

## The “\_” Words

This whole “N” word, “B” word, “C” word (etc.) thing has got to stop! If you’re older than last week’s bananas like me, you’re probably pretty confused when commentators cite these (pick your favorite letter) “\_” words in their monologues. I’m not advocating we return to those days when these expletives or derogatory words were used *indiscriminately* or *maliciously* to disparage or insult other people. I’m simply suggesting that we ‘get real’ (there’s a phrase I like) about talking about them and not adding more to the already overflowing alphabet soup of INAPPROPRIATE WORDS that are threatening to choke our right of free speech.

It’s gotten so bad that I cannot even write the words I want to discuss in a column! That means if you don’t already know which words I’m talking about when I use the “\_” designation, you’re plumb out of “\_” luck because nobody would be permitted to tell you out loud or in print. How crazy is that? I suppose if this were a doctoral thesis or other academic work it would be okay to sprinkle them liberally throughout the pages, but this column is just your everyday garden variety ordinary free speech.

I can’t put my finger on exactly when this “\_” word thing got started, but I’m going to bet it was the brainchild of a sensitive, feeling, compassionate individual associated with a particular ‘soften free speech’ movement. It could also have come from someone incapable of using real words instead of euphemisms like *pooh* to replace... get ready for it... *excrement*. OMG, I said the “E” word! If you are one of those gentle souls who needs all of life’s rough edges sanded off for you and you fainted, I hope granny got you the smelling salts. It wasn’t meant to shock, honest.

It was just an example of how terribly prudish and self-censoring we’ve become about our language. While I’m on the subject, can we please stop using the “F bomb” to describe a foul word that has been with us since the 1600s? If we’re referring to its use, can’t we just say *expletive* or *swear word* or *cuss word* like we used to say back in my day in caveman times? Ironically, this word is probably now in the Guinness Book of World Records for its overuse today. If you like Rap music (though I can’t imagine anyone actually liking it or even understanding it for that matter), every fifth word is the “F” word. You can’t see a TMZ video of Alec Baldwin interviewed on NYC’s busy streets when the word doesn’t spew forth from him like the green goop from Linda Blair’s mouth in the Exorcist! Yup, it’s everywhere, more pervasive than *baby*, *baby* in 60s rock music.

I think there is a solution to all this “\_” madness. Listen up. The President should set the example and free the enslaved “\_” words by doing one of the following: A) include all of them at least once in any of his upcoming speeches to the American people; B) allow his Press Secretary, Jay Carney, to spice up his answers with them when he responds to an embarrassing question posed by Fox News’ reporter Ed Henry; or C) create a holiday, ‘National Expletive Day,’ during which all Americans are required to use at least one “\_” word in their daily speech (preferably to their boss) without fear or threat of banishment to a Leper Colony. After all, if the Vice-President can do it (remember, “This is a big “\_” ing deal” when he whispered it in the President’s shell-like ear before he made an announcement on Obamacare), then all of us should be able to do it. “\_” right!

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