

# The Gift of Encouragement

When I was in the second grade of elementary school, the best part of the day – for me, at least – came when Miss Hazel Fitzpatrick, the teacher, read chapters of children’s books.

Stories for children provide special places to glean some profound insights into life.

One of my favorite books was *Winnie-the-Pooh*, written by A.A. Milne. The stories about Winnie, or Pooh Bear, as he is also called, are set in Ashdown Forest, Sussex, England.

In one scene, Pooh is about to go for a walk in the Hundred Acre Wood. It is about 11:30 in the morning, and a fine time to go calling – just before lunch. So Pooh sets out across the stream, stepping on the stones, and when he gets right in the middle of the stream, he sits down on a warm stone and thinks about just where would be the best place of all to make a call.

He says to himself, “I think I’ll go see Tigger.” No. He dismisses that.

Then he says, “Owl!” But, “No, Owl uses big words, hard-to-understand words.”

At last, he brightens up. “I know! I think I’ll go see Rabbit. I like Rabbit. Rabbit uses encouraging words like, ‘How’s about lunch!’ and ‘Help yourself, Pooh!’ Yes, I think I’ll go see Rabbit.”



Why did Pooh finally select Rabbit? Because Rabbit had the gift of encouragement.

All of us have issues that we face in life – many of them producing grief, despair, frustrations, and certainly stress. We see many such concerns daily in those we serve in Life Care and Century Park.

They – and we – need to hear words that are friendly and warm, rather than harsh or hard; words that heal the spirit and build up esteem.

There is power in such speech. It can change the day, and perhaps even a life, for another. Choose to wield it wisely.

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing* (1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter