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North Hancock Elementary 5th grade teacher Rhonda Adkins laughs as Dave Weber illustrates a message during his "Sticks and Stones" seminar at HCHS Monday.

Dave Weber, an internationally recognized motivational speaker, author and trainer, uses comedy to deliver a point during a program for Hancock County teachers and administrators at HCHS Monday. Sitting from left, are: Miranda Brown, Traci Sanders and Leah Merritt. —Clarion photo by S.W.

Teachers hear how words impact relationships

By Ralph Dickerson
 Dave Weber, of Weber Associates, gave two presentations of his seminar called 'Sticks and Stones Exposed-The Truth Behind Words and Relationships.' The first

program took place Monday morning at Hancock County High School, and was geared toward teachers, administrators and staff of the school system. The second program took place at 6 p.m. that evening at the high

school. The focus of the program is how to build a better culture by learning how to better communicate with others by our word choices.

"It is about learning to be intentional with the words that come out of our mouth because words are so incredibly powerful," Weber said. "Words impact relationships, relationships impact culture and culture impacts results."

Weber said our society possesses so much negativity today because over the years we developed a caustic, biting, mean-spirited way of talking to each other. Instead of talking to people in positive, reaffirming ways, people today look to tear down others verbally. In the

process, it makes people separate from one another, which causes society to become more cold and distant. He said our words need to create Koinonia.

Weber defined this Greek word as "the coming together in a solidified oneness in an atmosphere of openness, honesty, trust, affirmation, support and encouragement." He said words are never neutral, either they are words of life, or they are words of death; either our words help bring out the best in people, or they help bring out the worst.

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Weber said psychologically each person projects seven different images to other people. He called these images "The Seven Me's I am." He said the Me's are the Me I think I am, the Me others see, the Me I used to be, the Me I want to be, the Me I really am, the Me others try to make me and the Me I try to protect.

He said the key to building positive relationships is to discover what the Me I want to be is. He said if we do not know what we want to be, it is impossible for us to get there. Second, when we find what the Me I want to be is, we need to nurture the Me I want to be in other people.

As an example, Weber mentioned a relative of his many years ago. This relative worked as a newspaper delivery boy in Cleveland. When it came time to collect the money for the newspapers, the boy went door-to-door on his route collecting the money. He came to one house and knocked on the door. An elderly woman, stooped by age, came to the door. Immediately, she started to praise the boy, and said she appreciated the fact that he placed her newspa-

per at the stoop outside of her door, and that she planned to write a letter to the paper telling them he was the best delivery boy she had for her newspaper.

Weber said no one really knows if his relative actually placed the newspaper in that location the few days prior to collecting for the papers, but he said from that day on, the boy made sure to put the paper on her stoop. Her positive words brought out the best in him.

"Our expectations impact how we interact, how we communicate, the time we spend with them and how we perceive their actions toward us," Weber said.

He called such positive reinforcement "frog kissing." He takes the term from the fairy tale about a prince being turned into a frog, and only a kiss from a woman would turn him back into a prince.

Weber lives outside of Atlanta, Ga. and formed his business in 1986. He got his start as a salesperson for Motorola, and three years later the company promoted him to a training position for sales people.

"I got my first taste of speaking and teaching, and I loved it," Weber said.

He travels approximately 165 days per year conducting his training seminars.