Recitation 1 **Mohammed Qahtani speech (modified): The power of words**

I have a son who is four, and he had this bad habit of writing on the walls with crayons. One evening I walked into his room and he was just drawing on the walls again. And I said, "Hey, hey, hey! Are you stupid? Don't you ever do that again?" Guess what happened. He did it again.

Nobody likes to be threatened. His pride will not allow it. He did it again just to make me angry. A week later, I walked into his room and he was doing it again. And this time, he was even looking at me.

I came down, and I said "Sweetie, come here. Don't do that, you're a big boy now." So, he never did it again because his pride wants him to be 'the big boy'.

Words, when said in the right way, can change someone's mind. You have the power to encourage a person, or destroy someone's happiness using only your words. Does that seem a bit too good to be true?

If you are a role model, anything you say could be believed. My friend Nasser, he loved his father, and he would do anything to make him happy. Year after year, Nasser tried but his father was not easy to impress. His father never offered any words of encouragement.

In his first year in college, Nasser got straight A's and he said to himself, "This is it! This is what will finally make my dad proud." He called his father, "Dad, I got straight A's. Are you proud of me? Father, please tell me you are proud." "Yeah, listen son, I'll have to call you back, I'm busy."

'I'm busy' was the single sentence that broke the camel's back. And Nasser started drinking. He stopped working hard. He just gave up.

"Nasser why? Why are you throwing your life away?"

"If the one person in the world that I care about the most doesn't care about me, then why should I care about myself?"

Words have power. You can change a life, inspire your nation and make this world a beautiful place. Isn't that what we all want? Your words can hurt or they can heal.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us choose our words carefully.

Word count: 376