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## Language

### The Power of Words

*Words have the power to both destroy and heal. When words are both true and kind, they can change the world.*

—Andrea Gardner, 2012

#### LEARNER OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter, the reader will be able to:

1. Discuss personal responsibility in use of language.
2. Identify and describe the word traps highlighted in this chapter.
3. Explain the importance and impact of nonverbal communication.
4. Describe the language of acknowledgment, gratitude, and validation.

A film excerpt on YouTube, *The Power of Words* (Gardner, 2010), opens with a homeless man sitting on the sidewalk of a bustling Manhattan street. On a carton, he's written, "Help me!" It appears that few have stopped to answer his plea. Finally, a woman stops, takes out a pen, and on the man's carton writes, "It's a beautiful day and I can't see it." Immediately, the man begins receiving an outpouring of coins and bills from passersby. When the woman returns, a short while later, the man asks her, "What happened?" She replies, "I just changed the words."

Andrea Gardner, in her book *Change Your Words, Change Your World* (2012) has demonstrated her commitment to teaching others about the impact of their language. As speech-language pathologists and audiologists who counsel clients and their families, we have always been interested in how language affects others and relates to listening. We see this as crucial for our work.

In the late 1980s, I (BTA) had the opportunity to attend the Communication Workshop through Landmark Education. This weekend seminar stressed the importance of the