

What's in a word?

Countdown resident word expert helps raise awareness of charitable gifts in wills

Remember A Charity has enlisted the support of the resident word expert from Channel 4's Countdown programme, Susie Dent, for its current consumer campaign aimed at raising awareness of charitable gifts in wills.

Susie Dent is working with the charity consortium to explore alternative terms for the word 'legacy' and to provide insight into why 'legacy language' is acting as a barrier to giving.

According to research carried out for Remember A Charity by TNS Social in 2008, the word 'legacy' is largely misunderstood amongst the general public and has negative connotations with 'the wealthy', death, wills and even eccentricity.

According to Susie Dent:

"We know that the language involved in leaving a donation to charity is putting people off, and it may take just a simple step to put it right. 'Legacy' is conjuring up all the wrong associations: if we can find the right words to show people how even the tiniest gift can make a difference, then the power of language can be put to hugely beneficial use.

"Legacy' suggests wealth and celebrity. Perhaps a new, tongue-in-cheek coinage like 'inshareitance' would get people talking, while simpler nouns such as 'gift' or 'lifeline' might sound more encouraging and straightforward. And, if we prefer not to dwell on thoughts of death, a touch of humour might help - 'pay-as-you-go' could raise a smile or two."

The activity was carried out to support Remember A Charity's current awareness campaign into charitable legacies, which aims to normalise leaving gifts in wills and create talkability.

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