

## Old Proverbs Still Speak the Truth

Now, the VOA Special English program Words and Their Stories.

Today we explain more proverbs. A proverb is a short, well-known saying that expresses a common truth or belief. Proverbs are popular around the world. Many proverbs give advice about how to live. Some proverbs are hundreds of years old, but they are still used today.

For example, my son is just like his father in many ways. We often say the two of them prove the proverb that the apple does not fall far from the tree.

My daughter is very short. She would like to be taller. But I tell her that good things come in small packages. The size of something is not always important. Some valuable things are very small, like diamonds and other jewels.

But I also tell my children that all that glitters is not gold. Do not be fooled by appearances. Something may look valuable, but may not really be valuable. Also, I tell them do not judge a book by its cover. You should not judge something only by its appearance.

Another proverb is, do not bite off more than you can chew. This means do not try to do more than you are able to do.

Some times I tell my children to cooperate to solve a problem. After all, two heads are better than one. Two people working together can get better results. But another proverb says too many cooks spoil the broth. If too many people try to do something, then the job will not be done well.

I also tell my children that two wrongs do not make a right. You should not do something bad just because someone did the same to you.

Some people are pessimists: they always think about how bad things are or will be. Other people are optimists: they always look on the bright side. They think things will be all right.

Optimists might say that every cloud has a silver lining. They can find something good even in a bad situation. Other people are both pessimists and optimists. They hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

Some people often worry about what they will do in a situation that might happen in the future. We could tell them do not cross that bridge until you come to it.

It is usually much better to prevent a problem from happening than it is to find ways to solve it. So we say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Finally, I always liked this proverb: You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Honey is sweet while vinegar is not. In other words, you can win people to your side more easily with gentle persuasion than by hostile actions.

This VOA Special English program was written by Shelley Gollust. I'm Barbara Klein.