



Karen is the WA President for Baptist women. She is currently working for Willow Creek, USA as an Executive Director for GLS Asia. She has a husband and two children [22 and 19] and has a strong desire to see people live and minister out of a place of health and passion.

## Prayer for Today

Dear Lord,  
Today I pray that you will give me the courage to say "I Love You".  
Where I have held back from others, move my heart forward and give me the desire to love others deeply.  
When my words don't come easily, give me the strength to speak regardless.  
May I nurture those you have placed in my life and speak words of love that will bring life and health.  
Amen

## THE POWER OF 'I LOVE YOU'

A new command I give you: **Love one another.**  
As I have loved you, so you must **love one another.**  
John 13:34

When I consider these three small words, I think of marriages that have been saved, friendships that have been restored and children who have felt nurtured. There is great power in not only living these words, but in speaking them out. When we have them said over us, we feel our very spirit responding.

Growing up I heard the saying 'Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me.' It was usually spoken by a child who was being bullied and teased mercilessly. It was a feeble attempt to stand strong against the verbal barrage that was often aimed at them. The problem was...it wasn't true! Words have the power to wound us deeply. They also have the power to bring life.

There are many things we can do for others that show them we care. We can give gifts or serve them in some way. Yet, it seems a whole other ball-game to be able to speak the words "I love you" to them. We become paralysed because the feelings may not be there at the time. The thing we need to remember is that love is more a decision of the heart than a feeling. I choose to love. I choose to speak the words out, even when it is hard.

I remember a season in my marriage when it was difficult for me to speak those words. It was more about where my heart was at, and I was challenged by someone close to me at the time to say them anyway and let those words begin to change my feelings. The moment the words were uttered, I felt things melt away. Tears followed. By making that choice, I turned the circumstances around and began to nurture softness and love. I'll be forever grateful for the wise advice I received.

Who is it that needs to hear those words from you today? Your husband, your children, your extended family or friends? Take a deep breath, swallow your pride and speak them out. Then watch what happens in response. Those three words have the power to love others back to life.

I love you

Karen Wilson  
Baptist Women's President WA



Dear friends, let us **love one another**, for love comes from God. Everyone who **loves** has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7

## The Boy In The Jacket

By Shaun Chandran

*Shaun is a child psychologist who in November 2009 travelled to Russia on a humanitarian clown trip with 36 clowns from 10 countries around the world led by Dr Patch Adams. The following touching story was adapted from his final journal entry on the trip.*

We had been in Russia for a whole two weeks now and were at our final destination in St Petersburg. For 15 hours a day over 14 days, we had been clowning everywhere and anywhere that was humanly possible. We had visited many orphanages, hospitals and nursing homes and had clowned all through the streets of Russia. On this final day, we were to visit a large orphanage for children with disabilities.

As we arrived, we were informed that we would split into smaller groups so we could reach as many children as possible. I remember finding myself with a group of about eight clowns from all over the world. By this time, all the clowns were like family and we had grown very close to one another. The eight of us were led by a staff member through many doors and stairwells till we finally reached a small room of children. If you have worked with children with disabilities, you will be aware that sometimes they can be very excitable and engaging. As our group of clowns entered the room, all the children started to jump up and approach us with great laughter and excitement.

As I was dancing with one particular child, I remember noticing two children in the corner of the room on a large beanbag who were not engaging with anyone. After I finished my dance, I started to slowly make my way toward them and sat quietly on the beanbag. I then began stroking them gently; one boy on his stomach and the other on his back as I started to sing the little I knew of a Russian lullaby. As I was singing, the boy whose back I was rubbing slowly began to sit up. And there he was, the boy in the jacket. I had only ever read accounts of children in orphanages who were kept in straight-jackets. To suddenly be in front of one shattered me to the core of my being.



I turned to the staff member who was close by and, through the translator who was with us, asked if the jacket could be removed. I was met with resistance and was bluntly told, 'He is a violent and aggressive child and will hurt you and himself'. I reassured the staff member that I worked with children in my own country and that if at any point she felt he or I were unsafe, she could put the jacket back on. Hesitantly, she agreed but, as she removed the jacket I was met with a look, which I translated as 'you are a crazy foreign clown'.

Continued...

Be devoted to **one another** in love.  
Honour **one another** above yourselves.  
Romans 12:10

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters.  
But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.  
Galatians 5:13

## The Boy In The Jacket cont...

During my time with the boy, we began the dance of getting to know one another. He was uncertain at first and slow to engage. As I began to open up to him, he too slowly began to open up to me. I remember how particularly excited he was with a squeaky rubber chicken that I had with me. I also remember thinking it was funny when he started to gesture to the staff member to 'go away'. I remember then also thinking that, if I was kept in a straight-jacket all day with an absence of any physical touch and movement, those would be the two very things I would long for most. And so we began to move, dance and sing together. For over half an hour we danced the dance of connection until he finally curled into my arms as I held him close.

The whole time all this was happening, I remember noticing the staff member, who was still close by, slowly beginning to change in her body language from rigidity to softness. Not once during my engagement with this boy had he hit me or himself. As the boy was in my arms, I heard this staff member say something to the translator. I immediately asked the translator, 'What did she say?', and was told, 'She has just said that, this is the calmest she has ever seen this boy'.

I remember feeling overwhelmed with emotion at this point. I wondered whether through our connection we were able to show this staff member the possibility of love, hope and understanding. I held him even closer and whispered, 'Yellow Blue Bus, Yellow Blue Bus, Yellow Blue Bus' which translated from Russian means 'I Love You, I Love You, I Love You', as a tear rolled down my cheek. As I said those words, I could feel him return them to me, not through words but through his very being. It was one of the highest experiences of love I have ever felt. So unconditional and so pure.

As the clowns were given the cue that it was our time to leave the orphanage, I left with the boy my squeaky rubber chicken, which I had carried with me all through our two-week journey. It was a gentle and bittersweet goodbye. Before I left the room, I went up to the staff member and gave her a big hug and said, 'Yellow Blue Bus', to which she smiled and returned that all too familiar 'you are a crazy foreign clown' look, but this time with so much more kindness and joy. I turned away and, as I headed to the front door, my fart machine went off to roaring laughter from the children and staff in the room. This was a wonderful way to close an amazing trip filled with many touching experiences, and I will never forget my time with 'the boy in the jacket'.

'Yellow Blue Bus'. I Love You.



*Shaun Chandran is passionate about making a difference in this world, striving to live his life as his message; a message of peace, love, human rights and social justice. From Perth, he works as a psychologist with children who have experienced episodes of abuse and neglect. He works in a team of incredible individuals and loves his work. Use the link below to see a video of his interaction with this boy...*

<http://www.livingnow.com.au/component/content/article/11/4043-the-boy-in-the-jacket-video.html>

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