

I read a book called *Smart Brevity*. It was not a long book, and its subtitle told the story: “The Power of Saying More with Less.” The book is directed toward people who use social media or are in the business world with speeches, memos, e-mails, and texts that are used for the workplace. But, there are lessons in the book for all of us. The authors do admit that there are proper places for wordiness, writings such as novels and poetry. But, even in those creative enterprises, less is often more effective than more.

The act of saying “no” or “yes” without additional explanation seems impossible for most of us. Someone asks us, “Can you go out to lunch this week?”

Why is it that “No” would sound so rude to our ears? We are trained from toddlers to make and expect others to make lengthy explanations for every “No” or “Yes” we utter. But if one really looks at the question, what is required for a logical answer? One word, either “No” or “Yes.”

One issue I have is with the use of emojis. The authors assert that judicious use of these symbols saves words and is a good way to shorten a presentation, e-mail, or other message. They may be correct, and there are certainly occasions when a picture is worth many words. I wonder, though, is this the first step backwards from our hard-won evolutionary journey to a written language? Will we eventually use logography, a system based at least partially on picture symbols? As we gain in ease in communicating without many words, will we lose the ability to express shades of meaning? Will we no longer recognize “nuance?” The next chapter in this issue has not yet been written—in words, in pictures, or in speech.