

Deaf Proverb:

Empty-handedness betrays no one.

Source: **Silence is a friend that betrays no man.**

Function(s): **Advice and observation**

Characteristic(s): **Personification: Empty-handedness betraying**

Keyword(s): **empty-handedness**

Situation(s): **Universal**

Example(s): ***“The less you sign, the better - and remember this: empty-handedness betrays no one.”***

Points to Ponder:

By signing nothing, no secrets can be inadvertently given away. Hence, *empty-handedness*.

This proverb also implies that if one keeps quiet (i.e., not signing), others would not know s/he is deaf.

In order to make the proverb “unisex” in tone, the Deafie version uses *no one* instead of the original proverb’s “no man.”

Compare it with related proverbs on pages 47 and 52.

Deaf Proverb:

Small potatoes have big eyes.

Source: Little pitchers have big ears. [English]
Small potatoes (colloquialism)

Function(s): Observation

Characteristic(s): Analogy: potatoes ↔ children
Hyperbole: small potatoes ↔ big eyes
Personification: potatoes having eyes
Pun (homonym): eyes ↔ sprouts

Keyword(s): potatoes, big eyes

Situation(s): Families and schools

Example(s): ***“Pssst! Be careful what you sign around these Deafie kids. Small potatoes do have big eyes.”***

Points to Ponder: The original proverb, which obviously originated in the world of the hearing, takes advantage of the other meaning of the word, “ear” (the looping part of the pitcher that is used as a handle).

In a “parallel” manner, the Deafie version uses one of many meanings of the word, “eye,” namely a sprout found on the surface of the potato.

Both of these proverbs imply the same thing: children can catch on to what you might have unwittingly said (or signed) in their presence.

Deaf Proverb:

A designer is
a signer sans signs.

Source: (Original)

Function(s): Observation

Characteristic(s): Alliteration: signer, sans, signs
Pun (homonym): designer ↔ de-signer (not a signer)

Keyword(s): designer, signer, sans signs

Situation(s): Manualism vs. oralism debates

Example(s): “You may want to raise your Deafie child as an oralist, but remember a designer is a signer sans signs.”

Points to Ponder:

Designer in this proverb is to be interpreted as “de-signer” whose literal meaning is someone who does not sign.

“Sans” – an imported French word in the English language – is used instead of the English “without” because of its first letter, “s,” which comes handy (*pun intended*) for the alliteration of the proverb’s last three words.

The proverb implies Deafies are endowed with an innate and natural ability to sign.

Also, see a related proverb on page 27.