One of the crazy joys of writing is that others’ response to what you say often depends on how you say it. Using concise sentences and powerful verbs is one way to engage readers and strengthen the force of your meaning. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

Replace long word strings with vivid verbs.

Adequate: The girl was rather surprised by the fact that her brother was dating her friend.
Power-Packed: The girl was shocked that her brother was dating her friend.

Adequate: The boy felt kind of annoyed that his sister seemed less-than-enthustiastic.
Power-Packed: The boy was irritated that his sister did not approve.

Use verbs that have powerful connotations.

Adequate: The girl tried hiding her feelings, but they showed through anyway.
Power-Packed: The girl attempted suppressing her feelings, but they would not be silenced.

Adequate: The boy was angry with his sister, despite his efforts not to be.
Power-Packed: The boy grew resentful toward his sister, despite his better judgment.

When building an argument, avoid clichés and enlist verbs that carry credibility.

Adequate: After praying, they decided to set aside their differences and be friends.
Power-Packed: After praying, they reconciled their friendship.

Adequate: Because of this experience, I believe that Jesus will help us to live in peace.
Power-Packed: This example demonstrates that Jesus empowers us to live peacefully.

Here is a list of power-packed verbs that can replace “say” in a sentence:

- Argue
- Assert
- Assess
- Boast
- Caution
- Concede
- Conclude
- Confess
- Criticize
- Demand
- Deduce
- Deny
- Dictate
- Directed
- Echo
- Elaborate
- Explain
- Extrapolate
- Find
- Hold
- Imply
- Include
- Infer
- Justify
- Lament
- Muse
- Pontificate
- Predict
- Pretend
- Promise
- Propose
- Qualify
- Quantify
- Query
- Question
- Reason
- Reply
- Show
- State
- Suggest
- Suppose
- Summarize
- Surmise
- Understand
- Voice
- Vouch
- Vow
- Waver