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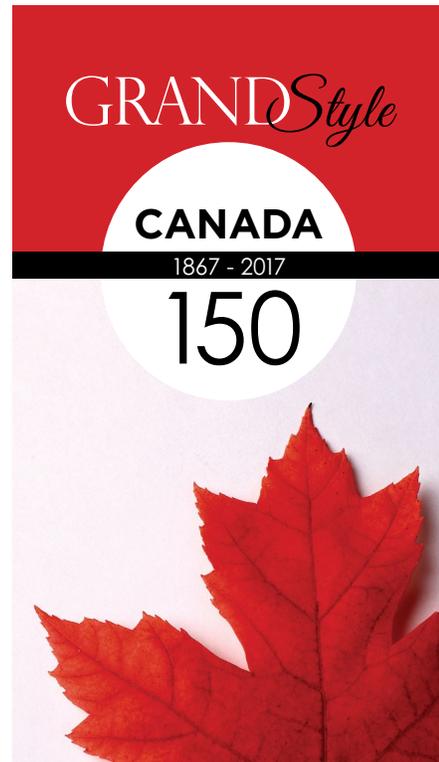
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PHOTOGRAPHY • DECLAN OUTHIT

# SAY IT *with* JEWELRY

Eudaimonia,  
apramada, meraki:  
Waterloo-based  
Speechlust pairs  
inspiring words  
with fashion



Lynn  
Haddrall

**W**hat's the perfect word to describe your personality or state of mind? Courtney Chilton has a few suggestions to inspire you.

Chilton, 25, searches the world for words to incorporate into her jewelry company, named Speechlust. She believes in the power of words to transform.

"I've found a lot of comfort in things like quotes and song lyrics," she said, showing me around her uptown Waterloo condo, where she has created an airy, bright work studio.

We are surrounded by phrases, carefully chosen and placed on walls and on her

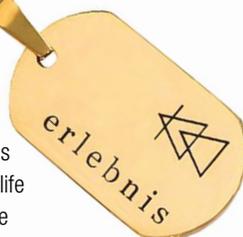
refrigerator. Some are words from different cultures, defined on "definition" cards she keeps in stacks.

Many words sound exotic, such as apramada (a moral watchfulness and awareness of the ethical implications of one's actions), nemophilist (a haunter of the woods, who loves the forest, its beauty and solitude) and boheme (a creative, individualistic person who's passionate about living unconventionally and opposed to ordinary).

Chilton describes her online business as a jewelry company that uses unique words to remind individuals of their core beliefs, aspirations and favourite memories. She collects words she hopes will resonate. She looks for life-affirming thoughts and concepts people can easily carry with them.

She remembers a philosophy class she attended while studying literature at Dalhousie University. That's where she first

A Speechlust necklace featuring the word Erlebnis (to live fully, experiencing life deeply and intensely in the here and the now).



**Examples of some words from Speechlust.com:**

**Halcyon:**  
(adj.) To be calm, peaceful and tranquil.  
(n.) A mythical bird said to calm and charm the waves of the sea.

**Sophrosyne:**  
(n.) A healthy state of mind characterized by self-control, moderation and a deep awareness of one's true being.

**Heliophile:**  
(n.) One who is attracted to or craving the sun.

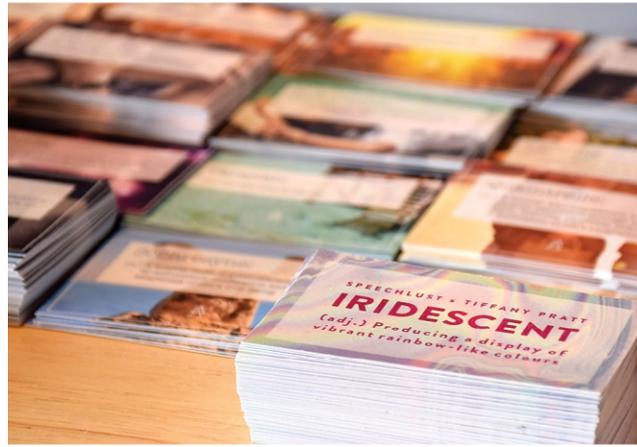
**Ikigai:**  
(n.) Your reason for waking up in the morning; the passion that drives your life.

**Utepiis:**  
(v.) To sit outside on a sunny day enjoying a cold beer.

**Cynosure:**  
(n.) Something that strongly attracts attention through its brilliance.

**Paralian:**  
(n.) One who lives by the sea.

**Strikhedonia:**  
The pleasure of being able to say "to hell with it."



PHOTOGRAPHY • DECLAN OUTHIT

Row upon row of "definition cards." They provide information about the inspirational words on the jewelry designed by Chilton.

Speechlust jewelry displayed in Chilton's home.

It was wanderlust that led Chilton to put her favourite word on a piece of jewelry and eventually start her own business. Chilton's home studio has space for her to create and experiment. Her designs are simple and will work with casual or dressier styles.

heard the word eudaimonia.

"We were learning about the meaning of virtue," Chilton recalls. "It's a Greek word that means human flourishing as a result of living a virtuous life. Its meaning motivates me every day. I just thought the whole idea is beautiful and I just wanted the word with me all the time."

She contemplated a tattoo, but that was too permanent.

"Life changes and I didn't know if the word would speak to me later. So, when I was travelling in southeast Asia and came across a jewelry market, it just seemed like the perfect way to carry the word with me but not have it forever."

She had a necklace created with eudaimonia on it. She followed it up with a bracelet featuring fernweh (a feeling of homesickness for distant places and the unexplored). Friends and acquaintances loved the jewelry. Chilton sensed she was on to something. She came up with the company name in her mom's basement, surrounded by whiteboards filled with words.

"I truly just wrote down a thousand words that had to do with what I wanted the brand to be about and what my mission was about. I really fell in love with the desire of using words to create change and have power in your life and that's where the lust part came in; speech is all about the words."

Chilton designed the logo. Two triangles intersect, the top one to transcend and the bottom one representing exploration.

"I thought it was really beautiful to simply think of pushing ourselves through all the barriers that we perceive in our life and to explore different areas to grow."

This enterprising millennial had lots of creative energy for design but no business education or experience. Luckily, she knows an expert — her father, David Chilton, author of the popular *Wealthy Barber* books and a former panelist on the *Dragons' Den* television show.

"He was the first person I went to with the idea. I had worked for him for a couple summers doing his due diligence for *Dragons' Den* and it was amazing practice for this," she says. "I thought he would kind

of brush it off, but he was really into it. That got me so excited about entrepreneurship and he's been a saint since. I really couldn't have a better mentor."

She laughs in saying that she accepts his business advice more readily than personal guidance.

"I'm a very creative person and that's where my genius is, thinking of the designs and the branding and having all the things that I want to say and the copy. But he's really good at telling me where I should go in the business sense. He's kind of like the left side to my right-side brain."

Her father wears one of her necklaces, even when golfing. His word? Sangfroid. It's French and it means composure and coolness shown even under intense stress and pressure.

The young designer likes simple, versatile creations. There are unembellished dogtags and more complicated pieces with beading and different metals. They work with a casual or dressy style.

Speechlust recently launched a men's line. A custom add-on lets customers personalize a piece with their own words, or initials that are meaningful to them.

"I absolutely love how some women will buy motherhood words and then put the initials of their children on the back. Some people will buy travel words and put the coordinates of somewhere they travelled to. It's really fun seeing how creative the customers are getting with this new feature."

On the day we meet, Chilton is wearing a necklace with the word eunoia (positive thinking growing from a healthy frame of mind). Her personal experience inspired her to choose words that will help others.

"The line that is most important to me is our empowerment line. It deals with challenges that a lot of women like me seem to be faced with. I've had very bad health issues my entire life with anxiety and depression. That's why I find these words so important," she says.

"I really would like to focus more on that aspect of the company and create a community around it. I have so many customers who seem to be dealing with

a lot of similar issues and I would like to create a conversation because our company is all about the words. Focusing more on that line is a really big goal for me."

Chilton loves to hear from her customers. Some have suggested design-worthy words. She has had a few requests for hygge, a Danish word that embodies a lifestyle of coziness. It might appear in the fall line.

I asked Chilton to suggest a word to capture the spirit of Waterloo Region.

"I love the word meraki for this region. It means to put your soul, heart and passion into a project, thereby leaving yourself in the work. I think that this is such a passionate community, but it's a very humble place with a lot of talent. I think we are very lucky that we have this community that will trade their talents to help one another because that doesn't happen everywhere."

Chilton loves to travel but has interrupted her wanderlust for now.

"I really want to go to Morocco. I'm pretty focused on doing that in the next four years. I love the colours and the scents. I feel like I haven't seen a picture yet that hasn't been beautiful in the areas that people seem to go."

Her immediate focus is on her business and on encouraging young women to launch their dreams.

"I feel extremely lucky to be a young, female entrepreneur in this community. Starting out on your own can be tough. No one can fully explain ahead of time the needed change in lifestyle, the financial instability and the general sense of confusion that you must endure during the launch of your business. Nothing goes smoothly," Chilton says.

But living in Waterloo Region can be heartening, as others innovate and grow around you.

"With this year's women's marches, the enthusiasm around 'girl bosses' and all of the new female-run local businesses, there can't be a better time and more ideal community for females contemplating going off on their own," Chilton says.

There may not be a word for that yet. Bet on Chilton to find it. 

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