

# 10 Phrases to Drop from Your Vocabulary

## by Lou Solomon

These verbal mistakes can cost you credibility and influence, so fix them, stat—if you want people to take you seriously.

Researchers believe that the earliest spoken language was Mayan, which was around 7,000 years ago. Imagine, in 70 centuries, we've progressed to, "... and I was like, really?"

Whether you are leading a team meeting, presenting to a prospective client or delivering a keynote speech to a global audience, verbal mistakes will undermine your credibility and distract from your message.

If you want to have integrity and influence, consider dropping these phrases:

### 1. "I'm confused," or "I don't get it."

Instead of putting all the responsibility on the other person, take co-ownership. Say, "Help me understand your position," and remain open.

### 2. "You know what I mean?" and "Does that make sense?"

Asking for constant validation chips away at your command.

### 3. "I was like..." or "She was like..."

The word "like" is an unsophisticated setup that gets in the way of your clarity and credibility.

### 4. "Um, ah, uh, you know."

Watch out for overuse of filler words and practice pausing to counteract the clutter.

### 5. "I've been too busy" or "I started writing an email and forgot to send it."

Excuses are unattractive. Say, "I apologize for the inconvenience. You will have it by tomorrow."

### 6. "Out-of-the-box thinking"

... should be retired. We can't escape all the buzzword phrases, but ones like this have become boring.

### 7. "You always..."

Sweeping generalizations lack insight and get in the way of healthy dialogue. Be specific and avoid using vague blame tactics.

### 8. "I think we should kind of do it this way."

Tentative language waters down your presence as a confident communicator. Make a solid recommendation and own it.

**9. “I hate to say this, but...” and “John is a good person, but...”**

Don't try to disguise criticism with a layer of caring or say things that offer zero value.

**10. “Really?”**

It's an all-purpose complaint that sounds like whining. Try making an interesting observation instead.

If you want to have more credibility and influence, be uh, like, you know, more intentional in your communication. Replace negative tone and lackluster words with positive tone and authentic appreciative words. Each new day is an opportunity to inspire greatness, so say something real.