

SPARKING IDEAS AND ACTION IN YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS
HARMONY COACHING & CONSULTING

Talk It Up

It's been well established by behavioral science that what we say – and how we say it – has a tremendous impact on thoughts and actions. Yet, according to author Dr. Kenneth Christian, many of us go about our lives woefully unaware of the impact everyday use of language has on our attitudes and our fundamental beliefs about ourselves. In *Your Own Worst Enemy: Breaking the Habit of Adult Underachievement* (Regan Books, 2002), Christian offers six tips for taking control of your speech patterns and talking yourself into greater achievement.

1. Stop “try”-ing.

The word “try” is a part of what Christian calls “loophole language.” By saying you will “try” to do something, you are implicitly giving yourself an out to fall short. For one week, forbid yourself from using the word “try” and see what kind of effect it has.

In addition, note the difference you feel between forbidding yourself versus simply 'trying' not to use the word.

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Are you controlling your speech patterns?

Attitude Paves an Upward Career Path

Every situation is different and no one can predict what a person will need to do in order to succeed, but here are some observations about the kind of attitudes that can help people be more successful:

1. Competition can be motivating:

While many people use competition as an excuse for not doing something, those who really want to win see competition as an opportunity, and they are willing to do the tough work necessary to win.

2. Learn to deal with your fears:

Fear is one of the greatest deterrents to taking risks. People worry so much about failing that their fear paralyzes them, draining the energy they might otherwise be using more productively. Fear also puts imaginary difficulties in our paths, creating problems even when we have not experienced any. Fear spreads because the people around us sense when we are fearful of something. One of the best ways to overcome fear is to do the thing you fear the most so that it no longer controls you.

3. Beaten paths are for beaten people:

Sometimes the thing that will help you become a winner is not something you dread doing or don't want to do, but rather something you are dying to do, yet don't have the courage to try. Successful people are those who are willing, at some critical point, to take a risk – not a foolish risk, but one that they have carefully thought through, recognizing both the positives and negatives that may result from the action.

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The ability to take such a risk moves you off the beaten path and sets you apart from everybody else. It may make you uncomfortable, but it also can make you a winner.

Tips for changing your attitude

- ▲ **Give a little bit more.** Be willing to give your full 100 percent to every endeavor.
- ▲ **Dedicate yourself to a single goal.** While you do not have just one chance to win in life, you also do not have to be lured by the notion that the grass may be greener if you switch options.
- ▲ **Learn to be flexible.** Be prepared to make adjustments if the situation calls for it.
- ▲ **Find a hero who can inspire you when you are discouraged.** It helps to remind you that even the most successful people suffer setbacks.
- ▲ **Be prepared.** Be aware of things that could go wrong. Consider all the possibilities available, so that when the inevitable problems crop up, you will be ready with solutions.



The Impact of Poor 'Outlook'

Explanation: When candidates have a poor outlook it means that they do not feel good about some aspect of their life, including but not limited to their job, company, self, home life, financial situation or physical appearance.

Since candidates are in the process of looking for a job, it is reasonable to assume that they are not happy with their present employment because of the company, manager, performance, lack of support, challenge or growth opportunity.

Impact: While it is normal to see an outlook problem in a candidate,

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an outlook problem that is not resolved at the time of hiring is a problem for the entire workforce. If you equate outlook with a contagious disease, then it is safe to assume that within 90 days, everyone on your workforce would have an outlook problem. Therefore, it's crucial to be certain that THIS outlook problem is due to the uncertainty of the candidate's employment status.

If you are certain that a recommended candidate's outlook problem is directly related to his or her current employment situation, you can confidently hire that individual.

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Web Site Of The Month AnnualCreditReport.com

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies to provide you with a free copy of your credit report once every 12 months beginning in December 2004. A credit report contains information on where you live, how you pay your bills, and whether you have been sued, arrested, or filed for bankruptcy. The information is sold to creditors, insurers, employers, and other businesses that use it to evaluate your applications for credit, insurance, employment, or renting a home.

This central site allows you to request a free credit report, once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies — Equifax, Experian, and Trans Union. Find out when FREE reports are available in your state at www.annualcreditreport.com



harmony

Coaching & Consulting

1650 Faxon Avenue
Memphis, TN 38112

Tel: 901-272-7390 Fax: 901-278-8921

E-mail: bburtch@harmonycc.net

Visit Our Web Site at: www.harmonycc.net

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2. Cut out vagueness.

Phrases like “kind of” and “sort of” allow you to express ambivalence while seeming to make a statement. When you speak about goals or other definitive aspects of your life, use unequivocal language. Don’t say, “I sort of want to do this,” say, “I will do this.”

3. Take responsibility.

Decisive people, you will notice, speak simply in the present tense and in the active voice. Compare the difference between “It needs to get done” and “I need to do it.” Take greater personal responsibility with your language, and you will take greater personal responsibility with your life.

When you speak about goals or other definitive aspects of your life, use unequivocal language.



4. Negate the negative.

Catch yourself every time you use such self-defeating statements, as “I hate making presentations,” “It’s too late to take this training,” or “I can’t figure out this new computer system.” Such self-limiting talk becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. Instead, say, “I choose to like making presentations,” “There’s still time to take the training,” and “I have yet to figure out the new training.” Ask your friends and family to help catch you whenever you use negative phrases.

5. Put things behind you.

Describe any negative traits you perceive about yourself in the past tense. So rather than saying “I’m not a good closer,” say, “I didn’t used to be a good closer.” By relegating these negative attributes to the past, you imply the possibility for change, and soon you’ll be believing it.

6. Make positives present.

Use the present tense to discuss positive attributes, even attributes you don’t feel you manifest quite yet. By using the present tense, you put pressure on yourself to make the statement a reality.

"There is one quality which one must possess to win, and that is definiteness of purpose, the knowledge of what one wants and a burning desire to possess it."

— Ronald Reagan



Lessen Crisis Management

Keep crisis management from dominating your day. After putting out a fire, routinely go one-step further by asking:

- ◆ What is the pattern here?
- ◆ Why did it occur?
- ◆ What can we do to avoid it in the future?
- ◆ Who can be trained to prevent it from happening?

Then put a plan into place to avoid the crisis next time.

— Adapted from *Don't Oil the Squeaky Wheel ... and 19 Other Contrarian Ways to Improve Your Leadership Effectiveness*, Dr. Wolf J. Rinke, www.wolfrinke.com. One-Minute Strategy

Photographing Saves Time

Turn your digital camera into a time-saver in the office:

Photograph your whiteboard after a meeting to preserve the notes without copying them by hand.



Troubleshooting A Stagnant Meeting

Be ready to propel a meeting forward when it hits trouble spots. Here are three classic meeting problems and how to solve them:

- ✓ Problem: “We always peter out.” Solution: End the meeting on a high note. If 17 minutes into the meeting, you reach the climax of the gathering, stop the meeting there. That way everyone walks out revved up – and more productive.
- ✓ Problem: “Everyone’s bored out of their minds.” Solution: Make attendees laugh. Here’s a trick from Sheldon Arora, CEO of Esoftsolutions in Plano, Texas: The last person into the room at the monthly companywide meeting has to tell a joke. It loosens up the room and fills the seats on time.
- ✓ Problem: “No one retains a thing.” Solution: Do a five-minute recap at the end. You want everyone to leave knowing exactly what they’re supposed to do. Clarify potential outcomes, outline next steps and make assignments.



— Adapted from *Escape From Meeting Hell*, Patrick J. Sauer, Inc., www.inc.com.

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