

# FILLER WORDS & UPSPEAK

## Bad Habit #1: FILLER WORDS

**What are filler words?** Um, ahhh, like, you know, so, sort of, okay, hmmmmm.  
Filler words are our brain's way of filling space while we try to find the next word to say.

The result of using filler words is that we undermine our credibility. Instead of delivering a clear, concise statement or answering a question with clarity, when we use filler words we sound as if we have no idea what we are talking about. And something else happens: the person we are talking to gets frustrated and starts to tune us out.

**How can we break this bad habit?** Learn the power of the pause. Pausing gives our brain the chance to retrieve the word we are looking for. When we pause, the listener leans in to see what we will say next and suddenly, we have their attention.

Grab a package of sticky notes and a black Sharpie. Write down the filler word you use the most on 4-6 sticky notes. Now put a big X through the filler word. Post the sticky notes within your eye view on places like your laptop, the bathroom mirror, above the kitchen sink and on your car dashboard. Every time your brain sees that word with the X through it, it receives the message: don't say that word.

## Bad Habit #2: UPSPEAK aka UPTALK aka VALLEY GIRL TALK

UpSpeak is when we end each sentence on an up note. The result is that we sound like we are asking a question instead of making a statement. As with filler words, our credibility is diminished. To stop your UpSpeak habit, be sure that the words you are saying are coming out of your mouth with no up-note at the end of the sentence. Speaking with clarity automatically makes you a better communicator.

It takes 30 days to break a bad habit, so get started right now!