



**This is KILLING your
CREDIBILITY**

Why 'In My Opinion' Is Killing Your Leadership Credibility

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"This is not the best way to approach this project!"

The room went silent. All the eyes turned to look at him. There was expectation, anticipation and yes, hesitation. They waited for what he would say next! Then he said ...

"... in my opinion."

The air left the room. The eyebrows lowered and some eyes rolled! He had their attention and they were anticipating the solution. Then, with three simple words, he minimized his statement!

Leadership is layered and the language of leadership carries clues and cues!

Whether you are a real estate broker, small business leader or corporate professional, competence and confidence are relayed in how you communicate.

Here are 3 leadership communication faux pas to avoid:

Avoid Hedged Requests or Soft Statements

Leadership often requires directness and conviction. When making a strong statement such as, "This is not the best way...", your audience will already look to you to provide guidance based on your statement. Adding "in my opinion," only serves to minimize. Make your direct statement and let it stand or follow up with a solution.

Another example of a hedged request..."We're close to the deadline for this report. Would you do the first page for me please...at your convenience?"

Instead, consider, "The deadline for this report is in two days. I'd like your help with completing the 2nd half by tomorrow. Can you make that work?" or "How can we make this work?"

The timeline is specific. The request is clear and the leader anticipates obstacles by asking for input without being demanding.

- Don't say: "This might not be the best way ... in my opinion."
- Do say: "This is not the best way. Here's what we should do ..."

I immediately pause him and ask, "Son, how can I help?"

He pauses and shares his request. " My friends and I were thinking about going to the mall. But, I don't have any funds."

Because we've had this conversation previously, I ask him to restate. He smiles and begins, "Dad, I'd like to go to the mall with my friends but I don't have any funding. Are you able to facilitate my financial quandary, please?"

OK. He could have chosen simpler words. But, deleting the nothing burger words "I was just wondering if" made his request more direct, stronger and confident.

- Don't say: "I was just wondering if ..."
- Do say: "Can we ...?"

Avoid Get-Out-Of-Jail-Free Words

In the game Monopoly, there are Get-Out-Of-Jail-Free cards. They function EXACTLY as the name suggests! If you land in jail, you use the card to exit without payment or waiting to roll the right number. We attempt to use some words in the same way.

Most likely ... probably ... possibly ...

Any of these adverbs creates a weaker statement. It's as if you want to give information but want to remove culpability if things don't go as planned.

Delete these tentative, low impact words from your communication!

- Don't say: "We'll probably ..."
- Do say: "We will ..."

Believe it or not, simple deletions from your language can increase your impact and influence! As a leader, believe in the power of your ideas and back them up with powerful words. You will see the dividends in how your team responds!

Robert Kennedy III is a professional speaker, master storyteller and licensed real estate professional. His core belief? Everyone's words deserve to be heard! And in order to be heard above the noise, you must connect with your audience. Robert runs **Kennetik Communications**, a minority owned training company in Laurel, MD.

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