

4 PHRASES THAT MAKE YOU SOUND LESS CONFIDENT (AND WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD)

Not everyone is born a charming extrovert ... and that's a good thing. If everyone was the same, life would be boring. And especially in the workplace, it's mainly when you have a variety of different personalities – including the quieter and introverted personalities – that workdays are more colorful and interesting.

However, introversion at work and having trouble outwardly communicating your thoughts and feelings in a healthy way can cause challenges in your career, because that typically means it's hard to confidently perform in front of colleagues and supervisors – and it also causes unnecessary awkwardness!

Whether or not you would call yourself an introvert, here are a few specific phrases to stop saying – and even rid from your vocabulary completely – if you want to sound and feel more confident at work:

1. "I just wanted ..."

People who express themselves vaguely and passively appear insecure. That leads us to tip #1: If you want to appear more confident, say goodbye to passive wording. Instead of using phrases like "I just wanted to ...", try "I'm planning on ..." or "My suggestion is ..." to express your goals and ideas. You will notice, by using a binding language you will not only sound more determined, confident and competent in the moment to your colleagues and supervisors, but you'll also start to believe it to be true.

2. "Could you maybe ..."

Many of us throw in the seemingly harmless word "maybe" without even noticing in our everyday work talk. For example, to ask a colleague for a favor or to assign a task. Of course it's important to ask politely if you want someone to do something for you, but adding "maybe" to what otherwise should be a pretty straightforward request, makes it seem as if you're almost expecting to get a "no" answer. Or, it would at least give the receiver of your message the notion that you don't have high hopes that they'd say "yes". We, therefore recommend using phrases like "Can you help me with this project?" without the word "maybe". This doesn't necessarily take away the person's option to say no, but what it does is prevent any unnecessary confusion about your expectations.

3. "I could do that ..."

Friendliness and reliability are important requirements for teamwork and that means that you absolutely should lend a helping hand to colleagues every so often when you find it's needed. However, that doesn't mean you have to be the one to help every time someone needs it, and neither does it mean that you should never say "no" to a coworker who asks for help.

This probably feels difficult to do if you're a naturally generous and helpful person, but you must set and enforce your own boundaries and "guard your own time" in order to stay sane and successful at work yourself.

If you know that you're swamped and can't spare time away from an important deadline or project, be upfront to both your colleagues and superiors. Offering help to others while secretly wishing you didn't

have to, or even being quietly resentful about it, is NOT the way to go. You can respond to a request in a friendly but clear way: “I would love to help but unfortunately, I have no time.”

“I could do that ... ” is also the wrong phrase if you really DO want to help out or do whatever task it is that needs to get done. In this case, communicating clearly about your intentions helps others understand that you are glad to take on the task and aren’t only doing it out of helpfulness.

4. Filler words like “actually” or “perhaps”

Filler words such as “actually” or “perhaps” have become more and more common in conversation these days. And while there’s no problem with having those words in your vocabulary in general, you should be very careful about the way you throw them into sentences, especially in the workplace; “actually” and “perhaps” have the potential to detract from what you’re trying to say or even weaken your argument or conviction because they tend to not add much value. The same is true of the following expressions: possibly, practically, possibly, possibly, and basically – they all have the tendency to make you sound less confident.

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