

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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The Sound of Silence



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Systems®



- Improve Communication
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Communicate More Effectively Without Non-Words

At the conclusion of a full, challenging day with the Board of Directors of one of our client organizations, I asked Mike, one of my partners who has co-facilitated dozens, if not hundreds, of events with me over the past 5 years, for any final comments he might like to make. I never worry about or rehearse Mike's participation. He always has extremely insightful comments to make, and this time was no exception. His comments about the importance of spontaneity and quick decision making in our rapidly changing world were especially important for these board members to hear. This client is in a fast-changing industry, experiencing increased competitive pressures. Spontaneity and decisiveness are important to their success. Mike wanted everyone on the board to see clearly how important it is to courageously act when they are faced with opportunities to pioneer innovations and expand their practice. They have reached the size where this can be their market strength. This ability creates competitive advantage.



As Mike began to speak, I listened with rapt attention, which I always endeavor to do. The only thing that was different this time was I heard no "uh's," no hesitations, no "you know's" or "I think's," none of the bothersome non-words that many, if not most of us use to unconsciously punctuate our communication. These non-words include "you know," "I think," and "uh, uh, uh." They are credibility destroyers. We use these non-words because our thinking hasn't been keeping up with our ability to make the point we are endeavoring to make, and we are afraid of silence. I was so amazed because Mike has had that "you know," "uh, uh, uh" style of communication for some time. The constant use of non-words is a habit, a bad habit, a sloppy habit. The following day when we did our in-depth analysis and debrief of the day, I complimented him profusely because I know how difficult it can be to break this habit. And even though it may only be at a subconscious level with our listeners, when our delivery is free of these distractions, it changes their perception, it affects their confidence, their respect and their willingness to be influenced and act on the recommendations we make.

Do you have the courage to include in your personal improvement action plan, a strategy to eliminate bothersome, distracting non-words from your delivery? If so, I recommend that you record some of your informal conversations to see if you have those distracting non-words of "I think," "you know," "you know what I mean," or "uh." Count them up; see how often you use them. You may be surprised. Another way to break the habit is to "hire a friend" to charge you a quarter each time you punctuate your communication with a distracting "uh," "you know" or "I think." As I say, it will break you!

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