

The, like, "Like" situation has gotten out of control

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The "like" situation has gotten way out of hand.

I believe it used to be "aaahhh," then "ummm" and even the famous French space-filler "errrr." But now that our generation and those younger than us (God save you, New Generation), have graduated to the more idiotic and certainly less effective "like," I am starting to fear the end of the world.

You know what I am talking about. It is the incapability of people between the ages of five and 25 to compose a sentence that does not include the word "like." You are guilty. You do it. Don't deny it, but let's do something about it.

How are we supposed to know what anybody's talking about, now that every other word is "like"? People are taking so long to spit out simple sentences that I anticipate the end of our nation soon. The President of Generation X will be unable to speak to the leaders of other power-nations without them snickering behind their backs at the blubbing idiot whom we the people have chosen to lead our country.

Under the knife of folks 25-and-under, the English language has become a tortured, mangled thing. We are already exposed to so few of the facets of our language, and now we are stabbing the thousand or so words we actually use in the head by taking five minutes to dribble them out.

Let me give you an example. Picture this: You are in a class — one of those with a professor who marks off points if you don't actively participate — sitting next to the young man wearing a hat with an overly-bent baseball cap brim. He feels that now would be a good time to get his points, considering he's awake and all, and if he says something now, he can get a good 20 minutes more of sleep before the end of class.

This is what he says:

"Well, like, when I, like, read Lacan, or whatever his name is, I was, like, I don't know what you're talking about, dude. But then, I, like, read it again, and I am, like, starting to get it, but on a lot of the points, I'm, like, whatever... I don't get it."

Pardon me? At this point, I wonder how this trend toward a ten-word language can possibly mean good things for our society. Just the

fact that it took this guy five minutes to say something that he could have just as easily expressed with three words — "I'm a moron" — shows that our world, while increasing the speed of technology, is decreasing the importance of verbal communication.

However, the bent-brimmed hat boy gets his points, and is marked in the professor's records as an excellent contributor to class discussion. He will most likely get good marks, have an excellent grade-point average and snag a fabulous internship, then a great job. Soon, he's likely to be the President of the United States.

Or maybe the girl sitting next to him will get the job. After all, how could we pass up the leadership skills of a person who says:

"OK, so I was, like, sitting there reading this. And I, like, had to read it FIVE times before I started to get it, but pretty soon, I started to realize that it was, like, like, that time when I was in, like, fifth grade or something and I was like trying to figure out why the mom in "Flowers in the Attic" was such a witch. And then, it, like, hit me or whatever, and I realized that, like, like, everybody has their own, like, problems, you know what I mean?"

Whoa. Slow down, there, Buckaroo. Did you just use two double-likes? And better yet, did you just also include in your analysis of Jacques Lacan the second and third place winners of the English-language-killer competition, "or whatever" and "you know what I mean"? You must be a genius.

I, like, don't deny that I catch myself using the word "like" where it doesn't belong. Whenever I do, though, I cringe. I gag. I realize that I just significantly decreased the effectiveness of my own attempt at verbal communication.

In my analysis of the situation, I have come up with a few solutions. I propose that we take back our intelligence. We must form some sort of twelve-step "like" dependency program that will enable offenders to overcome the one true problem in our society. Let's begin.

Are You "Like" Dependent?

If you can answer one or more of the following questions with a yes, you are "like" dependent:

1. Do you find yourself using the word "like" one or more times in single sentences, usually in places of grammatical structure that are completely unnecessary and, indeed, retarded?

2. Are you a double-"like"

offender?

3. Have your loved ones ever confronted you with a count of the number of times you used "like" in conversation?

4. Have you ever used the word "like" during a conversation about how often people use the word "like"?

What Do I, Like, Do Now?

Admitting that you are a victim is the first step toward recovery. Now you need to use the help of those who love you to stop your behavior. Follow these two steps:

1. Find a sponsor. Commission a loved one to smack you a good one every time you use the word. Research shows that pain dissuades.

2. Give \$1 to your favorite charity every time you use the word. Even if you support a good charity, you will shut up when you can't even afford McDonald's.

By sticking to these steps, you can be sure to do your part to eliminate one of the most destructive problems of our society. Of course, it will leave us with the two significant problems of greed and physical abuse...

But, who, like, cares about that, or whatever? You know what I mean?

A dream of water: 'The storm that caught her up...'

"Don't pinch me please. Let me go on dreaming." -Michael Ondaatje (The English Patient)

I thought I knew her. Her stories, her experiences—they were only a decorative sleeve she wore in my presence.

We were friends, there was no doubt about that, but did I really know her?

She stood, unfettered, under the fist of the downpour, as if in a dry universe and it had really been the tap of a lover on her shoulder.

The rain drenched her instantaneously, scattering others to open doors and shaded overhangs. It was now pointless for her to run. The shower had already claimed her motionless, stone body.

She tilted her head back and closed her eyes, as if smelling a delicious aroma with all of her senses now heightened.

The pounding of the rainfall drowned out the buzzing from the overhead street light hanging above her saturated soul, beating down on her face broken bright gleams caused by the sheets of water that came between them.

I saw her differently in this

new light, as if the wetness had altered her appearance, or perhaps it was just bent like a stick half-submersed under the water's surface. A refraction of something I thought I knew, but really hadn't.

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She then looked down at her feet to see the dancing drops bounce off the earth's surface, as if they were performing an ancient ritual just for her.

With each moment that passed, the strength of the storm increased, the trees with their wind drunk hair, her soaking clothes stuck to her soft skin, outlining her thin shoulders, her breasts, her waist, her legs.

The willow across the street lashed like a thousand tongues, hissing under the breath of the wind a thousand sad songs.

She paid attention to no one, acknowledged nothing, but the storm that caught her up and stole

her heart once again.

She was oblivious to the many pairs of prevailing eyes that looked upon her with queer stares.

She once told me in her many stories of childhood that she could read thunder.

She said it spoke to her like a king. It was as if he could still speak to her just as clearly as he did that first night on the beach.

It was his love transformed like an unspoken language too profound to break down, some cosmic arbitrator, given the megaphone of nature to disguise his voice.

But she knew, she could understand every word, like a book of simple words she read his thoughts.

She stood, crying, though you wouldn't have known with the rain, as every moment she spent with him rushed into her at once.

She began to weep deeper than the willow now, more wildly, as every kiss, every brush of his arm against hers' on that paradise beach,

touched her again. She remembered snuggling with him in a blouse of sinking sand, their kingdom on the blue.

It was him, ruffling her feathers, whispering salty words into her

ears, only this time the salt came from her tears rather than the deep ocean they once shared.

He spoke to her, that heavy burdening rain, and I will never know what he said.

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