

OPINION

Do We Sound, Like, Dumb When We Talk?

Courtney Johnson, Contributing Writer

I'm sure you, like me, have had several professors tell you that strong communication skills are a must in the working world because the ability to communicate well is what will make you stand apart from competing job applicants. Speaking is a main form of communication; we're able to weave our thoughts into coherent sentences and then vocalize them. Although a coherent sentence is the goal, lately all I hear when people open their mouths to speak is the word "like." Often times, "like" is almost every other word that's spoken. I'll give you an example, and while I am paraphrasing, the following is close to a word-for-word recount of a statement I recently overheard on campus: "My family and I, like, decided to go on, like, a vacation. We, like, looked up flights, and like, found the best one. We're going over like, summer break, and I am, like, so excited!" No, I'm not exaggerating, and I wouldn't be surprised if I left out a "like" or five. How difficult is it to read those few short sentences that have been flooded with the word "like"? Imagine if this person were writing about her planned vacation—there's no conceivable universe in which she would put pen to paper and write it out that way. I, being in "like" overload, re-

cently counted the times one of my friends said it over the span of about five sentences. I couldn't tell you what she was talking about because all I could focus on was the maddening, superfluous, unnecessary use of this one syllable word. The final tally was 13 times.

Why is this such a big deal? Well, supposedly we're here at an institution of higher learning to become more educated, to better prepare for a career, and to make every attempt at becoming the best candidate for a job. How, then, does one expect to be considered the best of the best when it seems impossible to speak without sounding (forgive me for being blunt), "like," dumb? If you're talking this way during an interview, I'm sorry, but you've probably already defeated yourself.

I am not saying that I don't ever utter this word; certainly, I do. But I can tell you that hearing it roughly 500 times a day has made me vigilant at attempting to eliminate it from my speech unless it is completely necessary within a sentence. When is it necessary? Here's an example, "I don't like it when you say 'like' too

much." And, of course, it's not just here on campus that this happens—it's everywhere. My point in bringing it up is that we can all do something to stop this assault on the spoken word. No, not everyone will be a wordsmith, but we could all try, like, harder.

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Meredith Women and the Obsession with Engagement

Alison Ridick, Staff Writer

We've all heard the stereotype that girls go to Meredith College to get their MRS. degree. Although this seems ludicrous to actual Meredith students, in some respects it actually holds true. Many of the students I have met over my years here have one common goal: to be engaged before they graduate. Two of the girls who hold this viewpoint shared their views:

When do you plan on getting engaged? When do you plan on getting married?

Girl 1: I want to be engaged before I graduate on Mother's Day 2012. I want to graduate with a diamond ring on my finger. I want to live by myself for a year after I graduate so I can learn to become self-sufficient; I can learn to pay off my bills. I want to live alone for a least a year also so I can plan my wedding in that time.

Girl 2: I want to get engaged sometime soon, before I go to Italy for study abroad in the next two to three months. I want to get married after graduation (May of 2012) so that I can have my babies immediately afterwards. I want to be like my mom. She had all her babies early so that we were all out of the house by

the time she was 40 years old. By getting married sooner and having my babies immediately I will have more time to spend with my husband alone.

Why is getting engaged before you graduate important to you? Why not wait?

Girl 1: Getting engaged early will allow me to start my life plan sooner. After I get married, I want to wait a long time, about five years, before I have children. In those five years I will be able to whatever I want with my husband on a whim and not have to worry about my children. I will be able to establish a financial routine with my husband and we can get a chunk of my school loans paid off. I want to wait five years also because if something like divorce were to happen, it would happen then. That time is for the protection of me and him. After five years I want to have 4 kids, about three to four years apart, and the sooner I get started on that the more I can guarantee myself that I will have all my babies at a safe age.

Girl 2: I have been with my boyfriend forever, about 3-and-a-half years. He has a stable job and he already supports me. Last year I lived with him for a year. I'm just tired of waiting and I just want to make it official. The only thing that really keeps us from being married is the marriage certificate.

What do you think marriage this early will help you accomplish in life?

Girl 1: Getting married early will help me accomplish my dream of having many babies that much sooner. I just want to have children; my

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life revolves around them.

Girl 2: It will help me have babies sooner and I once they move out, I will have the rest of my life to be with my husband. I want to follow in my mother's footsteps; I want to be a young mother. I would like to be married early because it will provide me with a support system as I enter into the world after I graduate. I would also like to have my kids young because my mom is a young mom and we are very close. She was always the "cool" mom and I want my kids to experience that too.

I am flabbergasted that so many students at Meredith hold these views about getting married so early. There are many people who end up rushing into marriage not knowing the partner very well with a fairy-tale view of marriage in mind. When these dreams are shattered, divorce can result. Many people today think that cohabitation will help you "practice" marriage, when in reality, couples who live together prior to marriage are twice as likely to divorce. The divorce rate is already at 50 percent and who wants to increase it? Many of us have unrealistic expectations about marriage that can lead to divorce. The key is to talk to other married couples and try to reconcile unrealistic expectations about marriage before diving in.



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