

The Adjective

Why Should Public Speakers Kill the Adjective?

Can you remember your first **adjective**?

Do you know why you need to kill them like cockroaches when it comes to public speaking?

Do you know three **problems they create** for public speakers?

I learned about them the same time I got my first thesaurus. Miss Bartholomew was the first to introduce me to them. We became best friends. I even took it to bed like my teddy bear when younger. It got tucked under my pillow. I got to become friends with Miss B too.

Only problem, some of us who were taught the same thing by our various Miss B's around the world in the various language arts classes became copy writers for ad companies. The result, we out grew adjectives.

How many times can laundry soap become New. When the same old soap was not new enough, it became New and Improved. Perhaps when it became liquid it was indeed new. Once it became concentrated it indeed became improved, at least in a reduction of the cost of shipping, less weight and size meant more units shipped at the same cost.

From when this site first went up, you might remember my catch phrase of hiring exterminators to kill the adjectives. I have a confession. I go to those meetings where you say, "Hi, I'm Jonathan and I am an adjective junkie." Perhaps beyond being a junkie, I was also an enabler and could even go so far as to say I was codependent with adjectives.

My wife tried to help early on in my public speaking career. She would ask how many things in life were truly fantastic or awesome. Granted, I have a zeal for life and all things living, but I was in denial.

Hi, My Name Is...

Then I was introduced to my first AA meeting. Yes, my first Adjectives Anonymous.

They helped me to see the light. First thing they showed me was that there are about 100 keyword searches for the word, variations of and combinations of the A word. Some went into the 20,000 range. A good sign that there are a lot of users out there.

They helped me to understand that if you're a public speaker, speech writer, involved in speech writing, a presenter, or just want to maintain credibility, then your at risk of becoming a user (or worse, an addict) of the 'A'.

Then they helped me to appreciate the three steps to eliminate adjective abuse.

Adjectives are Ambiguous

Take the word big for instance. It is a big adjective in itself. It has eleven different meanings. It can refer to size, force, age, number, position, and even pregnancy to name a few. In the international world we live in, not everyone will appreciate you referring to a woman as being big, even if you mean 'big with child.'

In addition to numerous meanings, ambiguity comes from their being subjective. I am big relative to my wife but next to someone big like Andre the Giant I'm small. Andre incidentally was not only big in size and big in the entertainment industry, and based on those who knew him, he had a big personality too. It could be said he was bigger than life.

If you don't know Andre the Giant, one of his last appearances was on the movie Princes Bride. He has passed away.

Subjective is what you think, feel (emotion and texture), smell, taste and hear (in quality). To fully appreciate what subjective means, ask anyone what cherry tastes like.

The end result, you can lose control of the meaning of the words you say and how different ones in the audience perceive them. If you lose control of the meaning of the words, you lose control of the understanding the audience has of your public speaking.

Adjectives are Abused by Being Overused

Go back to the big lady. She no doubt will give birth to a new baby. Have you ever seen an old baby? Have you ever seen an ugly baby for that matter? Remember, ugly is an 'A' word.

Having been a part of delivering babies as a nurse, believe me, the end result of procreation is truly fantastic but the babies are usually ugly when they come out. That's why we have to give them a bath. And the little cap. We tell everyone that it is to keep the head warm. There is something you may not know.

When the baby is trying to get out for some time, it's head gets a little cone shaped. You can't exactly hand a new baby to mom with a cone head unless she is a cone-head herself. Once the head gets back to normal, the beautiful new baby is, well, beautiful.

Also, they don't come out pristine. They have not had a bath for close to 9 months. They need a bath before they can be, er, eh, beautiful. I have given my share of baby baths.

Please don't get me wrong here. A a new life they are beautiful, but in a baby pageant they would not make it past the first cut.

Adjectives Set Off Our Spam Filters

After growing up with dozens of new and improved products that looked exactly like the old ones, we have develop our own spam filters. These filters cause us to have a 'yeh sure response.' They cause us to turn off our minds.

A raisin box with 10% more raisins probably had 10 and now have 11 in the box. Or even worse, they took out the one with out telling us the last time it was new and improved. Now they put it back.

Indeed, when the breakfast, lunch and dinner my wife makes me are all fantastic, she is a little suspect. Alternating awesome from time to time didn't work either. When making her breakfast, lunch and dinner she will only express sincere thanks and the occasional flattery like you make the best coffee.

Of course the spam filters processed that last statement and it was heard as, "I like it best when you make the coffee."

When public speaking, adjectives have the same effect on our audiences. Their spam filters start shutting down the listening centers of their brains. They turn off, tune out and shut down accepting what we say.

The Solution

The solution for public speakers, **Kill the Adjective**. It may sound like a drastic measure, but if you don't it can kill your public speech.

Lets look at an example of adjective spamming from a site in a public speaking related field. This is an e-mail ad copy. It could just as easily be something said at the end of a speech. The titles, names, and web address have been changed or eliminated to protect the guilty.

We just wanted to follow up on your interest in our **dynamic** ABCDE course. There is space for you in our last course for 2006. This will be held in Toronto the week of October 23-27. Please see our website at www.abcde for course locations and dates and to register. Don't hesitate too long to take advantage of this **incredible** training. 100 million people around the world need to learn English. In one **intensive** week you will be **fully** equipped to teach them. Please let us know what you would like to do or if you have further questions.

What do you think? Would you want to get some incredible training? Do you want to spend one week on intensive training to be fully equipped to teach. Would you want to sign up? Or did your spam filters say, "I don't think so." Did you notice that it was more about them than it was about you or me?

Everything this ad says is true (Friends have taken the course). But unless you know about the school and it's instructor and what it accomplishes, would you believe this ad? It is unfortunate that if you did not know it first hand, your spam filters would give the "yeh sure" response. This course delivers exactly what it says it does. If for nothing else but to learn the teaching methods, this would be a great course to take.

If you want to teach ESL, this is the **best** school in the world. Ok, I forgot to kill the adjective. Let me have a second chance.

If you invest the time and expense to take this course, you will qualify and have the ability to start teaching any second language. Don't take my word for it. Listen to what some recent graduates who have started schools have to say.