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# *Getting Rid of Old Habits for Better Language Fluency & Communication*

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Have you ever wondered why people or even perhaps our good selves, often make language errors due to old habits forming and the resistance to get rid of these? A quick example comes by way of this question. How often have you heard someone saying, "Repeat again"?

The thing is most of us are aware that this is inappropriate as it is redundant. Yet, many of us have gotten into the habit of saying this and the more we do this, the more we hear this, from ourselves and others, we get into the habit of saying it and almost believing in its truth. Hence, the moral of this is, in order to speak fluently for better communication, it is important to get rid of old habits, which we know to be erroneous and to embrace using phrases correctly. Habit forming takes time, but breaking an already established habit takes even more time and includes a proactive mind and the concerted effort, patience and endurance by an individual to achieve the desired result. This is a challenge for all of us, and if we want to change for better language fluency and communication, we can apply ourselves.

Another example is when even teachers say "Today, we are going to discuss about pollution". We all know that discuss is a word (verb, actually, but we're not going into grammar here) which is never followed by 'about' ( a preposition – again, we're not going into grammar here). In a way, one is repeating oneself as discussing implies talking 'about' something. Yet, we hear this in spoken language and tend to pick it up, so it becomes a part of our spoken language. Back to the moral of the story: We need to speak accurately, and one way is to get rid of old habits which display errors. In this case, knowing that an expression is wrong, yet using it habitually as if it were right, is a bad habit and becomes 'old' as we keep using it over the years. Therefore, it is time to be mindful of the way we speak to ensure that we correct ourselves instead of following our old ways of using inaccurate and even wrong expressions in spoken language.



When was the last time you heard someone mispronouncing the word "determine" to sound like "deter" and then "mine", as in a tin mine or the possessive pronoun mine? Many students mispronounce this word and sometimes, even teachers too. This could be due to listening to this countless times in which it becomes believed to be correct and then applied on a daily basis to form a habit. Hence, we get into the habit of mispronouncing words. However, once we know that this is incorrect, or when someone points it out to us, we need to work on it quickly with a decided effort, to break away from old habits which form stumbling blocks in the way of our language fluency and effective communication.

We will discuss more of these stumbling blocks in the next edition of the bulletin. For now, the authors have picked just two examples of how old habits need to change in order to make way for new ones to enable us to improve our language fluency and communication. One example touches on redundancy and the other, a common mispronunciation. Both can mar our oral presentations and communication while affecting the impressions we make on others listening to us.

We all can make changes to improve our language fluency and communication. What is important is to identify just two errors at any one time, as a start, that we know we are making. This may be due to our own realisation or if not, could have been pointed out to us by others. Then, we need to make a decided effort to work on this. Slowly, through conscious awareness and practice, we will all improve our language fluency and communication as we correct ourselves. We can work with a friend, a colleague or even on our own. Just work on these aspects in small bite sizes and give ourselves a time frame to work on these. Once confident, we can move to the next two errors and so forth. Just, make that decision to get rid of old habits that flaw our language fluency and communication – that is the first step to a successful journey.

The diagram below shows how old habits, those that cause us to speak incorrectly, can pull us down. In contrast, the new habits, those where language is used correctly, can actually enhance our communication skills and lives, causing us to rise and move upward.

Figure 1: The ultimate guide to give up your bad habits: The NIMBLE FOUNDATION BLOG-STAY SAFE



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