

9 Phrases That Secretly Destroy Your Credibility

(And what to say instead)

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1. "Does that make sense?"

Why it's harmful:

- It suggests you doubt your own clarity.
- It can sound condescending, assuming the other person doesn't follow.

What to say instead:

- "Do you have any questions?"
- "How does that land with you?"
- "Let me know if I can clarify anything."

2. "This might be a stupid question, but..."

Why it's harmful:

- It introduces your idea through negativity and self-doubt.
- It may lead people to devalue your input.

What to say instead:

- "I'd like to clarify..."
- "Here's a question for discussion..."
- "To make sure we're aligned, could we explore..."

3. "I'll try."

Why it's harmful:

- Shows uncertainty and lack of commitment.
- Leaves room for failure before you've even got started.

What to say instead:

- "I will."
- "Here's how I plan to approach this..."
- "I'm confident we can deliver [*specific goal*]."

4.

**"Sorry to bother you,
but..."**

Why it's harmful:

- Apologising unnecessarily reduces your confidence & authority.
- It positions you as a nuisance rather than a contributor.

What to say instead:

- "I'd like to discuss [*specific topic*]..."
- "When you have a moment, I'd love your input."
- "Following up to ensure we're aligned on..."

5. "Hopefully..."

Why it's harmful:

- Conveys a lack of control or having no faith in the outcomes.
- Can make you sound passive and uncertain.

What to say instead:

- "I'm confident that..."
- "We'll make sure it happens by [*specific time*]."
- "The plan is to achieve X through Y."

6. "I guess / I could be wrong, but..."

Why it's harmful:

- Undermines your expertise before sharing valuable insights.
- Makes others dismiss your perspective.

What to say instead:

- "Here's my perspective..."
- "Based on what I know..."
- "From my understanding, we should do..."

7.

"If that's okay..."

Why it's harmful:

- Implies a lack of authority or decisiveness.
- Positions your suggestion as optional or hesitant.

What to say instead:

- "Let's move forward with this approach."
- "I suggest we proceed by doing [*action*]."
- "This aligns with our goals, so let's do it."

8. "Let me know if you need anything."

Why it's harmful:

- Places the burden of follow-up on the other person.
- It's vague, non-committal & could indicate low engagement.

What to say instead:

- "What specific support do you need right now?"
- "I'm here to help with [*specific action*]."
- "Would it help if I handled [*specific task*]?"

9. "No offence, but..."

Why it's harmful:

- Signals what you're about to say will offend.
- Comes across as passive-aggressive, insincere or defensive.

What to say instead:

- "Here's some constructive feedback..."
- "I'd like to share my perspective on this..."
- "May I offer a different take on this?"

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