

Increasing Certainty in an Uncertain Economy

By Dean Savoca

Words create reality. Words can kill self-confidence, break relationships, spark fights, damage reputations and destroy organizations. Words can also awaken the spirit, create certainty, strengthen relationships and build organizations. Martin Luther King started a movement with the words, *"I have a dream..."*

Language is how we give meaning to our circumstances, ourselves and our future. What we say creates certainty or uncertainty. Be aware of the words that help you feel confident, empowered and certain. Be aware of the words that steal your confidence and create uncertainty.

Choose words to get the results you want.

What words do you choose to describe your circumstances?

When a reporter asked Thomas Edison how it felt to fail 2000 times before successfully inventing the light bulb, Edison said, "I never failed once. It just happened to be a 2000-step process." A key to his success was the meaning he gave to failure. Some women who leave their careers to raise their children describe this choice as a "sacrifice", while others call it an "investment in their children". Their choice of words reflects their fulfillment in the role they have chosen. We have unlimited options on how we describe our day: awful, bad, OK, good, excellent, extraordinary. How often is a day all terrible or all terrific? Not often. How we describe our day impacts how we feel. Using overly-dramatic words can increase stress and uncertainty.

The economy can be described as devastating or depressing. Others use words like challenging, interesting or opportunistic. What's the difference in mindset? Some may argue it's ignoring the reality of the economy, but how we feel and our mindset leads to our actions. Calling the economy depressing may lead to immobility -- calling the economy opportunistic has led some to take action and start a new business. Taking action changes our circumstances.

Recognize that circumstances will change and your choice of words can influence this change.

What words do you choose to describe yourself?

"Notice the difference between what happens when a man says to himself 'I have failed three times' and what happens when he says 'I am a failure.'" - S. I. Hayakawa (linguist, educator, U.S. Senator) Try it out. How do you feel when you use these two different phrases to describe yourself? One can give you certainty and energy to continue and the other may lead to uncertainty, self-doubt and giving up. The most powerful language we use is when we say "I am" something. Whatever words follow "I am" is getting locked in subconsciously as part of our identity of who we are. We will do whatever it takes to be consistent with who we think we are. Often this shows up as self-sabotage. You can say you are an outstanding parent or a lousy parent. Neither is true 100% of the time, but which one empowers you to be the parent you want to be? Choosing to say you are an outstanding parent empowers you to be one. Take a minute to finish the following sentence with the first five things to come to your mind.

I am _____.

Now go back and notice which words produced confidence and certainty. Which created uncertainty and drained your confidence?

A local Mary Kay cosmetics dealer who attended one of my trainings said, “I am the millionaire cosmetic diva”. When she used this language, she flipped her hair and put a smile on her face. For her, that declaration created confidence and certainty. It affected her performance and led to positive results in her business.

Be aware of the words you use to describe yourself.

What words do you choose to describe your future?

Martin Luther King said, “I have a dream.” These historic words created a vision that is being realized today. He stated a possibility for the future. John F. Kennedy, in 1960, used fourteen words that expressed a desired future; “We will have a man on the moon by the end of this decade.” And we did.

Organizations have vision statements that provide a foundation for decision making. The Cherry Creek Chamber of Commerce in Denver CO adopted a vision statement in 2006 of being a “*vibrant community for business success*” which included being debt free. These words provided direction resulting in certainty about the Chamber’s future that was soon realized.

Regardless of what's happening externally with the economy, we can create our future with the words we use. One way to increase your certainty is to use words to create what you want. Create a personal or professional vision statement that expresses the legacy you want to leave, or the vision you have for your business. Words create reality. They give meaning to our circumstances, ourselves and our future.

Follow these steps to increase certainty:

Step 1: Be aware of the words you use (especially “*I am*” language).

Step 2: Determine how you can transform the language that creates self-doubt and uncertainty to language that creates certainty (remember neither is true 100% of the time).

Step 3: Create a vision statement for your future.



Dean Savoca, M.Ed., BCC, CSP™ is *the* performance development partner for leaders who want highly-effective teams that are focused, aligned and inspired. Simply put, Dean helps leaders coach their people. A 25-year veteran of the meetings and events industry, Dean combines an early career in hospitality sales and operations with a Master’s Degree in Organizational Performance and Change, and has spent the last 15 years speaking, training and coaching on leadership and development. He helps people identify the core issues they face daily that impact performance development, people management and team alignment – and rallies them to action, *often right there in the room*. **The result is a better bottom line** – boosted by improved performance, higher productivity, and more cohesive teamwork. Dean is a board-certified coach and has conducted more than 10,000 executive coaching sessions. He is also a Certified Speaking Professional™, conferred by the National Speakers Association, and actively involved in several industry associations.