



IT'S LIKE DRIVING ME LIKE CRAZY!

By Dr. J. Mitchell Perry

It appears that the most contagious habit that is sweeping the country today is the use of the word "LIKE." It's a disease that is infecting everyone.

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I have been thinking and reflecting about how it all started... slow at first, back in the day. Then gradually increasing the infection to young people, to these days, like today, everyone and I mean like everyone is like speaking this way. Both genders from elementary school kids, to young adults, to middle-aged people, and even "distinguished" people, you know the like gray-haired set.

When did it like start? As far as I can remember, it started during the 1950's with "beatniks" like Maynard G. Krebs on the TV show "Dobie Gillis" where Maynard said with cool style in the coffee house, "It's like cool, man!"

Fast forward to the 1980's when young girls in San Fernando Valley became increasingly infected with a speech pattern called "Valley Speak" which became a 1983 movie "Valley Girl," followed by a hugely successful movie in 1995 called "Clueless." "Like I'm sure..."

What is mind boggling is how EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE SPEAKING THIS WAY! Watch TV morning shows such as "The Today Show," "Good Morning America," "the View," etc. Check out TV hosts, commentators, politicians, pundits, celebrities, entertainers, college professors, medical professionals, etc. It seems so chronic.

It's like everywhere!

Recently I was watching CNN and this woman commentator was complaining about a popular politician and she said, "There is like no level to which this guy will not stoop, to not like take responsibility for what he has like done."

AND I WAS LIKE WHAT?

LIKE is an irritating filler, and it makes people look and sound stupid.

It appears that the word LIKE is quickly replacing:

- *You know*
- *Um*
- *And um*
- *You understand*
- *You see what I'm saying?*
- *I'm just saying*
- *Right?*
- *Yah?*

LIKE can now be used in multiple ways (here are like just a few applications):

- A quotation highlighter - *"I was like I don't like think so."*
- A hyperbole amplifier - *"It was like bigger than 10 football fields!"*
- A warning to spare you more madness - *"I could so like say something now."*
- More madness to drive you insane -
 - *"It was like just the other day, and like, I was like minding my own business. And like out of the blue Randy said the most horrible like rude remarks to me. And I was like so offended. And then I was like 'I don't think so.'" And then I'm like I'm sure it was like I don't know, you know? So like what's up with him?"*
 - *"I'm so ready to be like done with him. So like YEAH."*

SO, HAVE I DRIVEN YOU INSANE YET?

As you read how often I used the word "LIKE," is it beginning to really irritate you? It is difficult enough for me to write this way, so I imagine by now it must be driving you out of your mind.

Recently I was in a conversation with a very educated person at a university, and he was completely unaware that he used the word "LIKE" eleven times in three minutes. I was counting and he was quite surprised when I told him the total.

Go to YouTube or Sirius radio and select any channel featuring comedians performing their set. Watch and listen. You will notice that most of them are using "LIKE" virtually all the time, certainly every fourth or fifth word.

The lesson?

Habits are very contagious just as fashion, trends, tastes, outlooks, preferences, speech patterns, vernacular, cliques, and states of mind create common routines. Most of those routines are seductive, unconscious, and reflecting the need for people to fit in and be LIKE everyone else. And, if everyone else is using "LIKE" constantly, and you are summarily unimpressed, then ask yourself if you really want to sound this way too.

What might you do to stop the "LIKE" habit?

You might ask someone close to you to start counting how often you use the word. It will be eye-opening when they report the totals. You also might ask your friend to raise their hand every time you say "LIKE." While this will be initially irritating and frustrating,

your awareness will go up and you will be more likely to erase the “LIKE” filler habit that makes you sound so brain damaged.

You will then start noticing how often everyone around you is using “LIKE” and you will probably stop yourself.

So, LIKE YEAH!

At your service,

Dr. J. Mitchell Perry