

Conquering Talkaholism

Fortunately, there are simple strategies to check the addiction once you know the reasons behind it. **BY LENN MILLBOWER**



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It happens during many training programs. The addiction takes hold. No one stops the destructive behavior. Instead, they ignore the addict. The addiction is talkaholism, and the addict is—more often than not—the trainer.

Fortunately, there are simple strategies to check the addiction. Let’s look at the reasons that fuel talkaholism and some specific strategies for controlling it.

Reason: Eagerness – Trainers often become trainers because of a passion for sharing expertise. When we share every nugget of our wisdom, our learners cannot discern which specific pieces of information are critical. They try to absorb everything and end up absorbing nothing.

Strategy: Timeliness – Self-edit your expertise. Give them only what they need, and only when they need it.

Reason: Ego – Some trainers love the spotlight. Training gives us a platform to stand on, and an audience that applauds.

Strategy: Humility – You are not the center of attention. Your learners should be in awe of your message, not you. Become one with your message.

Reason: Control – Some trainers like to be in control. Talking maintains that control. When the learners are talking, anything can, and often does, happen.

Strategy: Surrender – Adults need to control

an over-abundance of information and an under-allocation of time. This forces the trainer to deliver an “information dump.”

Strategy: Edit – Dumping is not learning. Learners must have time to absorb the content. Instead of canceling processing activities, ruthlessly self-edit your content.

Reason: Discernment – Many trainers cannot shut up. We talk about our children, spouses, ailments, and pets.

Strategy: Focus – Focus like a laser on your subject. If it’s off topic, don’t say it.

Reason: Preparation – Some trainers are overly confident. They either don’t have time to prepare or believe they can “wing it.”

Strategy: Practice – Winging it is not a winning strategy. You may get through it, and even be brilliant, but you also will miss important content. Rehearsal ensures flawless deliveries. It allows you to self-edit, to reason through what must be said, and to determine how to say it succinctly.

Reason: Boredom – Some trainers get bored repeating the same content over and over again.

Strategy: Refine – Trainer boredom does not equate to learner irrelevance. When you lose interest, refine your delivery, teach a different program, or transition to a different role.

Reason: Dictates – Organizations sometimes dictate trainers must speak specific, difficult-to-deliver, language.

Strategy: Participation – Get the learners involved. Have them read the language to you or cut the sentences into segments they must “puzzle” together. If all else fails, get through it as quickly as possible.

Addiction is easy. Self-discipline is not. Talking maintains order. Listening surrenders control. Who knows what they’ll say, or how long they’ll take saying it? “Talkaholic” is a term

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their own learning. Give them time and space to do it their way. By surrendering control you will, ironically, gain the control that comes with respect.

Reason: Time – Many training programs have

we trainers should own up to. Let’s force ourselves to travel down that road to recovery. Let’s do it, if not for us, then for the ones our addiction most affects: our learners. **E**