

Preface to the 3rd Edition

The principal animating force behind my writing this all-new version of “The Articulate Professional,” after a gap of over a dozen years, has been the deep appreciation for the previous edition still expressed by people in a breadth of professions and occupations. CEOs and other top executives, senior managers, salespersons, medical doctors, engineers and architects, attorneys, school teachers and administrators, college professors, other educators, and college and high school students... indeed, **people from all walks of life!** And speaking of school officials, I’ll never forget a phone call from a high school principal here in Houston, shortly after the publication of the first edition in 1993. “I’m carrying a copy of your book with me wherever I go (as a resource for emphasizing key points during meetings),” he said. I was immensely flattered, even if I felt that his actually carrying a copy everywhere he went was perhaps a bit excessive.

Before highlighting some of the numerous changes and enhancements in this new edition, let me first reassure users of previous versions that this book retains all of the chief attributes that readers said made the previous editions so useful. In fact, several entries now have more than the customary two *Workplace Examples*, which were the previous editions’ most popular feature; you will also find some illustrations of such workplace uses under *Other Examples*, in the guise of “this author saying: ...” or “an employee saying: ...” and so on.

To substantially increase the power of “The Articulate Professional,” I’ve dropped dozens of words that were featured in the 2nd edition because they had become relatively common during the past decade, and therefore justified substitution by entries that better met my criteria for inclusion. A word should be stirring, not very common, have the capacity to make an utterance more vivid and evocative and therefore more recallable, and above all, it must pass the most crucial test: **that the word be in the conversational vocabulary of America’s most articulate.**

A few of the 70+ words that have been deleted are: *affront, anecdotal, antipathy, conundrum, debunk, disavow, disingenuous, dogged, embolden, euphemism, foreshadow, impassioned, imperil, infinitesimal, onerous, oxymoron, palpable, pedestrian, plethora, squelch, tacit, tenet, trepidation, and untenable.*

Some of the 100+ entries that make their debut in “The Articulate Professional” are: *acerbic, atmospheric, automaton, balkanize, chimerical, defang, disabuse, ennui, epochal, equanimity, Faustian, fillip, gravitas, inimical, intemperate, laconic, meretricious, milieu, nostrum, obdurate, opprobrium, perfunctory, profligate, puppeteer, retrograde, sagacious, Sisyphian, soporific, supine, trenchant, unalloyed, verve, visceral, and zeitgeist.*

There is a new section devoted exclusively to **words of praise**. As I’m sure you too have observed, the typical praise both in the workplace and at social events--such as galas--is composed entirely of trite words and expressions and thus lacks pulse. Result: the praise delivered by a boss for one employee sounds no different than that for the next employee, as if the two were clones, leaving the person who is being praised underwhelmed and disillusioned. Worse, it’s a wasted opportunity to inspire the employee. While there are dozens of words

scattered throughout the book that can be used to commend someone memorably--as was the case in the previous editions--the idea of adding a section devoted solely to certain “choice” words for lauding somebody crystallized shortly after a reader emailed me. **Eric Opp**, a manager for Sterling Commerce, contacted me to express his frustration at not easily finding strong and fresh words to extol the talents of his employees. The enlightened Mr. Opp is clearly someone who realizes how much more effective praise can be if it’s not only genuine and sincere, but also does not come across as humdrum and hackneyed.

Another noteworthy enhancement is my having squeezed in several hundred additional *Other Examples* so that you can accelerate your “owning” of a featured word, and begin employing it in conversation almost immediately.

Finally, as in the past, every page has two or more examples linked to famous (or infamous) persons, events, organizations, or other entities. The purpose is to help make a word easier to internalize and cement into your memory. However, I must emphatically state that such examples are not meant to endorse, even in the remotest sense, any particular side in the deep and harsh political divide that currently characterizes our nation. I am an independent and strive to keep my illustrations completely apolitical.

I’m extremely grateful to **Susan Breeden** and **Mary Ellis** for their editorial assistance. Their sharp minds and keen eyes have helped ensure that grammar and other errors are kept to an absolute minimum. Still, if you the reader notice any, don’t hesitate to let me know by picking up the phone or emailing me.

As I continue my voyage to identify words that ought to be featured in “The Articulate Professional” or **its upcoming sequel, “The Articulate Professional II,”** your suggestions regarding which ones ought to be added--or deleted--are most welcome.

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