



THE WORDS THAT SHRINK YOU

The language we use to describe ourselves and others.

You never want to say, “Oh, I'm not being neurotic.” Never. You do not defend that. You tell them what you are, hold it, and just continue.

A Note From Lori & Jett

Language isn't just communication. It's instruction. The words we use determine how people see us and eventually how we see ourselves. This guide isn't about policing language. It's about recognizing when accurate behavior has been relabeled as a flaw. Our hope is that this becomes something you come back to whenever you hear these words directed toward yourself or someone you love.

The four moves

1. **Do not defend the label.**
2. Give them back the language.
3. Tell them what you are.
4. Hold it, and just continue.

Three kinds of diminishing language

The group	What it sounds like
1. Undermine and diminish competence	Bossy, aggressive, difficult, abrasive, demanding, overbearing, domineering, pushy, blunt
2. Make you seem childlike	Feisty, spunky, sassy, dear, young lady, go-getter
3. Weaponize emotion	Emotional, neurotic, paranoid, touchy, hysterical, uptight, spiral

Jett's reframe list

Instead of	Try
Opinionated	Prepared. Well researched.
Neurotic, paranoid	Risk aware. Forward thinking. Meticulous. Driven.
Hyper	Energized. Highly organized. A critical thinker.
Bossy	Decisive. Driven. Strategic. Responsible.
Too much, OTT	Meticulous. Thorough. A high achiever.
Demanding	Uncompromising. Driven. You have standards.
Emotional	Empathetic. Thoughtful. Passionate. Committed.
Difficult	High standards. Meticulous. You have expectations.

SAY IT OUT LOUD

Give Them Back The Language

Keep it on your phone. You don't want to turn this into a confrontation. You want to turn it into a lesson, with some warmth, but certainly being firm.

You're being neurotic, in a business environment

- “What you mean is I'm being thorough and meticulous and forward-thinking.”
- “Interesting. I call it being diligent.” And then just continue.
- “I'll take confident and diligent, thank you.”

You're being neurotic, in a personal relationship

- “I'm not gonna accept that label. I'm being thorough. Now let's talk about this.”
- “You know what? That word is designed to end a conversation. This one's just beginning.”

You're being emotional

- “I notice that word comes up when women speak with conviction. I'll take it as a sign that I'm being heard.”
- “I have feelings about this because it really matters. This is not a flaw, it's a human response.”
- “What would a non-emotional version of this conversation look like to you?”
- “Let's table the personality assessment and just stay with the issue.”

Spunky, feisty, sassy

- “I'll take confident and direct, and thank you.”

When someone throws a word at your work

- “Well, let's unpack that. Stupid means dumb. This is not a dumb idea. Tell me why you don't like us. Help us understand.”

You're so demanding

- “I'm driven, yeah, and I love my job. Okay, as I was saying, here's what we need to do next.”

Stop prefacing

Look, don't think I'm pushy, but. I'm not trying to be controlling. This is not my strength, but. This isn't my area of expertise. When you preface an idea with that kind of language, who is going to take you seriously when you can't take yourself seriously?

Yes, I've got views. Yes, I have experience. Yes, I lead. Watch me.