Feedback and Lead-In Words

At TranscribeMe, we define feedback words as "active-listening" responses. They are words used by one speaker with the sole purpose of conveying to another speaker that he or she is still listening, understands, and as encouragement for the other speaker to continue. Common feedback words are *okay*, *right*, *got it*, and *yeah*.

We REMOVE feedback when it:
- Sits on a line by itself
- Isn't acknowledged by anyone
- Adds no meaning and does not directly comment on the topic at hand

> I went to the store--
> Right.
> --and forgot my list.
> Yeah.
> So I didn't--
> Okay.
> --get everything I needed.
> Right. Yeah. Okay. I hate when I do that.

In the above example, when *Right*, *Yeah*, and *Okay* are spoken by the second speaker (S2) in the midst of the main speaker's speech and are the *only* thing said, they are feedback words and so we remove them. In the last line, however, when S2 continues after voicing these same words, they become important and every single one of them stays in. These are called **lead-in words**:

> I went to the store and forgot my list. So I didn't get everything I needed.
> Right. Yeah. Okay. I hate when I do that.

Lead-in Words

Lead-in words are the same words often used as feedback words; however, they are not sprinkled in as interruptions. There are people who just keep pouring forth these little utterances while they are gathering their thoughts. BUT, if they go on to say something of substance, you must include every word, even if it looks something like this:

> Right. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. No. Right. Got it. Interesting. Right, right, right. My next question is, how can you stand to listen to me?

They usually come at the tail end of what the other speaker is saying and are often in rapid succession and immediately followed by what that person is going to say. Yes, a lot of times they are completely unnecessary since usually what follows confirms either way. However, we don't want to overly clean up the text. That would be the difference between Clean Verbatim and Edited Verbatim. We have found that our clients tend to like a more-is-better approach. So, although it grates on your nerves, we leave them in.

A bit of a judgment call, yes. But once you've heard both feedback words and lead-in words, you can usually tell the difference.

Special Note for QAs and Future QAs

Remember that timestamps are timed when the first word is uttered *for that speaker's line*. If the speaker has false starts or filler words at the beginning of the line, the timestamp will still be inserted at the first utterance, even if those words are not included in the written transcript. So we timestamp filler words or false starts as the first utterance, even if it is something we would omit in the transcript.

However, in Clean Verbatim, **we ignore feedback words entirely.** Do not transcribe *or stamp* feedback words. This makes for a cleaner text.

> So that's the difference between feedback words and lead-in words.
> Okay. Okay. Right. Yeah, that makes total sense, and I really think it has helped to hone my skills.