

SPEAK TRUTH

With Confidence



1. Get Clear

Get clear about your main point, your top priorities, and precisely what you want.

- If pointing out a problem, find and describe its root cause and possible solutions..
- If driving change, bring data and stories that illustrate problems with the current state and how the change will improve things and benefit others.
- Often those in authority will approve a pilot more readily than an outright change. So, perhaps start by offering a well-thought-out experiment with a specific time to review and re-consider.



2. Explore Multiple Perspectives

Remember, everyone in an organization has their own lenses. What seems obvious, essential, or urgent to you may not be to someone else. So when sharing truth, spend a moment in the shoes of your audience.

- What key responsibilities, interests, expectations, or accountabilities most influence your audience? How are they similar to or different from yours?
- How might they respond or react to your voice? Why?
- How can you convey that you understand their pressures?
- Use that information to shape your message's timing, content, and approach.



3. Be Brave

Speaking your truth, especially truth to power, is sometimes risky and rarely easy or comfortable. So build your courage.

- Name for yourself your worst fears to pinpoint and soften their grip. Do you fear opposition? Getting ignored? Blame? Retaliation? Dismissal? Accountability without authority? Get specific.
- Sort out best you can if your fears are real in this moment or fueled by past experiences or vague “what if’s?” Stay present in the present.
- Remember, there’s no “right” type of courage. Voices are not always welcomed, and we each face different risks. So be proud of any and all courage. Nothing done bravely is too “small.”

SPEAK TRUTH

With Confidence



4. Use the Right Message, Method, and Timing

Your message has the best chance of landing if you strategize and prepare.

A. Craft the best message to:

- Capture your clearest points.
- Acknowledge and respect the interests of your audience.
- Allow you to stay brave.

B. Determine the best method:

- Planned or spontaneous conversation?
- Planned agenda item or separate dedicated meeting?
- Written with a follow-up conversation or meeting?
- Public or private? (A wise general rule is to praise in public and bring up challenges in private.)

C. Choose the best available time:

- When will your audience have the depth of attention you desire?
- Are they at their best first, middle, or last part of the workday?
- Be mindful that your urgency might not be theirs. Sometimes it's best to wait for circumstances to lend fertile ground for the topic; sometimes, "now" is right no matter what. Be strategic.



5. Inform, Compromise, Collaborate, or All Three

Know how to engage and pivot so you can pursue the best impact for the topic at hand.

- Sometimes you're sharing hard information because others need to know, with or without your continued involvement. Be aware you may not be told about next steps or decisions.
- Sometimes you're sharing challenging information or ideas and will be involved in subsequent activities. Be ready for that.
- Pursue a compromise when the best course is for everyone to negotiate, give, and take around their respective interests.
- Collaborate if the best outcome is realized when people (including you) transcend individual interests and create solutions together.