



Quick Reference Guide

The Art of Interruption



Reclaim Your Voice

Think about the last time you were cut off mid-sentence, or watched someone else get shut down, or waited...and waited...for a chance to jump in—that never came.

It happens in every group. Talking over, cutting off, and exclusion are common elements of many conversations. Learning to interrupt well and reclaim your vocal space is vital. **Used well, interruptions allow us to connect, affirm, and create space for ideas to thrive.**

Interruption is a natural part of most conversations and is a key driver of **Voice Equity**.




What is Voice Equity? Voice Equity means **Equal Opportunity for Contribution (E.O.C.)**—the chance to share ideas, be heard, and contribute meaningfully.

This guide gives you the tools to advocate for Voice Equity and transform interruption into influence—on behalf of yourself and others. Because your voice is your influence. And interrupting with finesse? That's vocal influence in action.

Reclaiming is not an interruption—it's a response to one.

When someone interrupts to silence or diminish you, calmly reassert your right to finish.

What to Say:

-  "Excuse me, Daya, I'd like to finish." Or, "If I could finish."
-  "Thank you, Sandy. I'll finish this thought, then we can move on."
-  "This is important. I'll finish, then happily yield the floor."

Your Voice is Your Influence
Keynotes | Workshops | Corporate Retreats

The Five Types of Strategic Interruption

Start with their name. The human brain is wired to respond to our own name, which creates a pause and gives you the floor. From there, you can choose one of four approaches:

1. 🎯 Distill — Summarize for Clarity

When to use: Cut through confusion and align the group

Say this:

- "It sounds like what you're saying is [...]. Do I have that right?"
- "If I understand you correctly, you're saying [...]. Is that correct?"

2. 🔄 Redirect — Bring Focus Back

When to use: Prevent drift and stay on agenda

Say this:

- "Thank you for your input. For now, let's return to..."
- "Let's pause on that for now, and stay focused on..."

3. ▶️ Move On — Prevent Overextension

When to use: Avoid fatigue and signal decisiveness

Say this:

- "We've explored this thoroughly. Let's take the next step."
- "I wish I had time to hear more, but I need to..."

4. ⏸️ Pause and Play

When to use: To pause the conversation in order to go deeper, then pick up where you left off.

Say this:

- "Could we pause for a moment? I'd like to focus on something you just mentioned."





5. 🗨️ On Behalf — Amplify Others

When to use: Make space for silenced voices


Say this:

- "Priya was saying something important. Priya, please continue."
- "I'd like to hear what Sarah was about to say."

Practical Tactics for Holding Your Ground

Tactic	How to Do It
 Raise volume, not pitch	Project through breath and vocal strength
 Check your face and tone	Stay calm, respectful, and assertive
 Take up space	Use gestures, posture, and presence
 Keep talking	When two voices collide, one yields. Let it be them.

No Need to Ask Permission—speak with a calm, confident expression and tone:

-  "Can I please finish?" or "Please let me finish."

Breaking Into Conversations (Networking & Social Settings)

Want to join in but no gap? Quick self-check: Am I giving space too? If yes, speakup—start with a name, even if you overlap. It can feel extremely awkward, but you are kindly extending more balance to the conversation.

Use these phrases:

- "Sandy, could we circle back to what you said about XYZ? I'm curious about..."
- "Hey everyone, I'd love to share my thoughts on this." Then keep going!

Said with warmth and enthusiasm, this signals engagement—not rudeness.

Important Facts that Influence Interruption

- A monologue is defined as **90 seconds** - staying concise reduces interruption risk
- Average speaking time before interruption in meetings: **2 minutes 51 seconds**
- Women are interrupted at a rate **3x higher** than men
- In mixed groups, gender is **30x more predictive** of interruption than seniority or title

Example: Even Supreme Court Justices aren't immune: [A 2015 study](#) noted that 65% of all interruptions were directed to the three female justices from male peers and subordinates.

Building a Culture of Voice Equity

In your team or organization:

- ✓ Establish meeting norms that protect airtime
- ✓ Rotate facilitators to distribute power
- ✓ Audit airtime for balanced participation
- ✓ Train leaders in the art of interruption with finesse
- ✓ Teach and model brevity to maximize collective contribution

Try opening meetings with: "In the spirit of Voice Equity, let's aim to keep our contributions brief to make room for others and keep us on schedule."

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Your Action Plan

This week, practice:

1. One strategic interruption (Distill, Redirect, Move On, or On Behalf)
2. Reclaiming your voice when interrupted
3. Breaking into one conversation where you've been silent
4. Making your point with concision

The Bottom Line

Voice Equity is about creating space where everyone's contributions matter—including yours. **Your Voice is Your Influence. Use it to lift yourself and others.**

About the Author

Rebecca P. Murray is a dynamic communication expert and vocal influence strategist, empowering professionals in construction, technology, and manufacturing to speak with confidence, lead with clarity, and show up with authority.

Through workshops and keynotes, she combines expertise in applied behavior science, technology, and theater to help professionals communicate more effectively, get to the point quickly, and use their voice to lead with influence—in meetings, on stages, or navigating challenging conversations.

A dedicated champion for **Voice Equity**, Rebecca teaches clients how to create collaborative spaces where every voice is heard, valued, and respected—because communication is more than just what you say. It's how you say it. And how you **sound** when you say it.

Let's Connect



 RPM@rebeccapmurray.com
 www.rebeccapmurray.com
 [@rebeccapmurray](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rebeccapmurray)
 360-854-8518



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