

When Your Voice Meets the Moment

A Quick Guide to Better Conversations and Meetings

Speaking up has consequences. Silence does too.

We cannot always predict what will happen when we speak up. But we can be more intentional about how we meet the moment — whether we have a week to prepare or three seconds to decide.

Say It Clean

Make Space

Invite Contribution

FIRST, DECIDE

Ask yourself:

- Whose conversation is this?*
- Does this moment call for my voice?*
- What could speaking up cost?*
- What could silence cost?*

There is not always a perfect answer. Make the best decision you can with the information, influence and agency you have in the moment.

WHEN YOU CAN PREPARE

- 1 Know your point.**
Decide what actually needs to be said.
- 2 Steady yourself.**
Calm the body, warm the voice and put poise first.
- 3 Set the frame.**
Let the other person know you will be brief and that you want their response.
"I just need a couple of minutes, and then I really want your take."
- 4 Plan for interruption or derailment.**
Protect your space without surrendering your poise.
"I would like to finish, and then I would love your input."
- 5 Pause on purpose.**
If necessary, write PAUSE or STOP TALKING directly into your notes.

WHEN IT HAPPENS IN THE MOMENT

YOU WILL NOT ALWAYS HAVE TIME TO PREPARE

- Someone interrupts.
- Someone rambles.
- A colleague's contribution gets lost.
- The conversation gets derailed.
- An important idea is dismissed before it is considered.

Ask yourself: Does this moment call for my voice?

Then return to the same playbook:

Say it clean.

Get to the point.

Make space.

Protect your own contribution — or someone else's.

Invite contribution.

Return the floor and listen.

KEEP VOICE EQUITY IN MIND

Voice Equity = Equal Opportunity for Contribution

It does not mean equal talk time.

It means creating enough conversational space for the thinking in the room to surface — while recognizing that sometimes we need to take space, sometimes we need to make space, and sometimes we need to protect it for someone else.

WHY IT MATTERS

Meetings are not simply places where people talk. They are where organizations are supposed to turn:



When voices disappear, conversations derail, or great thinking never receives airtime, that chain breaks. The goal is not more talking. It is to:

Hear Better Thinking

Have Better Conversations

Make Better Decisions

Prepare when you can. Embody it when you cannot. And when the moment calls for your voice:

SAY IT CLEAN • MAKE SPACE • INVITE CONTRIBUTION