

EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY

A Guide to Mastering Impactful
Communication at Work

5 KEY STEPS

to Speaking Up with 40+ Scripts and
Phrases You Can Use Today



SPEAK UP

5 KEY STEPS:

1. KEEP YOUR POWER

How are you contributing to undermining yourself at work?

2. SAY SOMETHING INSTEAD OF NOTHING

A gentle way to say something can actually be quite powerful

3. BUILD ON YOUR TRUTH-TELLING SKILLS

Making an impact depends on knowing how to deliver your truth

4. STANDING IN YOUR POWER

Learn to recognize your power, use it appropriately, and connect more deeply with others

5. PROACTIVELY SET BOUNDARIES

The best defense is a good offense

WELCOME

Being able to express yourself in a way that is well-received by others at work helps you feel less drained and more effective.

You can't make the impact you want without mastering the communication skills that get others to really hear you.

While a lot of work cultures can be challenging, minimizing the voices of the most competent, there are things you can do to improve your situation and feel better about yourself and your work.

"A confident person - knowing and believing in her identity - carries tools, not weapons. A confident person does not need to one-up anyone else. A confident person can be present to others, hear his or her perspectives, and integrate those views in ways that create value for everyone." Amy Cuddy, *Presence*.

Here is what to DO and SAY to be impactful at work and feel the confidence you deserve.

Need help? Where to find us?

Falmouth, ME is our stomping grounds, but we offer in-person and teletherapy sessions and workshops state-wide (and beyond) for adults and employers. Book a [free 15-min consult!](#)

HANNAH CURTIS, LCSW, FOUNDER



New Approaches

FIND YOUR WAY

STEP 1: KEEP YOUR POWER

The first thing you need to assess is: How are you contributing to undermining yourself at work?

Sneaky ways you give away your power at work include:

- Not saying how you feel
- Not setting limits
- Putting others needs always before your own
- Avoiding discomfort
- Undervaluing your time, skills, expertise
- Believing everyone else knows better
- Inappropriate guilt
- Being defensive
- Avoidance
- Thinking your words don't matter

If you want to feel confident, speak up, be respected, say the truth, be a force for positive change, you have to use your power.

STEP 2: SAY SOMETHING INSTEAD OF NOTHING

Instead of staying nothing, try a very gentle phrase, that lets people know you have another way of seeing a situation or that you are not in agreement.

A gentle way to say something can actually be quite powerful.

Instead of your silence, try:

“I wonder if...”

“I am curious about...”

“What if...”

“I wonder how it would be to...”

“Have we considered...”

STEP 3: BUILD ON YOUR TRUTH-TELLING SKILLS



What I know for sure, is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have. - Oprah

Being someone who speaks up and uses her power, who consistently speaks the truth at work (and beyond) starts with having a connection-first mindset and use of language. Making an impact depends on knowing how to deliver your truth.

Here are some top skills of powerful, truth-telling communicators:

1. Listening- because you really want to hear another's perspective.
2. Offering your viewpoint, saying, "May I offer my perspective?"
3. Being open to the fact that there are always multiple points of view, many solutions.
"My view is..."
4. Standing for something, instead of always against something or criticizing. "I believe in..." versus "That solution is foolish/won't work/isn't valid."
5. Validation- acknowledging the other person's feelings, without agreeing or disagreeing, but letting them know you see, hear, and recognize how they feel.

"I can see that you are feeling..."

"I hear that this is important to you..."

"I recognize that this is might feel ___ for you."

Truth-tellers look for opportunities to truly connect on a deeper level, by doing the hard work of listening and also sharing from a place of experience and values.

Think of a way to bring these skills to your workday tomorrow. Where can you add these phrases each and every day?



STEP 4: STANDING IN YOUR POWER

To be effective at communicating, it's best to be ready to know how to respond to push-back, steam-rolling, gaslighting, escalation, and other conflict-provoking behaviors.

Being able to recognize your power, use it appropriately, connect more deeply with others, and be a reliable and honest truth-teller will help make communicating easier. Nevertheless, there will always be others with difficult behaviors. You cannot let them silence you or take up your space.

I've put together the most effective skills for you right here. You won't "win" arguments, but you can re-frame conflicts and continue to stay in your power- that is the goal.

Print these responses and keep them where you can look at them frequently. Having some go-to scripts can help you feel more confident and stop losing your power by avoiding conflict.

Step out the content of what is being discussed, and observe the dynamic of how it is being discussed.

It sounds like:

"I'm noticing that we seem to be stuck."

"I'm aware that I'm tense and I need to take a break."

"I'm curious about why this is feeling so contentious right now."

"I'm noticing that you seem angry, can we talk about that?"

"It seems like this may not be a productive time to talk, we seem unfocused."

"I'm wondering why we are talking so loud right now."

Hand it back.

Call it out when somebody tries to give you something that it is not yours to own.

Especially effective for statements like:

"You are..."

"You need to..."

"You should..."

Here's what it sounds like:

"That's your opinion"

"That part is your responsibility."

"That is your perspective."

"That's not a priority for me."

"That doesn't work for me."

"I hear your feedback."

The awkwardly long silence.

Be very slow to respond. Allow the other person to feel the weight of what they said. Allow them to sweat what you might say...or not.

Slowing it down is a powerful way to respond. It shows that you will deal with this in your own time and in your own way, and not let them out of what they just said.

You can also, after a very long pause, give a very short (unsatisfying) answer, like “okay” or “I see.”

This is powerful because the other person was banking on you to have an emotional response, and you are depriving them of it. The emotion is left sitting over there with them.

Make them do the work.

Often people want to bait us emotionally. It's best not to be reactive- that is a powerless, defensive position.

Make them expose their own faulty logic, lack of thought, or ill intention by asking very matter-of-fact questions and being open to what they are saying.

Here's what this sounds like:

“Can you tell me more about how you came to that conclusion?”

“You lost me there for a second, can you tell me that one more time?”

“Help me understand how you arrived there, I'm lost.”

“I want to really understand, can you help me with what your position is on this?”

“I'm hearing _____ on one hand but then I hear you say _____ on the other, those feel like two different messages, so can help me understand how they work together?”

Perfect your conversation enders.

You need some good one-liners to end unproductive conversations (or people talking at you).

“I'm out of time.”

“That doesn't work for me.”

“I need to leave now.”

“Let me stop you there, I have to move on now.”

“I'm not interested.”

“I need to be done with this conversation now.”

“We can continue this when we meet next, but I'm out of time.”

“That's a no for me.”

