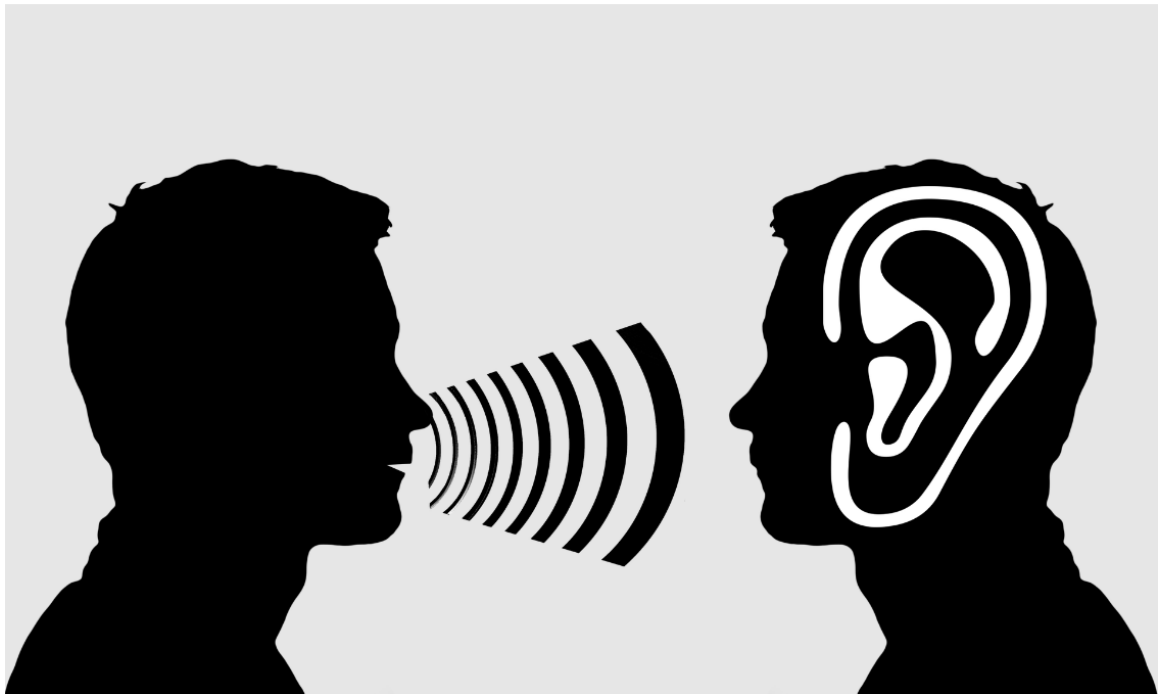


# Speaking Up and Listening Up

## Questions to Help



## Coaching questions for those wishing to Speak Up

In this section we consider the areas of:

- Outcome:* being clear about what outcome is intended / desired from speaking up
- Energy & Intention:* being clear about your motivation for speaking up
- Consequences:* being clear about the consequences of speaking up
- Responsibility:* being clear about why it needs to be you doing the speaking up
- Who & How:* being clear about who needs to be spoken to, and how they need to be spoken to
- Preparation & Support:* being clear about how to get ready for the required conversation

By considering these questions you give yourself the best chance of speaking up well.

Sometime's it's useful to think about the questions, and your responses, with a trusted colleague or friend.

Practicing what you are going to say , and saying it out loud, can help to build your confidence in speaking up.

**a) Outcome – being clear about what outcome is intended/desired from speaking up**

- What's the one message (in a single sentence) you want to be heard?
- What's the feeling you want the person you've spoken to, to be left with?
- What's the impression of you, you want to leave with the person you've spoken to?

**b) Energy & Intention – being clear about your motivation for speaking up**

- What's your intention in speaking up?
- How much do you care about speaking up or not?
- What agenda do you have? What can be acknowledged and what needs to remain private?
- Are you advocating or inquiring?
- What will be the counter-arguments?
- If asked, what solution/next step are you recommending?
- What level of emotion is useful for you to express?

**c) Consequences – being clear about the consequences of speaking up**

- What level of personal risk do you imagine comes with speaking up to this person on this topic?
- What is the realistic level of personal risk of you speaking up?
- How have people who have spoken up been treated in the past?
- Who is impacted by you speaking up?
- What are the implications of not speaking up?

**d) Responsibility – being clear about why it needs to be you doing the speaking up**

- Why should you be the one to speak up? Is there someone better?
- What sources of power do you have?
- Are you the only person saying this?
- Are you speaking for yourself or on behalf of many?

**e) Who & How – being clear about who needs to be spoken to and how they need to be spoken to**

- Given your intention and desired outcome from speaking up, who needs to hear you and who can hear you?
- Who do you want to speak to – and how is this different from who you need to speak to?
- What are the current preoccupations of the people you need to speak to – and how does what you want to say fit or not fit?
- What is it like to be the person you need to speak to?
- When and where is best to speak up? Is this a formal or informal conversation?
- What's the best way of expressing your insight? What language do you need to use to be heard?

**f) Preparation & Support – being clear about how to get ready for the required conversation**

- What experience do you have to draw on of successfully speaking up? What were you telling yourself? How did you feel? What did you learn?
- Whose and what support do you need?
- What evidence do you need and how does it need to be presented?
- Who will rehearse with you?

## Coaching questions for those wishing to enable others to Speak Up to Them

In this section we consider the areas of:

*So What?:* being clear about whether or not you value others speaking up to you

*Reputation:* being clear about your track record for openness

*Identity:* being aware of how much being right is part of who you are

*Truth Network:* identifying whether you have a social context that will help you stay open to others

*Current Practice:* paying attention to how you expect people to speak to you

*Levelling the Playing Field:* taking steps to reduce differences in hierarchical status

*Owning Status:* being clear about what your status is and its implications for working with an organisational perspective

*Blindspots:* being aware of who and what you find difficult to hear

By considering these questions, you can help to create an environment and culture where people will find it easier to speak up to you.

Sometimes it's useful to think about the questions, and your responses, with a trusted colleague or friend, or a coach.

Perhaps your answers will identify some opportunities for development.

**a) So What? – being clear about whether or not you value others speaking up to you**

- What are the consequences of people not speaking openly to you?
- What are you missing by only listening to the people you do?
- What do others know more about than you? And do you care?

**b) Reputation – being clear about your track record for openness**

- Do you have a reputation for being open? How do you know this?
- How do you help people speak-up well?
- Reflecting on times you've been challenged in the past – how did you respond and how might you have left that person feeling and thinking?
- What is your spontaneous emotional response to being challenged and how do you manage it?

**c) Identity – being aware of how much being right is part of who you are**

- What assumptions do you hold about being a leader and how all knowing they need to be?
- How does 'not knowing' make you feel as a leader?
- How does 'making mistakes' fit with your version of being a leader?

**d) Truth Network – identifying whether you have a social context that will help you stay open to others**

- Whose opinion counts to you?
- Who do you need to bring in to help you hear?
- Who can speak truthfully to you, and what's their agenda?
- How will you know if people are being straight with you?

**e) Current Practice – paying attention to how you expect people to speak to you**

- Do you expect people to follow formal communications protocols when speaking up to you?
- How can people indirectly and/or informally communicate their views to you?
- To what extent do people challenge you currently and in what forums?
- What are the best forums for people to speak openly to you? Is this best from your perspective or theirs?

**f) Levelling the Playing Field – taking steps to reduce differences in hierarchical status**

- What do you do to make people feel at the same (or closer to the) status level as you?
- How do you make others feel important, comfortable and significant?
- How do you signal to others that you are open to what they have to say?
- How do you phrase your questions and invitations so that people feel able to open up to you?

**g) Owning Status – being clear about what your status is and its implications for working with an organizational perspective**

- What sources of power are you seen to have by others? What are the implications of this for how they see your status and power?
- What can and can't be said to you in confidence?
- Do you know how not to hear something?

**h) Blindspots – being aware of who and what you find difficult to hear**

- What sort of data are you open and not open to?
- What are the things that you have already made up your mind about and are not open to having changed?
- What does it take for you to change your mind?
- What's your professional bias in terms of what type of organizational information you value most highly (e.g. financial / operational / strategic / people information)?
- What's your personal bias in terms of what sorts of people you prefer to listen to?