



Breaking Through Bias

Interruption Tip Sheet

Preventing Interruptions

- Remain confident
- Ignore signals that someone wants to interrupt you
- Don't look at people who want to interrupt you
- Use non-verbal behavior that shows you are in control (think power posing)
- Don't pause in a way that provides others with the opportunity to interrupt you
- Keep your volume up
- Form alliances and agree to "protect" each other at the meeting (like the women on Obama's staff)
 - If one of you is interrupted, have the other say, "I'd like to hear what she has to say," or "I want to hear this idea"
 - Speak up for others who are interrupted; it is harder for someone to take control from a speaker when there are two people to contend with
- Talk with other participants before the meeting to share and discuss your ideas; develop a strategy to make your points without interrupting one another

Dealing with Interruptions

- If the interrupter is more senior to you, you can use an approach such as: "Joe, would you mind if I finished my point? It will only take a minute..."
- Depending on the context, if a person routinely interrupts you, a firm but still pleasant tone may be justified. In this case, you may use language such as: "Excuse me, Jason, I am not finished yet. The point I was about to make is..." or "Justin, I'd appreciate you not interrupting me. You can speak when I am finished."
- Don't forget the power of your coping sense of humor. Even a wry smile can help you stay focused on your objective of keeping the floor.