

MAINTAINING THE FLOOR

These exercises were inspired by Veronica Rueckert, from her book, "Outspoken".

- Decide who is person A and who is B.
 - Take a moment to learn your script before you do each exercise.
 - Perform each exercise.
 - Then, start back at 1 and switch roles. (A becomes B).
- You can say whatever you like, but I've provided a script so you can focus on the technic without worrying so much about the content of what you are saying.

In both Parts 1 and 2, the objective of **Person A** is to have the floor. Think of A as the one who normally has difficulty maintaining the floor, while **Person B** normally effortlessly maintains the floor.

Allow up to 30 minutes, but you will probably finish sooner. Use the extra time to discuss what you think, then do the exercises again for practice. If you are feeling courageous, you can try having a real conversation. Choose a topic (thoughts about a tv show, an artist, a musician-anything you both find interesting) Please keep politics and religion out of the mix. Role play as A and B, utilizing the technics as they may naturally apply. Have fun!

PART 1-HOW TO NOT BE INTERRUPTED

In Part 1, **Person B** is the interrupter, while **Person A** works to maintain the floor.

1. The Snapback

Person A (PA)-is speaking, **Person B (PB)** rudely interrupts.

PA-“I believe that once upon a time, dinosaurs were fairies and”

PB-(interrupt!) “I think that dinosaurs...”

PA-hold up one finger and say “I want to finish this thought....Dinosaurs were fairies and had magical powers.”

2. Boardroom Chicken

PA-is speaking, **PB** rudely interrupts, **PA** continues and speaks louder without stopping..

PA-“I believe that once upon a time,

PB-“I think that..”

PA-(louder, continues thought) “Dinosaurs were fairies and had magical powers”

3. The Nuclear Option

PA-is speaking, **Partner B (PB)** rudely interrupts and continues talking, **PA** waits for a pause, then jumps back in.

PA-“I believe that once upon a time, dinosaurs were fairies...”

PB-“I think that dinosaurs were often misunderstood, and were quite gentle and kind unless they were hungry.”

PA -“B, you interrupted me. Let me pick up...dinosaurs were fairies and had magical powers.”

4. Engage Your Allies

Here, A and B are teaming up. This is useful in group situations-**B jumps in and says “I was really interested in what A had to say”**. People appreciate help and will often return the favor. You would need a 3rd person to do this exercise properly. For now, just pretend 😊

PA-“I believe that once upon a time, dinosaurs were fairies and...”

(imaginary interruption-**PB**-clap your hands twice!)

PB-“I was really interested to hear the rest of what A had to say”

PA-“Thank you, B. So, they were fairies and they had magical powers.”

PART 2-HOW TO INTERRUPT

In Part 2, **Partner A** interrupts **B** to gain control of the floor.

1. The Blade

PB-begins talking. **PA** waits for a slight pause and jumps in. **PA** will speak louder than **PB**, and jump in quickly and energetically.

PB-“I believe that once upon a time, dinosaurs were fairies and they had magical powers and furthermore they liked to plant flowers because flowers are beautiful...”

PB- “I’m going to jump in here. Flowers are definitely beautiful but with all due respect, dinosaurs didn’t care about aesthetics.”

2. Broken Record

PB is speaking and **PA** breaks in, using a quick repetitive and percussive phrase.

PB-“I believe that once upon a time, dinosaurs were fairies and they had magical powers and furthermore (*keep talking as **PA** tries to interrupt) they liked to plant flowers because flowers are beautiful...”

PA- “I’m gonna I’m gonna I’m gonna (get louder) I’M GONNA I’M GONNA I’M GONNA jump in. Dinosaurs are extinct, and it’s fun to talk about them, but can we address the current dilemma of climate change? ”

PB-“They are important because if we can understand why they became extinct, (PB Start here!) then we can understand more about how to prepare for what might come next for humans and...”

PA-“Let me Let me Let me LET ME LET ME pick up-I agree that it’s important to discuss why they became extinct and but do you sincerely believe dinosaurs were fairies with magical powers?”