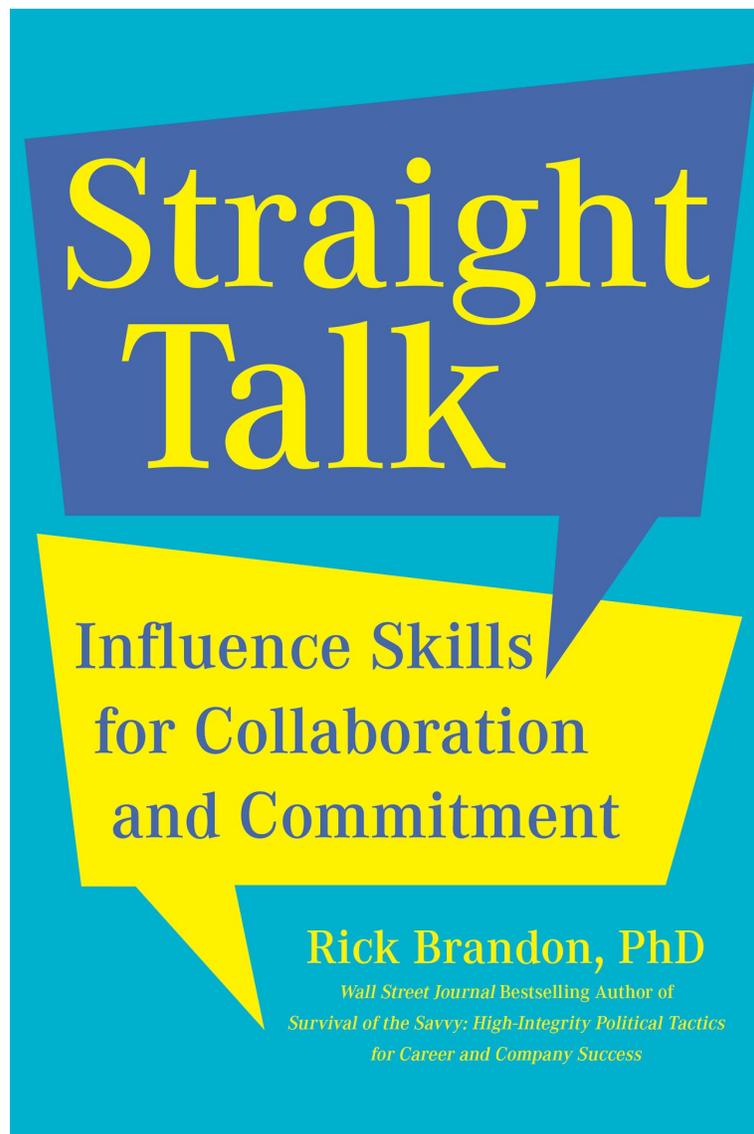


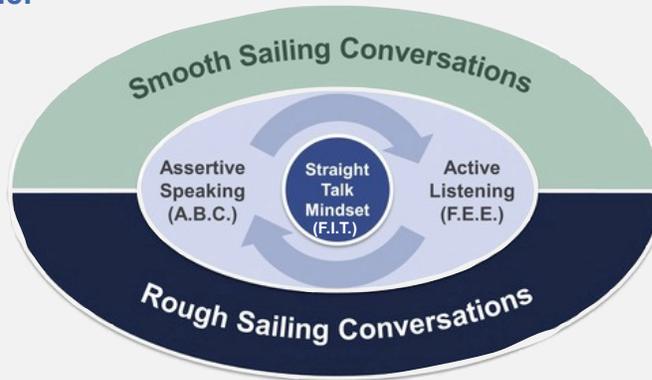


# *Straight Talk:* Briefing and Coaching Tool



# Straight Talk Briefing Outline

## Straight Talk Model



### Purpose

To share your learning about *Straight Talk* Skills with your team as well as to further your own expertise. After all, the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else!

### Directions

1. Use the big-picture outline on these pages as a guide for teaching the skills to your team.
2. Make notes about how you might explain what you've learned for each concept or skill with any teaching points you want to convey. You might plan for one more general overview session or a series of more detailed mini-lessons..
3. Feel free to use the relevant *Straight Talk* book pages listed, as well as suggested activities.
4. Relax. Don't expect to be an expert instructor or coach, rather to simply share information.

## STRAIGHT TALK MINDSET

**Explanation.** Read the definition of *Straight Talk* (Book, pg. 11) and share why you believe the skills will help the team (e.g., improved influence, results, group dynamics, customer relations, etc.). Show the overall *Straight Talk* Model and walk the team through it. Describe how it starts with being mentally and attitudinally F.I.T. by adopting the *Straight Talk* Mindset of "**F**ostering the Business Goals" of open, positive communication, "**I**dentifying Our Communication Patterns" (*Passive, Aggressive, Assertive, or Borderline Passive/Aggressive*), and "**T**aking the *Straight Talk* Challenge" by being committed to respectful while assertive dialogue— no matter how hard— and taking responsibility for how we communicate.

- **Activity:** Elicit the goals of *Straight Talk* skills after defining it: gain commitment, share innovative , ideas, identify concerns and mistakes for risk management, provide feedback at all levels, improve productivity, increase employee engagement, etc..

- **Activity:** Brainstorm the costs of *being Passive or Aggressive*, and the benefits of being *Assertive*.

- **Activity:** Conduct a Pairs Discussion in which team members disclose their answers to the questions about when they may act *Aggressively, Passively, and Assertively*, as well as how they can still improve even when they are *Assertive* (Book, pg. 32).

# Straight Talk Briefing Outline (continued)

## ASSERTIVE SPEAKING:

**Explanation.** Describe the “A.B.C.” skills (the building blocks) of *Speaking* skills to ensure full understanding and receptivity to our ideas, feedback, or needs.

- **A:** Use *Assertive Delivery*: The right body language and vocal tone.
  - **Activity:** Ask/teach what **Passive**, **Aggressive**, or **Assertive** behavior looks like (Book pp. 41-47).
- **B:** Use *Bias-Free Language* when communicating: objective, descriptive, accurate, and concrete phrasing that provides clarity and prevents resistance. Relate it to “flaming emails” (Book, pp. 51-53).
  - **Activity:** Conduct a fun “Pop Quiz” (Book, pp. 54-55) where you read each item and invite the group to either stand up and give a soccer cheer (“Woo-Wool!”) if it’s Factual or stay seated yelling “Boo” if it’s Opinion-Based.
- **C:** *Check Reactions* to see if others understand our message and gauge what they think (Book pp. 56-59).

## ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS:

Describe the “F.E.E.” skills, since it costs us to “pay attention. Use active listening skills to show focused attention, to ensure understanding and to defuse reactions.

- **F:** *Focusing* the mind, body, and environment: attending behaviors and mental concentration (Book, pp. 69-74).
- **E:** *Exploring* skills: acknowledge message, ask open questions, and encourage the speaker (Book, pp. 75-79).
- **E:** *Empathizing*: validating (Book, pg. 79) and paraphrasing to summarize the other’s emotions and content succinctly and empathically (Book, pp. 80-84 for “how to tips” and pp. 84-89 for “why”...the payoffs).
  - **Activity:** Ask the group to brainstorm payoffs to paraphrasing and then add some that they omit.
  - **Activity:** Act out scenarios as team members paraphrase for practice (Book, pp. 93, 97, 99-100, 101, 103).
  - **Activity:** Elicit how Active Listening can enrich team meetings and then ask team to commit to paraphrasing different points of view before speaking during meetings.

## CONVERSATION FORMATS:

**Explanation:** Note that we use *Straight Talk* Conversation Formats as quick structures for “packaging” our *Straight Talk* in candid while open ways. You can use *Straight Talk* Formats with your boss, direct reports, or colleagues in many situations, funneling the A.B.C. and F.E.E. skills into these preparation structures:

- 1) *Advising and Guiding* (Book, Module 6). Teach when and why, and show the stages and skills.
  - **Activity:** Trios practice the model. The Speaker describes a real problem as the Skill User facilitates the Understanding and Solve/Support stages. The Observer gives feedback on the use of the model (Book, pg. 112).
- 2) *G.A.I.N.-ing Commitment* (Book, Module 7). Teach when and how. Show the Format (Book, pg. 148).
  - **Activity:** Invite the team to write their own real G.O.A.L. messages after reading examples (Book, pp. 144-147).
  - **Activity:** Conduct another trio practice as a role-play of a conversation.
- 3) *Recognizing* (Book, Module 8). Teach when, why and how around the Recognizing Message.
  - **Activity:** The group writes some messages for people back home or in the room. Take turns reading aloud.
  - **Activity:** The group can mill and meet in two’s reading the messages to one another, then moving to others.
- 4) *Reminding* (Book, Module 9). Teach as a follow-up to a *G.A.I.N. Conversation* when someone drops the ball.
  - **Activity:** Consider mini-demonstrations of a *Passive* and *Aggressive* Reminding talk with a group member.
- 5) *Confronting* (Book, Module 10). Teach as a “rougher-sailing” follow-up to a *G.A.I.N. Conversation*.
  - **Activity:** Have the team craft a message and read them aloud while the others help edit what’s said.
- 6) *Disagreeing Agreeably* (Book, Module 11). Explain the four steps.
  - **Activity:** Have the team practice in pairs with an imaginary idea proposed as a Skill User disagrees.

# Building Skills in Others

## Directions

1. Informally rate your team 1-5 (or any other way you wish) on the book's skills on this page.
2. Plan who needs what coaching and implement your plan for discussing improving.
3. To save you time, consider first briefing and mini-teaching the skills in a group meeting. See the previous pages' job aid outline for briefing your team on the *Straight Talk* skills.

	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
<b>STRAIGHT TALK SKILL SETS</b>					
Seeing Business Benefits of Positive Communication					
Identifying Passive or Aggressive Communication					
Assertive Body Language and Vocals					
Bias-Free Factual versus Opinion-Baased Language					
Communication Dialogue Cycle (Speak-Check-Listen)					
Active Listening (F.E.E. Skills)					
Advising & Guiding (Exploring & Solving)					
G.A.I.N-ing Commitments					
Recognizing: "When you... ...I Feel...Because..."					
Reminding: "You committed to... What's Happened is...")					
Confronting Conversation: "When you... ...I Feel...Because..."					
Disagreeing Agreeably (Conversational Aikido)					