

Self-Advocacy Scripts

What to say when the moment matters - at work, in the meeting, and in writing.



For Black women and women of color who are done shrinking, over-explaining, and waiting to be noticed. Copy a script, make it yours, and send it.

7 real moments

Raises, credit, boundaries, visibility & more

Say it or send it

Spoken + email/chat version for every scenario

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You do not need perfect words. You need words that are ready.

Most of us do not lose the moment because we lack talent. We lose it because the moment is fast, the room is tense, and the sentence will not come. This guide fixes that. Every script below is short on purpose - so you can actually say it out loud or send it before you talk yourself out of it.

How to use this guide

- 1. Find your moment.** Jump to the scenario you are facing this week. You do not need to read this cover to cover.
- 2. Pick one script.** Choose *Say it* for live conversations or *Write it* when you want a paper trail. Swap in your project, your number, your date.
- 3. Say less than you think.** Make your point, then pause. Silence after a clear ask is not awkward - it is where decisions happen.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 1 Ask for the raise or promotion • 2 Take credit in the room • 3 Push back on invisible labor
- 4 Ask for visibility • 5 Negotiate workload & scope • 6 When you are talked over
- 7 Follow up after your review • Plus a 5-minute prep you can reuse every time

A note on tone: These scripts are warm and direct because you can be both. You do not need to soften every sentence to be professional. Clear is kind - to them, and to you.

Ask for the raise or promotion you have earned

Lead with results, name what you want, then stop. You are not asking for a favor - you are updating your price.

SAY IT - IN YOUR 1:1

"I want to talk about my compensation. In the last [6 months], I [led X / delivered Y / saved Z - add your numbers]. Based on that impact and the market for this role, I am asking for [salary / title]. What do we need to do to make that happen by [date]?"

WRITE IT - EMAIL FOLLOW-UP

Subject: Compensation conversation - next steps

Hi [Name], Thank you for discussing this today. To recap: I have [2-3 results with numbers], and I am requesting [salary/title] effective [date]. Please let me know the approval timeline and anything you need from me. - [Your Name]

IF THEY SAY "NOT RIGHT NOW"

"I understand. So I can plan, what specific results or level of scope would make this a yes, and can we check in on that on [date in 60-90 days]?"

Confidence tip: Say your number once, clearly - then let the silence do the work.

Take credit for your work - without apologizing for it

Credit is not bragging. It is an accurate record, said out loud, while the people who decide are in the room.

SAY IT - CLAIM YOUR WORK

"Quick context on this one: I built the first version of [project/analysis] and led [your part]. What we learned was [result]. I am happy to walk through the approach."

WRITE IT - CHAT OR EMAIL RECAP

Hi team - sharing the deck from today. For reference, I led [X] and partnered with [names] on [Y]. Next step I own is [Z] by [date]. Shout-out to [colleague] for [their contribution].

SAY IT - SHORT VERSION

"Yes - that builds on the work I shared last week. Here is where I landed after testing it."

Confidence tip: Use "I led / I built / I decided" for your part. Accuracy is not arrogance.

Push back on invisible labor - and say no cleanly

Note-taking, party planning, mentoring everyone, fixing every deck. If it is not your job, it needs a trade - not just your time.

SAY IT - THE TRADE, NOT JUST NO

"I cannot take that on and keep [your priority] on track. If [task] is now the priority, which of my current projects should move? I am happy to help you choose."

WRITE IT - DECLINE BY EMAIL/CHAT

Thanks for thinking of me. I am at capacity with [A and B] this week, so I cannot own [task]. [Name/team] may be a better fit, or we can revisit next sprint if priorities shift.

SAY IT - FOR RECURRING "OFFICE HOUSEWORK"

"I have covered [notes/planning/onboarding] the last few times. Let us rotate it so it is shared fairly - I can set up the rotation."

Confidence tip: No + a priority trade sounds like leadership. No + a long apology sounds negotiable.

Ask for visibility - not just more work

Promotions go to people decision-makers have seen lead. Ask for the room, the presentation, and the project with your name on it.

SAY IT - ASK TO LEAD OR PRESENT

"I would like to lead [project] / present our results to [audience]. I have been close to the work, and it is a good next step for my growth toward [next role]. Can we make that official?"

WRITE IT - PUT IT IN WRITING

Hi [Name] - following up on growth goals. I would like to be considered to lead [project] and present on [date/topic]. I have attached two recent results that show I am ready. Can we discuss in our next 1:1?

SAY IT - WHEN YOU GET BEHIND-THE-SCENES WORK AGAIN

"I am glad to support. For my development, I also need a visible piece this quarter. Can we pair this with [presentation / client lead / demo] that I own?"

Confidence tip: Ask for the opportunity by name. "I want more visibility" is easy to ignore; a specific ask is not.

Negotiate workload and scope before you burn out

Scope is easiest to shape at the start. Once you have quietly absorbed it, everyone assumes it was always yours.

SAY IT - CLARIFY BEFORE YOU COMMIT

"Before I commit, let us define what done looks like. I can deliver [A] by [date]. [B and C] would need more time, more support, or a later date. Which matters most?"

WRITE IT - RESET SCOPE IN EMAIL

Hi [Name] - confirming scope so we are aligned: I will own [deliverables] by [dates]. This does not include [items] unless we adjust timing. Please confirm, and I will get started.

SAY IT - WHEN SCOPE KEEPS GROWING

"This has grown beyond the original ask. I recommend we either extend the deadline to [date], add [resource], or cut [piece]. I do not recommend we do all of it at the same quality by [original date]."

Confidence tip: Offer options, not warnings. Leaders trade time, scope, and resources - pick the trade out loud.

When you are talked over - or your idea comes back as someone else's

You can reclaim the moment calmly and keep the meeting moving. No apology, no big confrontation required.

SAY IT - WHEN YOU ARE INTERRUPTED

"Let me finish this point - it connects to the decision we need. [Finish in one or two sentences.] Okay, go ahead."

SAY IT - WHEN YOUR IDEA GETS REPEATED

"Yes - glad that landed. That is the direction I proposed earlier because [reason]. Here is the next step I recommend we take with it."

WRITE IT - FOLLOW UP AFTER THE MEETING

Sharing notes from today: I proposed [idea] and we agreed to [decision/next step]. I will own [your next step] by [date]. Let me know if I missed anything.

Confidence tip: Keep your voice level and keep going. Finishing your sentence is the whole strategy.

Follow up after your performance review

The meeting is not the record - the email after it is. Send this within 24 hours, while the conversation is still fresh.

WRITE IT - THANK-YOU + RECAP EMAIL

Subject: Thank you + recap

Hi [Name], Thank you for the feedback and conversation today. My takeaways: strengths in [X], growth focus on [Y], and goals of [Z] for next cycle. I have attached wins I want on record. Please reply if I captured anything incorrectly.

WRITE IT - IF FEEDBACK WAS VAGUE

To make sure I act on this well: could you share one or two specific examples of [feedback area] and what strong looks like at my level? I want to target the right behaviors this quarter.

SAY IT - CLOSE THE REVIEW LIVE

"Before we wrap: what would need to be true for my next review to be exceeds expectations / promotion-ready? I want to work toward that explicitly."

Confidence tip: Get the path in writing. Clear targets are harder to move later.

Your 5-minute prep

Run this before any hard conversation. Five minutes now saves you from replaying it all night later.

1. **My result:** What did I deliver, in one line with a number if I have it?
2. **My ask:** What exactly do I want - money, title, time, credit, or a no?
3. **My sentence:** Which script above is closest? Say it out loud once.
4. **My record:** How will I follow up in writing within 24 hours?
5. **My reminder:** Advocating for myself is part of the job, not extra.

ASCEND AI FOR WOC

You do not have to figure out the next conversation alone.

Ascend is your private, judgment-free space to prep the hard talk, track your wins, and turn big goals into weekly steps - built for women of color in corporate.

Start at ascend.drsyreetabond.com

Bring this guide to your next 1:1. Then bring Ascend to every week after.

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Share this guide with a sister who needs the words this week.