# 3 Times You Should Stay Quiet During a Meeting by Jimmie Flores

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Many of us talk too much, and some of us say the wrong thing at the wrong time. We must learn the importance of silence, especially during sensitive discussions. In many cases, saying nothing is the smart move.

While getting my haircut at the local barbershop this week, the barber asked: â€œSo, tell me â€¦ are you a Republican or a Democrat?â€• We all know this is a loaded question, and regardless of my response, he was going to make a point about it. I used a safe answer: â€œI guess I tend to fall somewhere in the middle.â€• The fact is that I do have a preference, but he doesnâ€™t need to know that. I know his politica preference, and Iâ€™m sure he and I think differently. By keeping my thoughts to myself, the conversation was steered in a different direction, and no feelings were hurt. Another point here is that he had the advantage by holding the sharp object in his strong hand.

Here are three times when keeping your thoughts to yourself is best:

#1: When you are asked to criticize others.

Itâ€™s unfortunate that much time is wasted to putting down fellow employees. We are sometimes asked, â€œJanie, what do you think about Martin getting away with coming late to work two times this week?â€• You are being asked to participate in the gang tackling of Martin. This is an issue for your manager or HR to resolve, and not something requiring your attention.

#2: When a solution is identified, but others want to continue to brainstorm.

After a couple of hours, your team determined that outsourcing the data migration work is the best option, especially given the lack of internal resources and capabilities. Once the planning and analyses is done, itâ€™s time for implementation. There is nothing left to discuss.

However, near the end of the meeting, the project lead says, â€œOk, everyone, what did we miss? What else do we need to do? Does anyone else want to make any contributions?â€• No! The decision has been made. In many cases, the project lead has a difficult time closing the meeting because he is aware that the long and difficult work lies ahead. There is nothing else to contribute. Get an action plan. Assign the requirements. End the meeting. Get going!

#3: You are asked your opinion after someone is fired.

There is nothing else to say when someone is terminated. It doesnâ€™t help to say, â€œOh, Christopher was an overall good employee.â€• The decision was made, and feeling sympathy is a waste of time. On the flip side, you should not criticize the person who was given the pink slip. Make sure the process was followed, and get back to work.

To avoid causing any bigger problems, letâ€™s focus less on talking, and more on doing our work. A professional employee is one who stays away from spreading rumors, piling on, and engaging in petty activities. When you sense that someone is recruiting you to participate in any of these unproductive activities, kindly keep quiet.

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