

When to speak up against a superior

Speaking up about something you think a superior is doing wrong is intimidating and risky. From calling attention to a serious violation to questioning a simple business practice, you have to weigh your situation to determine whether speaking up is the right thing to do. Here are some things you should consider:

- 1. Would you be able to live with yourself if you didn't speak up?** If you feel that speaking up is the morally right thing to do, it may be too difficult to keep quiet.
- 2. Realistically understand the consequences.** Sometimes you might overestimate the negative consequences of speaking up and remain silent because of it. You should also weigh the consequences of staying silent.
- 3. Understand your position and how others listen to you.** People in some positions are expected to raise questions, while others may be expected to support the decisions of others.
- 4. Know when, how and to whom you should speak.** Choosing these things carefully will affect the potential consequences.

— Adapted from ["5 Questions to Ask Before You Call Out Someone Powerful,"](#) Megan Reitz and John Higgins, *Harvard Business Review*.