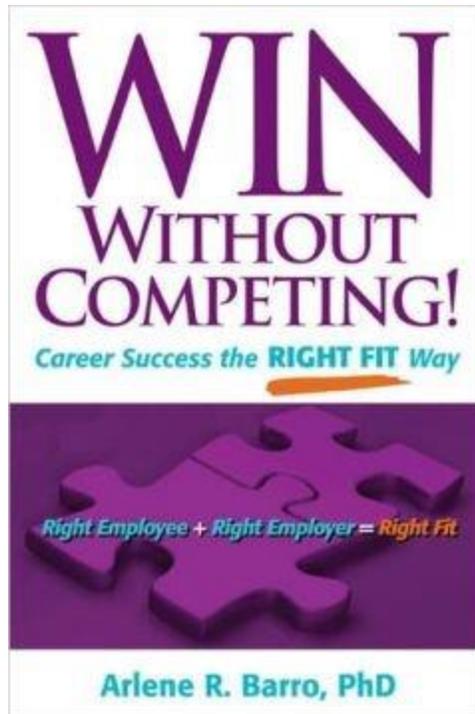


# Conquering Stress! With Dr. Arlene — Not Speaking Up Causes Stress



Posted: Friday, August 19, 2016 – 12:42 PM

**By Dr. Arlene Barro**

Are you missing critical opportunities to speak up that could change the trajectory of your life? The reasons why people don't speak up is a fascinating phenomenon. The magnitude of stress will vary according to the situation. You may think you're speaking up. Find out.

## **How do you feel?**

It is not uncommon to feel upset and unable to articulate the cause of this stress. Some of my clients point to the presidential election initially. Then, I discover the real reason for their distress. For example, from childhood through adulthood their parents made their decisions for them. Now, they feel stuck and stressed, especially if their parents died. Who will make their decisions for them? They can't. By understanding and accepting that their feelings were suppressed as children they can begin to learn how to connect to who they are today. Learning how to make decisions and recognizing their own feelings will take time. Speaking up will start to occur with training, as their self-confidence soars. It is critical to avoid unnecessary explosions and high stress.

## **What do you say?**

Opportunities to speak up present themselves all day long. Depending on the situation we decide whether we should say something. If we decide to speak up immediately, do we know exactly what we want to say? If you do not know say, "I will give this some thought" or another nebulous phrase that is appropriate. If we are faced with a delicate situation, we should create a broadcast and wait until we are comfortable speaking up. Practicing what to say is an excellent strategy when an immediate response is not required.

If you get accustomed to planning ahead for situations that repeat themselves, creating effective broadcasting is highly effective. Then you are ready to respond which will reduce your stress.

The secret to maintaining low stress is not dwelling on what you should have said and engaging in negative self-talk. Either fix it, drop it, or move on.

## **Pick, Probe and Pitch**

To master the broadcast, pick, probe and pitch. In many professional and personal situations it is imperative to use my pick, probe and pitch strategy to obtain information before responding to a statement, direct question or unspoken question.

Here are three situations in which employees and candidates should use this strategy: promotions, hiring and firing.

1. Employees who interview for a promotion and were not selected.
2. Candidates who are expecting a job offer and did not receive one.
3. Employees who were suddenly fired with no explanations.

In all three scenarios, many candidates and employees miss the opportunity to speak up and find out "why," even though it's stressful.

Career growth and self-confidence go hand-in-hand. Be prepared for the unexpected and learn from it. Practice selecting questions (pick), drilling down (probe) and fire those questions (pitch). We are approaching the end of the year, downsizing has already begun and will continue. Plan ahead. Do not wait for the ax to fall.

**Are you speaking up easily?**

If you have been doing this throughout your life, explain how you learned to do this. Difficulty speaking up? Share your progress. Figured out when not to speak up? Tell your story. Email your response to [drbarro@barroglobal.com](mailto:drbarro@barroglobal.com). Your story may appear in my next column.

***Dr. Arlene Barro, the creator of the Right Fit Method, is a UCLA-trained behavioral educational psychologist. She is the author of WIN Without Competing!, talk show host, motivational speaker, consultant and CEO. Dr. Arlene's company, barro global search, inc., is on Wilshire Boulevard.***