

An example:
Pull Leadership versus Push Leadership

This happens: You're having a conversation with someone who has significant influence in your world. It might be your life partner, it might be your boss, it might be a local business contact or politician. They won't let you finish a sentence. They've processed what they think you mean before you've completed your thought, and they respond to what they believe your message to be. More often than not they're wrong about your intent, so you go back and try, try, and try to get your point across. Even if they don't verbally interrupt, their body language and expressions make it clear they think they know where you're going. They're pushing the conversation along unnaturally.

How do you react? Do you raise your voice to try and talk over the other person? Do you wait for them to breathe and try to slip the thought in through the gap? Or do you give up and save it for an email? How do you feel? Frustration based on a perceived lack of value? Disappointment that your message wasn't heard? Do you sometimes go into a conversation knowing you're not going to be heard, so you're resigned to following up with an email? For me, I always feel like my time is being wasted.

You are a person of significant influence. You have family, friends, coworkers, constituents, staffers. Allow dialogue, and even if you're pretty sure you know where the conversation is going, allow it to happen naturally. Create value in all discussions by respecting the thoughts of the other folks in the room. When time allows, pull conversations along; don't push to a quick and often inaccurate conclusion.