

In Summary: STATE

**USE THE
SKILL "STATE
MY PATH"
TO SHARE
TOUGH
MESSAGES**

Share your facts

Tell your story

Ask for others' paths

Talk tentatively

Encourage testing

The Benefits of Starting with Facts

Facts are facts. The least controversial part of the Path to Action is what we saw or heard. If we are honest in sharing all the facts, these facts will build a foundation of shared meaning.

Facts are more persuasive. When we want to share something that others are likely to resist, it is far more effective to share the facts behind our story before we share the story itself. On the other hand, when we share only harsh or ugly conclusions, people can't figure out why we've drawn those conclusions, and we run the risk of being seen as a villain.

Facts are the least insulting. Stories are typically made up of rather unattractive conclusions. For example, you think a person is lazy or irresponsible or a backbiter. If you share these conclusions, it's only natural that others will feel hurt or insulted. In contrast, when you share only what you've seen and heard, others are far less likely to be offended.

Feelings and stories often keep us from facts. If we start by sharing our feelings or stories, others often don't understand what we're talking about. For example, we tell a friend that he can't be trusted (our story). We offer no further explanation, so he isn't sure why we drew such an unattractive conclusion. Since he's been accused of being untrustworthy, it's only natural that he becomes defensive. An argument ensues, and the original facts never make it into the conversation.