

The Most Expensive Thing Employees Say at Work Is Nothing

Workplace silence stalls careers, weakens teams, hides costly problems, and drains profits. Molly Tschang shows how to speak up and build shared reality.

RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, July 20, 2026

/EINPresswire.com/ -- July 2026 — Many workplace failures do not begin with a lack of intelligence, effort, or strategy. They begin with something left unsaid: the performance concern a manager postpones, the employee who never asks what is required for a promotion, the colleague who spots a risk but stays quiet, or the team that agrees publicly while privately operating from different realities.

That silence carries a steep price. Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2026 report found that only 20 percent of employees worldwide are engaged. Gallup estimates that low engagement costs the global economy about \$10 trillion in lost productivity—roughly 9 percent of global GDP—and reports a consistent relationship between engagement and productivity, profitability, and sales.

Silence can also damage careers. A 2026 analysis by the Burning Glass Institute and New York University's School of Professional Studies, involving 1.3 million professionals, found that about

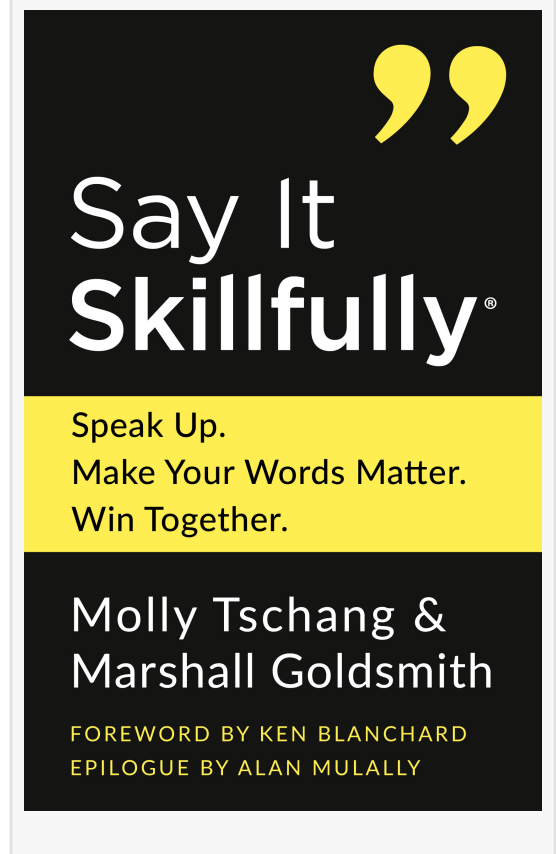
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Before we can lead anyone else, we must first lead ourselves. Say It Skillfully will help you lead to your full potential.”

*KEN BLANCHARD, NYT
Bestselling Author*

one in four white-collar workers experienced at least five years without a meaningful promotion or raise. Those whose careers stalled averaged only 30 percent wage growth during their first decade, compared with 71 percent among professionals who continued advancing. Failing to discuss expectations, accomplishments, development needs, and ambitions can allow damaging disconnects to persist.

“The conversation you avoid does not disappear. It usually



becomes more expensive. A performance issue grows, resentment builds, an employee's potential remains invisible, a risk goes unaddressed, or a team makes decisions without the information it needs. Silence may feel safe in the moment, but it is rarely neutral."

— Molly Tschang

Research also shows that communication directly affects team performance. A Catalyst study cited in Tschang's book found that 76 percent of employees with highly empathetic leaders reported being engaged, compared with 32 percent of those working for less empathetic leaders. MIT's Human Dynamics Laboratory similarly found that balanced participation, active listening, and concise exchanges can be more predictive of team success than individual intelligence or talent.

A Practical Framework for Better Conversations

In her #1 bestselling book, [Say It Skillfully: Speak Up. Make Your Words Matter. Win Together.](#), co-authored with executive coach Marshall Goldsmith, Tschang introduces the Me-You-We Framework.

ME: Lead yourself first. Identify the result you want and choose how you want to show up. Curiosity, patience, and partnership produce different outcomes than anger, defensiveness, or the need to prove someone wrong. When emotions run high, pause before speaking—or sending an email you may regret.

YOU: Understand the other person's reality. Rather than beginning with accusation or correction, ask how the other person sees the situation, what may be getting in the way, and what they believe is working. Listen to understand, not to prepare a rebuttal.

WE: Create a shared reality. The goal is not to win, but to surface perspectives, reveal disconnects, hear quieter or unpopular voices, and establish common understanding so better decisions can be made.

Tschang also recommends avoiding reflexive responses beginning with "no," "but," or "however"; framing feedback as an opportunity for growth; acknowledging the courage it takes to speak up; admitting mistakes without excuses; and ensuring dominant voices do not crowd out essential perspectives.

An Essential Skill at Every Level

For leaders, better conversations provide earlier access to bad news, operational risks, customer concerns, and overlooked ideas. For managers, they help clarify expectations, address performance issues sooner, and deliver feedback without unnecessary defensiveness. For employees, speaking up effectively can increase visibility, resolve tensions, surface contributions,

and create more direct conversations about advancement.

As founder of Abella Consulting and Say It Skillfully, Tschang advises senior leadership teams navigating communication, culture, and change. She guided executives through more than 80 mergers and acquisitions at Cisco and U.S. Filter and now works with organizations ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies.

Her bestselling book and Say It Skillfully online course provide a shared language and repeatable approach for handling difficult conversations, strengthening relationships, and improving performance.

[Download a FREE AUDIOBOOK of The Me-You-We Framework audiobook](#)

About Molly Tschang

Molly Tschang is the founder of Abella Consulting and Say It Skillfully and co-author, with Marshall Goldsmith, of the #1 bestselling book Say It Skillfully: Speak Up. Make Your Words Matter. Win Together.

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