

Guidelines for Wise Speech from the Buddha

1. What words are untrue, unbeneficial, or harsh, one does not say them.
2. What words are true but unbeneficial, or harsh, one does not say them (e.g. words spoken in anger to hurt the other person).
3. What words are true, beneficial, but disagreeable to others (e.g., constructive criticism), **one needs to have a sense of the proper time for saying them.**
4. What words are untrue, unbeneficial, but endearing and agreeable to others, (e.g., flattery), one does not say them.
5. What words are true, unbeneficial, but endearing and agreeable to others, (e.g. true compliments that may create a sense of ego or arrogance), one does not say them.
6. What words are true, beneficial, endearing and agreeable to others, **one needs to have a sense of the proper time for saying them.**

Short-cut questions to ask yourself in the midst of speaking:

- Is what I am about to say **true**?
- Is what I am about to say **kind**?
- Is what I am about to say **useful**?
- Is what I am about to say **timely**?