



Courage Compass
THERAPY

*Scripts
for
Effective
Communication*

Why or When these Will Not Work



- 1. You insist on being right.** This is not a battle to win by being right or wrong; connection is built through empathy, compassion, and understanding.
- 2. You go with your knee-jerk emotional reaction.** When we are hooked and triggered, it's tempting to react before taking a breath and gathering your thoughts.
- 3. You want your partner to hurt as much as you do.** If your goal is to injure and not communicate, the problem will get worse, not better.
- 4. You disagree on what the problem actually is.** Getting clarity on the problem will help immensely.
- 5. You are caught up in being defensive, or in an attack-defend dynamic.** If you feel tempted to defend, shift to asking clarifying questions.
- 6. You don't want to solve the problem; you have an ulterior motive.** Proving a point by being indirect or deceitful is manipulative.
- 7. You can't take accountability for your own part.** This is huge. It's super important to be able to own your own stuff.
- 8. Disrespect is rampant.** Profanity, belittling, condescension, and vitriol all add fuel to the fire. If you can't communicate without these elements, wait.

Communication Substitutions: 3 Simple Swaps with Big Impact



1. Instead of: "We need to talk" or "I need to talk to you"

Use: "I have some thoughts about x, and I'd love to chat with you about it at some point tonight/today/this week. Let me know a good time."

Why: It's less threatening and foreboding. **We need to talk/I need to talk to you** immediately makes the receiver anxious and defensive. By cluing him or her into the topic you'd like to discuss and giving them a choice of when they'd like to go over it, you're giving them some control.

2. Instead of: "Are you mad at me?"

Use: "I see you're being quiet and distant (or insert behavioral signs the person is exhibiting). When you do that, I imagine you're upset with me. What's going on?"

Why: You take some responsibility for making an "assumption" about the other person. They get information on how their nonverbal behavior comes across. If they are not upset, they can explain the behavior. If they are upset, they can start to understand how they are communicating that through behavior (ideally you'd like them to be upfront and direct instead of communicating through action or inaction, but that's a follow-up item).

3. Instead of: Why would you say something like that?/What is that supposed to mean?

Use: Hey, I really don't like when you say things like that. It hurts my feelings/ Hey, I'm confused by what you're saying. Do mean _____?

Why: Using rhetorical questions when you really mean "I'm hurt" is inflammatory and counterproductive. You're not going to get the answer you want like, "Yes, I'm an idiot, I should have said that you're amazing and you always have the best ideas/opinions." You're going to crank the argument up a notch by communicating you're pissed through your tone of voice, facial expressions, and indirect questions instead of making a statement and asking for clarification.

Sentence Completions



Sentence Completions for Resentment

When to use: When you find yourself resenting another person and your anger is building.

1. To figure out what's happening with **you**- do this **FIRST**.

Short: I resent ____ for _____. I expected they would_____. I **need** them to_____.

Long: I find myself resenting (person) for (action), because I expected him/her to (do/be/etc). Thus what I need from him/her is_____.

2. Communicate it with them **WITHOUT using the resentment part**.

Example: Hey Tom, I had **expected** that you'd get me the project by 5pm. Going forward, **I need you to** let me know if you're going to need more time to complete projects.

Sentence Completions for clear, direct, concise, communication

When to use: When you just need to be direct and honest with someone without blaming.

I feel_____ when you_____ because_____. When that happens, I imagine that_____.

Example: I feel hurt and insignificant when you don't call/text me back when you say you will, because I value our relationship. When that happens, I imagine that you don't care about me, or I'm not important.

Sentence Completions to ask for support

When to use: when you're trying to be brave, do something new, and need support

1. I want to show up in this part of my life
2. This feels _____ to me.
3. Here are some ways you can support me
4. Here's what support would look like for me
5. This is why this important to me

Sentence Completions for Empathic Communication



Circling Back

When to use: When you feel like you let someone down by not listening to their feelings

1. When you shared ____ with me, I'm not sure I showed up for you in a way that was supportive (or another word that fits the situation). I'd like to hear you tell me about ____ again so that I can better understand/respond.
2. I'm sorry that I'm not responding to you in the way you're expecting. I'm here for you, and I heard what you said, and I'm not sure what to say right now. I don't want to say the wrong thing.

Alternatively, when you were not heard:

1. When I shared about my experience of ____ with you, I felt that you were distracted/not present/not understanding of what was happening. It's important to me that you understand this, and I'd like to share it again with you if you're open to that.
2. I feel that you're not hearing me/understanding me. It would be helpful/what I need right now is _____ (for you to listen and not interrupt, for you to look me in the eyes and hold my hands, for you to wait to hug me until I'm finished, for you to not give me tissues when I'm crying, etc). I'd like to also do the same for you.

Ways to get Clarity



Clarity is Key

When to use

- When you want or need to sidestep defensiveness
- You need to buy time to breathe and collect your thoughts
- You are confused and really not sure what the other person is saying
- You want to highlight an inconsistency but don't want to point it out directly
- When you don't know what to say, you're worried about what the other person will think, and want to gain information about where they stand first

Questions to ask to gain clarity

- Can you tell me more about what you mean?
- Where did you learn about that?
- That's interesting, I hadn't thought about it that way. Can you tell me more?
- How did you draw that conclusion?
- Who else agrees with that?
- Has anyone provided feedback to you about that?
- What are your thoughts on that? What else?
- What do you mean by _____?
- What do you need from me?
- Are you looking for a solution from me or just someone to listen?
- Are there other perspectives on this?
- What decision are you leaning towards?
- Who else can help with this?
- Are you prepared for a response that may differ from your perspective?

Statements to buy additional time

- I need to think about/ reflect on this, let me circle back to you.
- I need to do some research before I can decide.
- I really just need some time to think this over.
- I need _____ from you before I can engage in a conversation about it.