

5 Go-To Conversation Starters

*Rebuilding Safety and
Connection with Your Teen*

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Why Connection Comes Before Change

When your teen pulls away, shuts down, or lashes out, it's tempting to focus on fixing the behavior. But here's the truth: behavior is just the surface. Underneath every eye roll, slammed door, or long silence is an emotion that needs a safe place to land.

These scripts are **not** about “getting your teen to talk,” they're about showing your teen that **you're still a safe place, no matter what**. They work because they lower the pressure, remove the agenda, and give your teen the freedom to come toward you instead of away from you.

You don't have to get it perfect. **You just have to be consistent**. Every time you choose presence over control, you lay another brick in the foundation of safety.



Script 1 : For the teen who's slow to interact

When to Use This:

After school, at the end of the day, or during quiet moments when your teen seems withdrawn. This is for the times you feel the urge to “pull them out” of silence.

Why It Works:

This script signals patience and removes the demand for interaction, which allows your teen to decide when they're ready to connect. It tells them: “I see you, I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere.”

Script:

Hey, no rush. I'm here if you want to hang out or talk. I'll be in the kitchen.

Pro Tip:

Pair this with a small, no-strings gesture, like making a snack and leaving it nearby without comment.

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Asking follow-up questions immediately (“Why are you quiet?”)
- Acting hurt if they don't respond right away



Script 2 : For the teen who's “over the top” and hard to feel cool with

When to Use This:

When your teen is buzzing with high energy, talking a mile a minute, or being loud and silly, and you're tempted to shut it down.

Why It Works:

Meeting their energy without overpowering or minimizing it shows you can handle them at full volume. This builds trust and keeps communication open.

Script:

You've got a lot going on right now, I want to get what's behind it.

Pro Tip:

Smile or laugh lightly when appropriate, it softens your presence without making fun of them.

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Matching their energy with frustration or sarcasm
- Telling them to “calm down” or “chill”



Script 3 : For the teen who just had a blow-up

When to Use This:

Right after an argument, heated comment, or emotional outburst, when emotions are still high.

Why It Works:

You're showing you see the human behind the behavior. Instead of reacting to the "spike," you make space for what's underneath.

Script:

That was a lot. I'm going to give us both a minute, then I want to hear what's under that.

Pro Tip:

Avoid "*calm down*" – it often makes teens feel even less understood.

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Demanding they explain themselves immediately
- Threatening consequences in the heat of the moment



Script 4 : For the teen who shuts down after school

When to Use This:

When your teen comes home quiet, moody, or detached after being out.

Why It Works:

This tells them you're glad they're home without interrogating them. It removes the performance of answering "How was your day?" when they're already drained.

Script:

You don't have to talk about your day if you don't want to.
I'm glad you're home.

Pro Tip:

Use a warm, low-energy tone — your vibe sets the safety.

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Rapid-fire questions as soon as they walk in
- Reading their quiet as rejection



Script 5 : For the teen who only talks during “random” moments

When to Use This:

When your teen drops a deep or surprising comment out of nowhere, often right before bed, in the car, or while you're busy.

Why It Works:

It shows you value their timing and are willing to stop and listen, even if it's inconvenient. This reinforces that their voice matters.

Script:

I love when you bring stuff up like this, even if it's out of nowhere. I'm here for it.

Pro Tip:

Drop what you're doing for a minute, it tells them they matter more than your task.

Mistakes to Avoid:

- Saying “Now's not a good time” unless it truly is urgent
- Overloading them with advice in that moment



Keep the Conversation Going

These scripts are **just the beginning**.

Real change happens when you have the tools, and the support, to use them consistently in the moments that matter most.

If you've been feeling stuck, unsure, or disconnected from your teen, you don't have to figure it out alone. Together, we can uncover what's really getting in the way and create a plan that works for your unique family.



17 Book a Parent Coaching Call

<https://calendly.com/jakegaineycoaching/30min>

Let's rebuild safety, trust, and connection, one conversation at a time.

