Safe and Cool Conversations

How to talk respectfully when emotions run high

Open, honest, and respectful communication increases family bonding and fosters loving relationships. For this to occur, people need to feel emotionally safe with one another. This is especially true in discussing a sensitive topic or talking with teens—who often feel misjudged and emotionally stressed. Fortunately, creating an emotionally safe place only needs three things: **1)** a right attitude, **2)** good social skills, and **3)** new "scripts" or phrases you can use to help people feel safe to talk. Focus on adjusting your attitudes, memorize the "scripts," and practice the skills until they come naturally. You'll see a huge increase in personal satisfaction and bonding.

Right Attitudes	Proven Social Skills	Safe and Cool Scripts
•Value others as yourself •Desire to understand how others feel and see things •Desire to express yourself respectfully as a peacemaker •Develop pure intentions •Cease to judge or be critical •Be generous instead of selfish •View others with compassion •Abandon ill-will; be willing to love •Respect others' boundaries and right to choose differently •Desire to speak only truth •Believe you could be wrong; freely admit errors •Be willing to make amends if you offend •Have courage to bring up hard issues in a sensitive and kind way •Feel sorry when you offend	•Use "LUV-Listening" •Talk in "I-Messages" •Use positive and kind words •Use respectful voice tones and body language •Look for and compliment the good •Notice others' body language •Notice if the discussion gets tense •Notice your own stress and quickly self-calm if needed •Defuse confrontations with calming statements and questions •Avoid throwing any C-Boulders •Say hard things in kind ways •If misunderstood, patiently clarify your motives and restate what you mean •Be tentative with your opinions •Avoid getting defensive •Apologize quickly for offenses •Ask openly for what you want or need •Use Mindfulness techniques to calm your brain, help you be non-judgemental, and question your thoughts and "stories"	•"Is this a good time to talk?" •"I want to be here for you. Let me know if you just want a listening ear, or if you need help or advice." •"What I appreciate about you is…" •"So what I think you're saying is…" •"Help me understand what you mean by that." •"How would you like things to be?" •"Thanks for sharing your opinion." •"You must feel…" •"I sense you're feeling ___. Tell me more." •"I'm sorry you're upset." •"I appreciate your concerns." •"Would you like my thoughts?" •"I'm sorry, that's not what I meant to imply. What I meant was_____." •"I'm sorry, what do you need me to do to make it up to you?" (If you offended.) •"Let me think on that and get back to you." •"Let's get more facts on this and then revisit it." •"I recognize I'm also part of the problem." •"Let's take a break to cool-down." •"Let's take turns getting our own way." •"Let's agree to disagree for now." •"Let's get outside help with this." •"I need your help. Would you please…"

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