



Say This - Not That & Why It Helps

<u>Old Script</u>	<u>New Script</u>	<u>Why It Helps</u>
“Calm Down”	I’m here. Take your time.	Signals emotional safety instead of control.
“You’re Being So Dramatic”	This matters to you—tell me why	Shows respect for their internal world.
“Because I said so.”	I’ll explain why. You don’t have to agree, but I want you to know my thinking.	Builds trust and encourages mutual respect.
“What’s wrong with you?”	That didn’t seem like you—what’s going on?	Invites curiosity instead of shame.
“Stop Crying”	It’s okay to feel what you’re feeling.	Normalizes emotional expression.
“If you don’t stop, you’re grounded.”	Let’s take a break and come back to this calmly.	De-escalates and preserves connection.
“You need to respect me.”	Let’s talk about how we can both show respect in hard moments.	Models mutual respect.
“Go to your room.”	Let’s take space to cool off, and we’ll talk when we’re ready.	Encourages regulation over isolation.
“You’re being ridiculous.”	It seems like this is really hard right now.	Acknowledges the emotional load.
“I’ve had enough of your attitude.”	Your tone tells me something’s off—can we unpack it together?	Opens door to underlying emotions.
“I’m disappointed in you.”	I love you. Let’s talk about what happened and what comes next.	Separates behavior from worth.



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“Why do you have to make everything so difficult?”	I can see this isn't easy for you—how can I support you right now?	Shows empathy over blame.
“Don't talk back.”	I want to hear your thoughts, even if we disagree—let's do it respectfully.	Encourages healthy disagreement.
“You're grounded until further notice.”	There's a consequence for this, but we'll talk through it first.	Involves them in accountability.
“You're embarrassing me.”	Let's talk later about what happened—I want to understand your side.	Protects dignity and builds trust.
“You're being selfish.”	I can see you're focused on what matters to you—can we also talk about how this impacts others?	Teaches empathy without shame.
“Just do what I say.”	I need your cooperation, and I'll explain why.	Promotes understanding and cooperation.
“You're making me so angry.”	I'm feeling really frustrated right now—I need a moment to cool off.	Models emotional regulation.
“This is your fault.”	Let's focus on how we can fix this together.	Encourages problem-solving, not blame.
“I don't want to hear it.”	I'm open to hearing your side when we're both ready.	Keeps communication open.
“I'm done with you.”	I'm upset right now, but I'm not going anywhere. We'll get through this.	Reinforces secure attachment.