BOOKTRONAUT



HARD CONVERSATIONS KIT

Scripts for the talks you keep avoiding. At work, at home and everywhere in between.

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booktronaut.com

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These scripts are for everyday conflicts between people who are basically safe with each other. If you are dealing with abuse, threats or violence, your safety comes first. Contact local emergency services or a support organization, and don't use a script to confront someone who may hurt you.

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START HERE

WHY YOU KEEP AVOIDING IT

There is a conversation you've been putting off. Maybe for days, maybe for years.

Asking for more money. Telling a friend they hurt you. Saying no to your boss. Admitting you were wrong. Every time you think about it, your chest gets a little tight and you find something else to do.

Here's the uncomfortable truth. Avoiding it doesn't make it go away. It makes it more expensive. Every week of silence adds interest, in resentment, in guessing, in the stories you tell yourself about what the other person thinks.

This kit is built for people who are not naturally good at confrontation. Which is most people. It gives you a simple method, a preparation sheet and twelve scripts for the situations that come up most often in real life.

HOW TO USE THE SCRIPTS

Don't read them out loud like a robot. Read them, understand the shape, then use your own words. The words in the scripts are training wheels.

Each script has the same parts.

- **The situation.** When to use it.
- **The opening.** The first thing you say. This is the hardest part, so we write it for you.

- **The core.** What you need them to understand.
- **If they react.** What to say when it gets defensive, emotional or cold.
- **The close.** How to end with something clear.

THE METHOD BEHIND EVERY SCRIPT

Every conversation in this kit follows four steps. We call it the bridge.

1. **Set.** Make it safe to talk. Pick the moment, say why you want to talk and that you care about a good outcome.
2. **Say.** Describe what happened and how it affects you. Facts first, then feelings. No accusations, no diagnoses.
3. **Ask.** Ask for their side and actually listen. This is the step most people skip.
4. **Agree.** End with something concrete. A next step, a change, a follow up date.

> *You don't need to win the conversation. You need to have it.*

THE PREP SHEET

BEFORE YOU TALK

Ten minutes of preparation changes everything. Fill this in on paper before any hard conversation. You'll walk in calmer, clearer and much harder to derail.

1. WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

Write only facts a camera could have recorded. Not "she disrespects me", but "she interrupted me three times in yesterday's meeting".

2. WHAT I WANT

Be honest. What would a good outcome look like? Something should change, you want to understand, you want an apology, you want to end something?

3. WHAT THEY MIGHT BE FEELING

Imagine their side. What pressure are they under? What might they be afraid of? You don't have to agree. You just have to imagine.

4. MY OPENING SENTENCE

Write the first sentence you will say. Short, calm and honest.

5. MY LINE IN THE SAND

What is the one thing you will not accept? Knowing this keeps you steady.

TIMING RULES

Not when either of you is tired, hungry, drunk or in a rush. Not in front of others. Not by text if it's serious and you can talk face to face or by voice. Not as an ambush. Give a heads up like "Can we talk tomorrow about how we split the work? I want to sort it out."

SCRIPT 1

ASKING FOR A RAISE

THE SITUATION

You've been doing more, the market pays more, or your salary simply hasn't kept up. You need to ask, and you're afraid of sounding greedy or ungrateful.

THE OPENING

"Thanks for making time. I'd like to talk about my salary. I've prepared some points about what I've delivered this year and where I'd like to go next, and I'd like to hear your view."

THE CORE

"Over the last year I've taken on X and Y, and the results were Z. I've looked at what roles like mine pay in our market, and I'd like to discuss moving my salary to around [range]. I want to keep growing here, and I want my pay to reflect what I'm contributing."

IF THEY REACT

"THERE'S NO BUDGET RIGHT NOW"

"I understand. Can we agree on what would need to be true for this to happen, and set a date to review it? I'd also like to talk about other options in the meantime, like training, a title change or flexible hours."

"EVERYONE WANTS A RAISE"

"I'm sure. I'm not asking because of what others want. I'm asking because of what I've delivered. Can we look at the specifics together?"

SILENCE

Stay quiet too. Count to five in your head. Silence feels awful, but the person who fills it often gives something away. If it goes on, say "What are you thinking?"

THE CLOSE

"Thank you. So the next step is [what was agreed], and we'll talk again on [date]. I'll send a short email summary so we're on the same page."

SCRIPT 2

SAYING NO TO YOUR BOSS

THE SITUATION

Your plate is full and a new task lands. If you say yes, quality drops everywhere or you work every evening. You need to push back without looking lazy.

THE OPENING

"I want to do this well, so I need to be honest about capacity. Right now I'm working on A, B and C."

THE CORE

"If I take this on, something else will slip. Which of these should move down the list, or is there someone else who could pick one up?"

The trick here is that you're not saying no. You're asking your boss to make the trade off decision. That's their job.

IF THEY REACT

"JUST FIT IT IN"

"I'd like to, but I don't want to promise something and then deliver it badly. If this is the top priority, then B will move to next week. Is that okay?"

"EVERYONE IS BUSY"

"I know. That's exactly why I want us to choose together what matters most, so the important things get done well."

THE CLOSE

"Great, so I'll start on the new task and B moves to [date]. I'll let the team know."

SCRIPT 3

FEEDBACK TO A COLLEAGUE

THE SITUATION

A colleague does something that makes your work harder. Misses deadlines, takes credit, sends messy work. You've been quietly fixing it and quietly getting angry.

THE OPENING

"Have you got ten minutes? There's something small I want to talk about so it doesn't become something big."

THE CORE

"On the last two projects, the files came to me a day after the deadline. That meant I had to rush my part and we missed some mistakes. I might be missing something on your side. What's been happening?"

Notice the structure. A specific fact, the effect on you, then a real question. No "you always", no "you never".

IF THEY REACT

THEY GET DEFENSIVE

"I'm not trying to blame you. I'm trying to fix how we work together, because I think we'd both have an easier time."

THEY BLAME SOMEONE ELSE

"That might be part of it. What could we do between the two of us so it works better next time?"

THE CLOSE

"So from now on you'll send me the file by Wednesday noon, and if something blocks you, you'll message me on Tuesday. Sound fair?"

SCRIPT 4

MONEY WITH YOUR PARTNER

THE SITUATION

You and your partner see money differently. One saves, one spends. One worries, one doesn't. It comes up in small fights about small purchases, but the real issue is bigger.

THE OPENING

"Can we have a calm talk about money this weekend? Not about any one purchase. About how we both feel about money and what we want."

THE CORE

"I've noticed we argue about small things, and I think it's because we see money differently. When I see big purchases I didn't know about, I feel anxious, because security matters a lot to me. I'd like to understand what money means to you."

IF THEY REACT

"YOU'RE TOO CONTROLLING"

"I hear that it feels that way. I don't want to control you. I want us to have a plan we both like, with some money each of us can spend without asking."

"WHY ARE WE DOING THIS NOW?"

"Because I'd rather talk about it while we're calm than in the middle of an argument. It matters to me because we matter to me."

THE CLOSE

"So let's try this for three months. We each get [amount] to spend freely, anything bigger than [amount] we talk about first, and we sit down once a month to check how it's going."

SCRIPT 5

CHORES AND FAIRNESS AT HOME

THE SITUATION

You do more at home and you're tired of it. Cleaning, planning, remembering birthdays, noticing the milk is running out. The invisible work counts too.

THE OPENING

"I want to talk about how we split things at home, because I'm getting tired and I don't want that to turn into resentment."

THE CORE

"I made a list of everything that needs doing in a normal week, including the planning and remembering. Right now I think I'm doing most of it. Can we look at it together and split it so it feels fair to both of us?"

A written list helps a lot here. The work you do invisibly becomes visible, and the conversation moves from feelings to a shared problem.

IF THEY REACT

"I DO LOTS OF THINGS TOO"

"You do, and I'm grateful. That's why I want to look at the whole list, so we can both see everything."

"JUST TELL ME WHAT TO DO"

"I appreciate that, but being the one who has to tell you is part of the work. I'd like you to own some things completely, from noticing to doing."

THE CLOSE

"So you take laundry and the weekly shopping, including the list. Let's try it for a month and check in on [date]."

SCRIPT 6

BOUNDARIES WITH PARENTS

THE SITUATION

You love your parents, and they still treat you like you're fifteen. Unannounced visits, comments about your partner, your weight, your job, how you raise your kids.

THE OPENING

"Mom, Dad, I love you and I want us to have a good relationship. That's why I want to talk about something that's been bothering me."

THE CORE

"When you comment on [topic], I feel judged, and I end up wanting to visit less. I know you mean well. I'm asking you to stop commenting on that. If I want advice, I'll ask, and I promise I will sometimes."

IF THEY REACT

"WE'RE JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU"

"I know, and I'm grateful you care. I'm doing okay. I need you to trust me with my own life."

THEY GET HURT OR CRY

"I'm not trying to hurt you. I'm telling you because I want to see you more, not less."

IT HAPPENS AGAIN

Calmly and immediately. "Remember what we talked about? I'm not discussing that." Then change the subject. If it continues, end the visit kindly. Boundaries are kept by actions, not by speeches.

SCRIPT 7

THE REAL APOLOGY

THE SITUATION

You messed up. You hurt someone, broke a promise, said something you regret. You want to fix it, but the words keep coming out as excuses.

> **THE OPENING**
>
> "I owe you an apology, and I want to do it properly."

> **THE CORE**
>
> "I [what you did, specifically]. That was wrong, and I understand it made you feel [their feeling, if you know it]. I'm sorry. From now on I'll [what will change]. Is there anything else you need from me to make this right?"

WHAT A REAL APOLOGY DOES NOT INCLUDE

- "I'm sorry if you felt..." That puts the problem on their feelings.
- "I'm sorry, but..." Everything after "but" erases the apology.
- A long story about why you did it. Explain only if they ask.
- A demand for instant forgiveness. That's theirs to give, in their own time.

IF THEY'RE STILL ANGRY

"That's fair. You don't have to forgive me today. I just wanted you to know I understand what I did and I'm going to change it."

SCRIPT 8

ENDING A RELATIONSHIP KINDLY

THE SITUATION

You want to end a romantic relationship. You've thought about it, it's not a mood, and you're not going to change your mind. You want to be honest without being cruel.

THE OPENING

"I need to talk to you about something serious, and it's hard for me to say."

THE CORE

"I've thought about this for a long time, and I've decided I want to end our relationship. This isn't something I decided lightly, and it's not about one thing you did. I don't see the future we'd both want, and I think it's more honest to say it now."

IF THEY REACT

"CAN'T WE TRY AGAIN?"

"I understand why you want that. I've thought about it a lot, and my answer is no. I'm sorry."

"WHAT DID I DO WRONG?"

"It's not a list of mistakes. We want different things. I don't want to turn this into a trial."

THE CLOSE

"I'll [practical next step, like staying with a friend tonight or picking up my things on Saturday]. I'm sorry this hurts. I do wish you well."

Be clear. Ambiguity feels kind in the moment and cruel afterwards. Don't promise friendship you're not sure you want.

SCRIPT 9

LETTING SOMEONE GO

THE SITUATION

You manage a team and you have to tell someone their job is ending, because of performance or because of a restructuring. Follow your company's process and talk to HR first. This script is about the human part.

THE OPENING

"Thank you for coming. I have difficult news, and I'm going to be direct because I think that's more respectful."

THE CORE

"We've decided to end your employment. Your last day will be [date]. This decision is final. [One clear sentence on the reason, agreed with HR.] I know this is hard to hear."

Say the decision in the first minute. Every minute of small talk before it is cruel.

IF THEY REACT

THEY ARGUE

"I understand you disagree. The decision is made. What I can do now is make sure you have everything you need for the next steps."

THEY GO SILENT

Give them time. "Take a moment. There's no rush." Have water and tissues nearby.

THE CLOSE

"[HR person] will walk you through the practical details, like your final pay and references. If there's anything I can do to help you land well, like a reference, I'll do it."

SCRIPT 10

WHEN A FRIEND OWES YOU MONEY

THE SITUATION

You lent money to a friend. The date passed. They haven't mentioned it, and every time you see them it sits between you.

THE OPENING

"Hey, can I bring up something a bit awkward? It's about the money I lent you in [month]."

THE CORE

"I know things might be tight, and I don't want this to get weird between us. I'd like us to agree on a plan to pay it back, even if it's in small amounts. What would work for you?"

IF THEY REACT

"I FORGOT, SORRY"

"No problem. Shall we say [amount] on [date]? I'll send you a reminder so neither of us has to think about it."

"I CAN'T RIGHT NOW"

"Okay. Can we agree on a smaller amount each month, starting [date]? I'd rather go slowly than leave it open."

THE CLOSE

"Great. So [amount] every month on the [day] until it's done. Thanks for sorting this with me. I'm glad we talked."

A simple rule for the future. Only lend friends money you could afford to lose. It protects the money and the friendship.

SCRIPT 11

ASKING FOR HELP

THE SITUATION

You're overwhelmed. At work, with kids, with a sick parent, with your own mind. You don't ask because you don't want to be a burden.

> **THE OPENING**
>
> "I'm struggling a bit at the moment, and I wanted to ask if you could help me with something."

> **THE CORE**
>
> "Could you [specific, small request] on [day]? It would really take some pressure off."

The secret is to be specific. "Let me know if you need anything" rarely leads anywhere. "Could you pick up the kids on Thursday?" usually gets a yes.

> **IF THEY SAY NO**
>
> "Totally fine, thanks for being honest. I'll figure something out."

Then ask someone else. One no is not proof that nobody cares.

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

If you feel hopeless, can't cope or have thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone today. A doctor, a crisis line in your country, or someone you trust. You don't need a script for that. "I'm not okay and I need help" is enough.

SCRIPT 12

TALKING TO SOMEONE WHO IS GRIEVING

THE SITUATION

Someone you care about lost a person, a pregnancy, a job or a dream. You're afraid of saying the wrong thing, so you say nothing. Silence hurts more than clumsy words.

THE OPENING

"I heard about [loss]. I'm so sorry."

THE CORE

"I don't know what to say, but I didn't want to say nothing. I'm thinking of you. If you want to talk about [name], I'd love to hear about them."

WHAT HELPS

- Say the name of the person who died. Many grieving people want to hear it.
- Offer specific help. "I'll bring dinner on Wednesday. Is that okay?"
- Keep showing up after the funeral, when everyone else goes quiet.

WHAT DOESN'T

- "Everything happens for a reason."
- "At least..."
- "I know exactly how you feel."

> THE CLOSE
>
> "I'm here. I'll check in on you next week."

And then actually do it.

REPAIR

WHEN IT GOES BADLY

Sometimes you prepare, you use the bridge, you say all the right things, and it still goes wrong. Voices rise. Someone leaves the room. You say the thing you promised yourself you wouldn't.

That's not the end. That's a normal part of hard conversations. What matters is the repair.

THE PAUSE

If things heat up, call a pause before it gets worse. "I want to continue this, but I need a break. Can we talk again in an hour?" Then come back when you said you would.

THE REPAIR MESSAGE

> AFTER A TALK WENT WRONG
>
> "I've been thinking about our conversation. I didn't handle it the way I wanted to, especially when I [what you did]. I still want to sort this out with you. Could we try again on [day]?"

THE FOLLOW UP

After any important conversation, send a short message that confirms what you agreed. It prevents "that's not what we said" a week later and shows you take it seriously.

YOUR HARD CONVERSATION CHECKLIST

- [ ] Facts written down
- [ ] Outcome I want
- [ ] Their likely side
- [ ] Opening sentence ready
- [ ] Good time and place picked
- [ ] Next step agreed at the end
- [ ] Follow up message sent

> *Courage isn't feeling no fear. It's sending the message with your hands still shaking.*



Thank you for reading

The conversation you're avoiding is usually smaller than the silence around it. Go have it.

This book is part of the Booktronaut universe. Every category is a planet, every book is a world, and every page you read grows a universe of your own.

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