

H1

WHYZMEN • GUIDE CARD • SESSION 4

The Marriage-Safe Conversation

Use it when... *a hard or tender conversation at home.*

At home the question under most conversations isn't "What should we do?" It is "**Are we OK?**"

Settle yourself first	Slow your body and voice. Drop the urge to explain, defend or fix. Connection beats correctness.
Open gently	"What's been weighing on you today?" · "Is this a good time to talk, or later?" No rapid-fire questions; no "why."
Reflect what you hear	"So you're feeling overwhelmed." · "You were hoping for support, not advice."
Name the feeling gently	"That sounds lonely." · "I hear some hurt in that." Don't debate the emotion. Feelings don't need proof.
Reassure the relationship	"I'm on your side." · "You matter to me." · "I'm glad you told me." This is what makes it marriage-safe.

If she feels safe, the conversation succeeds — even if nothing is solved.

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H1 • The Marriage-Safe Conversation (back)

Ask before you fix	“Do you want me to just listen, or help think through options?” If she says listen, that is the work.
Repair fast	“I’m sorry — I shifted into fixing. Let me try that again.”
Close with connection	“Thank you for trusting me with that.” • “What would feel supportive right now?”

AVOID

“You shouldn’t feel that way” • “Here’s what you need to do” • “I was just trying to help” • “That’s not what happened” • silence that feels like withdrawal.

CELEBRATE WELL

Good news needs answering too. Not “Oh, that’s nice,” but **“That’s wonderful. What was the best part?”** — then let her tell it again.

“She doesn’t need correcting. She needs connecting.”

THIS SKILL’S PRACTICES S4 Her day first • S9 Three Good Things, aloud

More in the Toolkit: 4 • At Home

Gottman, *The Relationship Cure*; Gable et al. (2004) on answering good news.

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