

MAGIC PHRASES

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Words to defuse a tough situation.

"I'm struggling"

When to use it:

- To express your feelings or perspective.
- To invite someone into a conversation or a resolution.

What it does:

- It puts the responsibility on you for how you are feeling or perceiving a situation.
- It shares with the other person how this is impacting you.
- It reduces defensiveness.
- It gives the other person the opportunity to play a positive role. Instead of feeling attacked or blamed, they can step up and help with what you are struggling with.

Example: NOT: "You disrespected me."

Better: "I'm struggling because I feel disrespected."

"Where from here?"

When to use it:

- After giving someone a chance to share their concerns.
- When you want to know what they want to see happen next.

What it does:

- It's open-ended, so it allows them to respond however they want.
- It shifts focus from the past to the future.
- It gives people a chance to imagine what they want to see happen next.

"I'm hearing that..." "It sounds like..."

When to use it:

- After someone has shared with you.
- Preceding a summary or reframe of someone's words.

What it does:

- It affirms that you are listening.
- It gives them an opportunity to expand or correct your summary of their words.

"That's a lot."

When to use it:

- After someone expresses their concerns, feelings, or experiences.

What it does:

- It validates and empathizes with the storm of thoughts and emotions swirling in their head.

"My perspective is...What is your perspective?"

When to use it:

- When you've had a disagreement.
- When you are ready to both share and listen.

What it does:

- It presents your interpretation of things as a perspective and not the one truth.
- It gives them a chance to share how they see things.
- It gives you a chance to learn more about the situation.

"Can we work together to..."

When to use it:

- To make a request.
- When you have an idea for a resolution or next step.

What it does:

- It invites the other person in as a collaborator.
- It distributes responsibility to both of you.
- It reduces defensiveness.

Example: NOT: "You have to tell me about these situations before they escalate!"

Better: "Can we work together to improve our communication and prevent this from happening again?"

"This is important. What do I need to understand?"

When to use it:

- When someone is displaying strong emotions, even if they are directed at you.
- When someone is repeating themselves.

What it does:

- It validates that you are taking them seriously. It does not commit you to agreeing with them or condoning their behavior.
- It gives them the opportunity to express the core of the issue.
- It can defuse strong emotions. It is difficult to yell at someone who has said that what you are yelling about is important.