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# Reaching Your Teen

10 conversation swaps that trade the wall for a door

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When a conversation with your teen goes sideways, it's often the opening line. Something like "why would you do that?" lands as an attack, so they defend, and the talk is over before it starts. These swaps keep the same intent but change the result: from putting them on trial to being on their side. You won't say them perfectly. The shift is what matters.

## The swaps

**INSTEAD OF** "Why would you do that?"

→

**TRY** "Help me understand what was going on for you."

**INSTEAD OF** "Calm down."

→

**TRY** "That looks really hard right now."

**INSTEAD OF** "You always do this."

→

**TRY** "I've noticed this a few times. Can we look at it together?"

**INSTEAD OF** "We need to talk."

→

**TRY** "Got a few minutes later? Nothing heavy."

**INSTEAD OF** "What is wrong with you?"

→

**TRY** "This isn't like you. What's going on?"

**INSTEAD OF** "You're overreacting."

→

**TRY** "This really matters to you."

**INSTEAD OF** "Because I said so."

→

**TRY** "Here's the reason, even if you don't love it."

**INSTEAD OF** "Just get over it."

→

**TRY** "You don't have to be over it yet."

**INSTEAD OF** "I'm so disappointed in you."

→

**TRY** "I'm not worried about the mistake. I'm on your side."

# Try one this week

Which swap will you try, and in what situation?

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The point isn't the exact words. It's the move from attacking to understanding. Pick one, use it once, and notice what changes.