

# When You're Always the One Who Initiates – Playbook

Use this before the conversation. It's a field guide, not a script to memorize.

## Before You Start

Get clear on the real thing you want to say. Not the frustration on top. The thing underneath it.

Ask yourself: is it resentment, loneliness, feeling unwanted, or something else?

Write it down if it helps. One sentence. The more specific you can be, the more useful this conversation will be.

Choose your moment. Don't bring this up right after a rejection, during stress, or when there's already tension. Wait for calm.

## The One Thing to Remember Going In

You are not building a case. You are naming a pattern that both of you are caught in.

Every time you say "I" instead of "you," you keep the door open.

Every time you say "you always" or "you never," you close it.

# The Conversation Sequence

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## Step 1 - Open with your own experience, not her behavior.

Use one of these openers depending on your situation:

If this is the first time you're naming it:

"I want to talk about something that's been sitting with me. I feel like I'm always the one who initiates between us. I miss feeling like it goes both ways."

If you've gone quiet and want to reconnect:

"I've been pulling back lately and I think it's been making things worse. What I actually want is to feel closer to you again."

If she just said no and you want to say the real thing:

"I'm not upset about earlier. But I miss feeling wanted by you. That's what I'm sitting with."

## Step 2 - Stop talking and wait.

After you say the opener, go quiet. Let her process. Don't add more words to soften it or explain it further. The silence is not uncomfortable, it's working.

## Step 3 - Listen to her first response without countering.

Whatever she says, let her finish before you respond. If she gets defensive, that's information. If she goes quiet, that's information. If she opens up, that's a gift.

Do not immediately counter or defend. Try: "I hear you. Tell me more about that."

## Step 4 - Stay in the conversation when it gets hard.

Your instinct may be to wrap it up and move on once it feels uncomfortable. Resist that. This is the part that matters.

If things escalate, try: "I want to keep talking about this. Can we take a breath first?"

If she goes quiet and shuts down: "I'm not going anywhere. Take whatever time you need."

### Step 5 - Close without a resolution demand.

You don't need this conversation to end with a plan or a commitment. Naming it is enough for now.

Try: "I'm glad I said something. I just wanted you to know where I'm at."

## Adapting by Your Communication Style

**If you tend to keep the peace:** You may soften this so much that she doesn't realize you're trying to say something real. Deliver the actual line. Don't bury it in reassurances.

**If you go quiet under pressure:** After you say the hard thing, stay in the room. If you need a minute, say so: "I need a second, but I'm not going anywhere."

**If you tend to push harder when unheard:** Watch your tone after she responds. If it starts to escalate, pause before you add intensity. Say: "I want to keep talking about this. Can we come back in a bit?"

**If you get defensive when criticized:** She may respond by pointing out things that contributed to the distance. Let her finish. Try: "You might be right about that. Tell me more."

## Adapting by Her Response Pattern

**If she tends to bring things up and push for resolution:** She may be relieved you're naming this. Keep your energy calm and let her respond fully before adding more.

**If she's pulled back and gotten quieter over time:** Give her space after you name it. A quiet "I just wanted you to know" and then waiting is often more effective than more explanation.

**If she values her space and keeps things low-key:** Try asking what feels connecting for her. "What makes you feel close to me?" opens more doors than "why don't you ever initiate?"

**If you've been the one chasing while she pulls back:** Slow your reaching. Rebuild smaller connections first: a hand on her shoulder, asking about her day, making her tea without being asked.

## If It Goes Badly

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**If she says you're making a big deal out of nothing:**

"I'm not trying to make it a big deal. I'm trying to say something honest. Can we try again?"

**If she goes quiet and shuts down:**

Don't chase. Wait a few minutes. Then: "I'm not upset. I just want to talk when you're ready."

**If she turns it into a broader relationship complaint:**

Let her go. Hear it out. This conversation can wait until tomorrow.

**If nothing seems to be working:**

"I don't think I'm saying this right. Can we try again another time? I'm not going anywhere."

## What Success Looks Like

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You said the real thing, not the softened version of it.

You stayed in the conversation when it got uncomfortable.

She didn't immediately shut down or escalate. Even a small moment of "I hear you" counts.

You didn't leave the conversation with a scoreboard. You left it with something said that needed saying.