

How to Stop Giving the Silent Treatment - Checklist

Keep this nearby before or during your next hard conversation.

Before You Start

- ☐ Notice the early signs: tight chest, racing thoughts, the urge to leave.
- ☐ Decide on a specific time to name if you need a break, like twenty minutes.
- ☐ Remind yourself the goal is to stay in the relationship, not to win the fight.

What To Watch For

- ☐ The moment you stop responding with words and start responding with silence.
- ☐ The urge to leave the room without saying anything first.
- ☐ Her voice getting louder or more urgent as you go quiet.

What To Say

- ☐ "I'm getting overwhelmed and I need twenty minutes. I'm not leaving the conversation. I'll be back."
- ☐ "I shut down earlier and I know that left you sitting with it alone."
- ☐ "Still thinking. Not avoiding you. Talk tonight?"

What Not To Do

- ☐ Don't walk out without naming that you're taking a break.
- ☐ Don't stay gone longer than the time you gave her.
- ☐ Don't defend the silence once you're back in the room.

Repair Move

Come back on your own before she has to ask. Say, "I'm back. I meant it when I said twenty minutes," and let her respond first.

Success Check

- ☐ You named a break out loud instead of leaving without a word.
- ☐ You came back on your own before she had to come find you.