

How to Listen to Your Wife When You're Running on Empty - Checklist

Use this before or during a conversation when you're low on energy but want to show up.

Before You Start

- ☐ ☐ Take fifteen seconds before you walk in — switch from work brain to home brain
- ☐ ☐ Notice if you're already planning your response while she's still talking
- ☐ ☐ Name out loud (to yourself) what she might need: to be heard, not fixed
- ☐ ☐ Put your phone face-down before she finishes her first sentence

What To Watch For

- ☐ ☐ Her voice speeds up or she repeats herself — she's checking if you're with her
- ☐ ☐ She trails off or says "never mind" — she's already checked out of the conversation
- ☐ ☐ Your instinct to fix or solve kicks in before she's finished the story
- ☐ ☐ You notice your eyes drifting — that's the cue to reset with Move 1

What To Say

- ☐ ☐ "Hang on, let me actually look at you for this." [Put phone down.] "Okay. What happened?"
- ☐ ☐ "That sounds like a genuinely frustrating day." [Pause.] "What part of it is still sitting with you?"
- ☐ ☐ "I'm running on empty right now. Give me fifteen minutes and I want to hear all of it."
- ☐ ☐ "Wait, don't never-mind me. Say it again, I'm here now."
- ☐ ☐ One follow-up question: "What did you end up telling her?" [Wait for the full answer.]

What Not To Do

- ☐ ☐ Don't jump to a solution before she asks for one
- ☐ ☐ Don't fake presence when you're too drained to actually listen
- ☐ ☐ Don't let "never mind" close the conversation without circling back
- ☐ ☐ Don't nod along while your brain is somewhere else — she can tell

Repair Move

If you checked out mid-conversation: "You're right, I lost the thread there. Say it again — I'm actually here now."

Success Check

- ☐ ☐ She finished her sentences instead of trailing off or shutting down
- ☐ ☐ She brought up something small and unprompted later in the evening