

When She Shuts Down Because You Got Too Loud - Checklist

Use this before a difficult conversation or after one that went off the rails.

Before You Start

- ☐ ☐ Pick a moment when neither of you is already stressed or rushed
- ☐ ☐ Check your own state: are you regulated enough to have this conversation right now?
- ☐ ☐ Know which script you're going to reach for if your volume starts to climb
- ☐ ☐ Commit to sitting down (posture signals your state before your words do)

What To Watch For

- ☐ ☐ Jaw tightening, voice speeding up, chest rising: these are your early warning signs
- ☐ ☐ Repeating the same point with more force: that's the signal you feel unheard, not that she needs more volume
- ☐ ☐ Her eyes going flat or her body turning away: she's at or past her threshold
- ☐ ☐ The urge to push harder when she goes quiet: resist this

What To Say

- ☐ ☐ Early Warning Script: "I'm getting louder than I want to be. Let me try that again more slowly."
- ☐ ☐ Scheduled Return: "I need to step out for 20 minutes. I'm not done with this, I'll be back."
- ☐ ☐ Return Script: "I got heated earlier and I'm sorry for that. I want to hear what you were trying to tell me."
- ☐ ☐ Soft Check-In: "I'm not asking you to talk about it right now. I just want you to know I know I went too hard."
- ☐ ☐ Next-Day Close: "When I get that loud, you can't hear what I'm actually trying to say. I want to get better at that."

What Not To Do

- ☐ ☐ Don't apologize for having feelings: apologize for the volume or intensity specifically
- ☐ ☐ Don't promise to never get loud again: commit to a specific action instead
- ☐ ☐ Don't return from a break at the same intensity you left with
- ☐ ☐ Don't push for immediate resolution when she's still shut down

- ☐ ☐ Don't wait in silence and expect that to count as repair

Repair Move

If the conversation ended badly and you haven't closed the loop:

- ☐ ☐ Come back with the Next-Day Close script (brief, low-pressure, no expectation of a response)
- ☐ ☐ Name the specific thing that broke the conversation: your volume, not the topic
- ☐ ☐ Give her time to come back: she may need an hour or more after an escalation

Success Check

- ☐ ☐ She stayed in the conversation, or came back to it within the hour, after you lowered your volume
- ☐ ☐ She brought something up the next day without significant encouragement
- ☐ ☐ The shutdown was shorter than it's been before