

When Being Too Nice Is Hurting Your Marriage – Checklist

Use this before or during a conversation where you're trying to say what you actually mean.

Before You Start

- ☐ ☐ I know what one specific thing I want to say (not a list, just one thing)
- ☐ ☐ I've checked my intention: I'm saying this to get closer, not to release pressure
- ☐ ☐ I've chosen a moment that isn't mid-task, stressful, or rushed
- ☐ ☐ I've done a quiet practice run of what I want to say

What To Watch For

- ☐ ☐ My voice staying even, not rising with the words
- ☐ ☐ Stopping after I say my piece, not over-explaining
- ☐ ☐ Noticing if I'm about to back away because she seems unsure
- ☐ ☐ Watching for the urge to apologize for having said it

What To Say

- ☐ ☐ Opening: "There's something I've been holding back and I want to tell you."
- ☐ ☐ Preference: "I'd actually rather do it this way."
- ☐ ☐ Naming something stored: "When [situation], I felt [feeling]. I didn't say anything at the time but I've been carrying it."
- ☐ ☐ Setting a limit: "I said yes earlier but that doesn't actually work for me."
- ☐ ☐ Frustration without a fight: "When [situation], I felt dismissed. I don't think you meant it that way."

What Not To Do

- ☐ ☐ Don't back away from what you said just because she's surprised
- ☐ ☐ Don't apologize for having an opinion or a need
- ☐ ☐ Don't turn this into a list of grievances
- ☐ ☐ Don't keep talking to fill silence after you've said your piece
- ☐ ☐ Don't expect one conversation to fix a long-standing pattern

Repair Move

If the conversation goes sideways:

- ☐ She gets defensive: "I'm not trying to criticize you. I just wanted to tell you how I felt."
- ☐ She shuts down: "Take your time. I'm not going anywhere."
- ☐ She brings up her own things: "Tell me what you've been carrying. I want to hear it."
- ☐ It falls flat: Come back in a few days. Consistency is what shifts things, not any single moment.

Success Check

- ☐ ☐ I said something honest and didn't back away when she responded
- ☐ ☐ The conversation felt more real than our usual exchanges, even if it was uncomfortable
- ☐ ☐ I didn't over-explain or apologize afterward