BOUNDARIES OVER BURNOUT: THE INTENSIVE

Scripts:

WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WTF TO SAY



WITH AMY GREEN SMITH CPCC, CHT

SCRIPTS:

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WHEN SOMEONE CATCHES YOU OFF GUARD

BUY YOURSELF TIME:

"Wow, I wasn't expecting that."

"That really caught me off guard."

"I don't quite know what to say here. I need some time to process."

"I'm going to need a bit of time to wrap my head around that so I can give it a proper response."

"I'm not sure I'll show up as my best self if we dive in now. Can we talk later?"

WHEN YOU'RE NOT READY TO TALK (BUT THEY ARE)

"I'd love to dig into this with you, but I'm fried. Can we table it until tomorrow?"

"I want to give this conversation the attention it deserves. Can we chat in the morning?"

"I wish I had the energy you deserve right now. I need a rain check for later this week."

WHEN IT'S YOU WHO NEEDS TO TALK - ASK FOR CONVERSATIONAL CONSENT:

"I'd love to run something by you when you have time."

"I've got something on my mind—can we talk sometime this week?"

"There's something important I'd like to share. When is a good time to chat?"

SETTING BOUNDARIES WITH TOUCH/PHYSICAL SPACE

"I'll pass on the hugs—I'm not a big hugger."

"I'll pass on the back slaps, thanks."

"Please don't touch my body."

USING A JOKE AS AN ENTRY POINT:

"Hey, you don't have consent! In all seriousness though, I'm not a touchy person."

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WHEN SOMEONE IS RUDE/OFFENSIVE

CALL IT OUT WITHOUT BEING COMBATIVE:

"I don't share that opinion, but I respect that it's yours."

"I don't appreciate that comment."

"That's highly offensive—I'm going to excuse myself."

"I'm not sure where that came from, but it doesn't work for me."

"I actually don't share that perspective."

"I'm not comfortable with this kind of teasing."

"Oh, did you not get the memo? We're not making fun of people anymore." (Then follow with serious clarity)

"But, for reals—I don't find that funny. Please don't show me things like that again."

WHEN SOMEONE IS PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE

ASK FOR CLARITY:

"What do you mean by that?"

"I'm not sure what that comment was supposed to mean."

CALL OUT THE TONE:

"That sounded like a joke, but it didn't feel like one."

"Interesting—You say one thing, but it seems you mean another."

SAYING NO WITHOUT OVER-EXPLAINING

GRACEFUL DECLINES:

"Thank you so much for thinking of me. Sadly, I'm not available."

"Unfortunately, it won't work this time around."

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"I need some downtime. I have to pass this time."

"To be honest, if I add one more thing, I just might break."

"Thank you so much for thinking of me. Unfortunately, I won't be able to help this time. Please ask again!"

"Unfortunately, I'm not available. I appreciate the invite."

WHEN PRESSURED FOR IMMEDIATE ANSWER:

"If you need an answer right away, I'll have to politely decline."

"I don't feel good about committing without checking my other obligations."

"I'd hate to have to back out last minute, so I better not commit."

USING VULNERABILITY:

"I'll be super honest—I'm barely staying afloat and just can't add one more thing."

"I've been working on not overcommitting myself, so I'm going to decline. Thank you for thinking of me."

"Believe me, I'd rather spend time with you, but I need to stay focused right now."

CLARIFYING INTENT

WHEN REJECTING/DECLINING - SPELLING OUT YOUR FEAR/WORRY:

"The last thing I would want you to think is that I don't want to be there. Please keep inviting me—it just fell on a bad date."

"My biggest fear is that you would think I don't love you or care about what we were planning."

STATING WHAT *IS* OR *IS NOT* YOUR INTENTION:

"Please know my intention is not to hurt you."

"Please know my intention is simply to honor what's real and true for me."

"My only goal is to communicate honestly."

"I don't expect you to agree with me or even support my choice, but I hope you can respect it."

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SETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

SOFT STARTUP WITH GRATITUDE:

"Thank you so much for taking the time to talk. I know this is super awkward and I really appreciate you making the time."

OWNING YOUR PART:

"I haven't said this kindly in the past. That's on me and I'm truly sorry for that."

"There's been a lot on my mind I haven't shared, and that's unfair to you."

"It was never my intention to make you feel dismissed or unimportant. I'm genuinely sorry and I'll work to not do it again."

REQUESTING A SAFE CONVERSATION CONTAINER:

"I'd love to share what's on my mind and get it all out and then I'd love to get your perspective."

USING THE 3-PART RECIPE:

"Here's what happened... Here's my interpretation... Here's my request..."

IF YOU BROUGHT NOTES TO THE CONVERSATION:

"I know it may seem silly that I wrote this all down, but it meant a lot to me to get this right."

"Things have gone off the rails in the past, and I wanted to do my best to stay focused and kind."

WHEN SOMEONE INTERRUPTS OR DERAILS

STAY ON TOPIC:

"Let's stay focused on this topic first. And then I'm happy to address your concerns after we get through [main topic]."

"I hear you that there are other things you'd like to address. I'm definitely game. Let's finish this topic and then we can circle back to this."

"I'd appreciate if you'd let me finish" or simply, "Please let me finish."

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DON'T TAKE THE BAIT:

"My car is not available. I hope you can understand." (Don't argue about the why)

"As I said, that isn't something I'm willing to do/say/be a part of."

ACKNOWLEDGING SOMEONE WITHOUT AGREEING

I can certainly see that perspective.

I can absolutely appreciate that experience.

I completely hear you.

I can understand how things felt totally different on your end.

WHEN THINGS GET HEATED/NEED TO PAUSE

DE-ESCALATE:

"Things are getting a bit heated. Let's take a break, take a breath, and jump back in in 30 min."

"I think tensions are getting high because this means a lot to both of us. I know I could use a break to cool off. How 'bout you?"

"Listen—I think we both really want to be heard and that can't happen if we're so activated. Let's take a quick break."

IF THEY ARE BULLYING/NAME CALLING: *(You can't have a productive conversation with someone in that state.)*

"I'm happy to speak with you, but not if you continue speaking to me in that manner."

"I"m hitting pause. We can pick this back up in a bit."

NOTE: ONLY use the above language if you are 110% sure you aren't in physical danger. If you suspect you are in physical danger, call in the people-pleasing defense tactic to keep you safe and plan an exit.

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WHEN YOU NEED TO ENFORCE A BOUNDARY

"Remember the chat we had the other day/week about [original boundary]? I was really serious about that and I want to request again that [restate specific boundary request]."

"I wanted to check back in on [original boundary]. In case I didn't express how truly important that was to me, I want you to hear that I [specific boundary request]. "

"Hey, listen. I know we've chatted about this a handful of times. I need to let you know that if it happens again, I'm going to have to [implement consequence]."

WHEN SOMEONE DISMISSES YOUR LIFESTYLE CHOICES

[Lightly] *"Are you seriously giving me a hard time for making a healthy decision for myself?" (ie. teasing you for working out too much, not drinking, etc.)*

[In joking manner] *"Oh, I'm currently not accepting on feedback on my life choices. All joking aside though, it's a powerful decision for me so I'd appreciate it if it didn't keep coming up."*

"I don't appreciate being dismissed/teased for making choices that work for me."

WHEN SOMEONE SAYS "YOU'RE SO SENSITIVE/TOO EMOTIONAL" OR "I"M JUST JOKING"

"Yeah, I tend to have a bit more emotional intelligence than most folks" or if addressing a man, "Yeah, women tend to be more emotionally intelligent than men."

"I know, right? It's one of my super powers."

"A joke, huh? Sounds like you wanted to be a dick but didn't want accountability for it."

"I really don't appreciate you deflecting by dismissing my feelings."

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