

BOUNDARY SCRIPTS YOU CAN SAY OUT LOUD

Purpose

Short, calm lines that draw a clear line and a next step. Use neutral tone. If you feel unsafe, stop and seek help (911 in danger; National DV Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE; 988 for crisis).

How to structure it (quick template)

"I'm not okay with **[behavior]**. I'm going to **[boundary/next step]**. I'm ready to talk when **[condition for safety]**."

VOICE / VOLUME

- "I'm not okay with raised voices. I'm pausing this and will come back in 20 minutes to talk calmly."
- "I hear you. Lower voice, or I'm stepping outside to reset and we'll try again at :30."

INTERRUPTING / OVERTALKING

- "I'm going to finish my sentence. If I'm interrupted again, I'll pause this and we can try in 30 minutes."
- "I'll listen next. Please let me finish this thought without interruption."

NAME-CALLING / DISRESPECT

- "I won't continue while I'm being called names. I'm taking a break; we can talk when it's respectful."
- "That language is not okay with me. Let's try again when we can both be respectful."

CIRCULAR ARGUMENT / GOING NOWHERE

- "We're repeating ourselves. I'm stopping for now; let's set a 10-minute talk at 7pm with one goal: next step."
- "I want progress, not looping. Let's write one thing each we can do and revisit tomorrow."

TIMEOUT / COOL-OFF

- "I need 20 minutes to reset. I'm not leaving the conversation—just the heat. I'll be back at :45."
- "I'm taking a walk to cool down; we'll restart when we're both ready to listen."

LEAVING THE HOUSE / PERSONAL SPACE

- "I'm going to my sister's/lobby/coffee shop for an hour to cool off. I'll text when I'm ready to talk safely."
- "I need the living room for 30 minutes to breathe. You can have it after."

AROUND KIDS

- “I’m not discussing this in front of the kids. We’ll pause now and pick it up after bedtime.”
- “Voices are rising around the kids. I’m stopping this and we’ll come back when they’re asleep.”

LATE-NIGHT / EXHAUSTED

- “I can’t do hard conversations when I’m tired. Let’s schedule 10am tomorrow.”
- “I want to do this well. Not tonight—let’s pick a time when we have energy.”

IN THE CAR / DRIVING

- “I won’t argue while driving. We can switch drivers or pause until we arrive.”
- “For safety, I’m turning off this topic until the car is parked.”

TEXT / PHONE FIGHTS

- “I don’t do conflict by text. Let’s pause and talk in person at 6pm.”
- “I’m muting this thread for an hour and will respond after I cool down.”

SUBSTANCE INVOLVED

- “I don’t do conflict when either of us has been drinking. Let’s revisit tomorrow.”
- “We can talk when we’re both clear and sober.”

PHYSICAL PROXIMITY

- “Please take two steps back. I need space to feel safe while we talk.”
- “I’m moving to the kitchen. You’re welcome to join me if we keep it calm.”

MONEY / HOT-BUTTON TOPICS

- “Let’s keep this to the budget line items. If it turns personal, I’m pausing and we’ll reschedule.”
- “One topic at a time. If we switch topics, I’m stopping and we’ll pick one to finish tomorrow.”

SEX / INTIMACY

- “I’m not available for intimacy when I feel unsafe. Let’s rebuild with calm talk and respect first.”
- “Connection for me starts with safety. Let’s focus on that tonight.”

DIGITAL / TECH BOUNDARIES

- “I’m not okay with checking my phone without permission. Please hand it back; we can discuss trust at 4pm.”
- “Screens down for this talk. If phones come out, I’ll pause the conversation.”

ACCOUNTABILITY / NEXT STEP

- “I need an apology without excuses and one concrete change. If that’s not possible now, let’s pause until it is.”
- “I’m asking for: lower voice, no interruptions, and one next action. Then I’m ready to continue.”

IF HE PUSHES BACK

- “I’m not arguing about the boundary. I’m enforcing it.”
- “I care about us. This is how I stay in the conversation safely.”
- “We can talk when the boundary is respected.”

IF THE BOUNDARY IS IGNORED

- “I’m ending this conversation for now. I’ll check back tomorrow at 6pm.”
- “I’m not safe to continue. I’m leaving and will text when I’m ready.”

AFTERCARE / REPAIR

- “Thank you for keeping it calm. I felt heard when you let me finish.”
- “I appreciate the pause. Next time, let’s use the 20-minute reset earlier.”

— Keep this handy. Short, calm, consistent. Repeat as needed.