

No-Heat Phrase Bank

Ready-to-use phrases that keep conversations open. Print this. Keep it handy.

Openers (Low Heat)

- "I've been thinking about something."
- "This surprised me."
- "I didn't expect to feel this way."
- "Can I tell you a quick story?"
- "I might be wrong, but here's what I noticed."

Bridges (Values-First)

- "I care about doing right by what we depend on."
- "I was raised to respect honest work."
- "I don't like systems that hide the truth."
- "I believe in taking responsibility for what we support."

De-Escalators (Keep Dignity Intact)

- "This isn't about blaming anyone."
- "The system is designed to keep people in the dark."
- "I'm not asking for perfection."
- "If this isn't your lane, that's okay."

Asks (Incremental)

- "Would you try one small switch this week?"
- "Would you be open to one alternative — just once?"
- "If you're curious, I'll send you something short."
- "Would you tell me what you think after you look?"

■ What to Avoid (Common Tripwires)

Tripwire Phrase	Why It Fails
"Only an idiot..."	Implies stupidity → identity defense activates
"If you cared..."	Implies moral failure → shame response
"People like you..."	Us-vs-them framing → walls go up
"How can anyone..."	Contempt as rhetoric → conversation over
"It's obvious that..."	Implies ignorance → listener shuts down