

The 3-Sentence Script to Stop a Fight Before It Escalates

A starting point to try, not a promise. Use this for ordinary disagreements when both people can safely say no, take space, and return.

1. Notice the shift

Watch for a sharper voice, repeated points, interrupting, or reaching for “always” and “never.” Those signals are a cue to pause the pattern, not prove your case.

“We are starting to repeat ourselves, and I want us to understand each other.”

2. Name one need

Describe your experience and one concrete need. Avoid telling the other person what they really think or assigning a motive.

“I felt left out when the plans were made, and I want us to decide together.”

3. Make one manageable request

Ask for one next step, or propose a pause with a clear return time that works for both people.

“Can we pause for 20 minutes, then come back and decide just this one thing?”

MAKE IT YOURS

One moment. One need. One next step.

Fill in your version

1. "I notice we are _____."
2. "I felt _____ when _____. What I need is _____."
3. "Could we _____?"

Before you try it

Choose a neutral moment to agree on a pause-and-return plan. Keep your tone ordinary. A script is not a technique for forcing agreement, securing affection, or overriding a boundary.

If the other person disagrees

You can acknowledge a different view without abandoning your own: "I hear that you see it differently. I still want us to address how this affected me." If discussion keeps escalating, stop and revisit whether the conversation is safe and workable.

A seven-day experiment

Pick one small rule together: check before committing both people to plans, let each person finish one thought, or agree on a return time after a break. After a week, ask what helped and what needs to change. Do not grade or police each other.

When this guide is not the right tool

Fear, coercion, threats, monitoring, violence, abuse, or thoughts of suicide require appropriate support, not better argument technique. In the US: immediate danger 911; suicide or emotional crisis call/text 988; relationship abuse 800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Outside the US, contact local emergency services or findahelpline.com. Internet use may be monitored.

Explore your recurring pattern at GETSAMEFIGHT.COM. Educational, not therapy or a diagnosis. No guaranteed outcome.