



5 Sentences Your Teenager Needs to Hear

Small shifts in the way we speak can make a big difference
in how safe our teenagers feel to come to us.

Before you begin

These aren't scripts to memorise.

They're reminders of the kind of relationship most of us hope to build with our children.

You don't need to use all five. You don't need to get them right every time. Pick the one that makes you pause — that's usually the one worth practising.

01

“I'm really glad you told me.”

WHAT YOUR TEENAGER NEEDS

To know they can come to us, even when they've made a mistake.

When teenagers tell us something difficult, they're often taking a risk. If our first response is anger, panic or a lecture, they may decide it's safer not to tell us next time. Being glad they told us doesn't mean we're glad about what happened. It means we're glad they trusted us enough to tell us.

INSTEAD OF...

“What were you thinking?”

“How could you do that?”

“Why didn't you tell me sooner?”

TRY...

“Thank you for telling me.”

“I'm really glad you came to me.”

EXAMPLE

Your son tells you he's failed an exam. Instead of jumping straight into solutions or disappointment, take a breath. “I know that wasn't easy to tell me. I'm really glad you did.” Only then begin talking about what comes next.

02

“Help me understand.”

WHAT YOUR TEENAGER NEEDS

To feel understood before they're corrected.

Teenagers don't expect us to agree with everything they do. But they do want us to try to understand what was happening for them. Curiosity opens conversations. Judgement closes them.

INSTEAD OF...

"What were you thinking?"

"That makes no sense."

"Why would you do something so stupid?"

TRY...

"Help me understand what was going on for you."

EXAMPLE

Your daughter comes home after breaking a family rule. Instead of launching into a lecture, ask: "Help me understand what happened." You may still need to set a boundary. But understanding comes before problem solving.

03

“That makes sense.”

WHAT YOUR TEENAGER NEEDS

To feel that their emotions are accepted.

Validation doesn't mean agreeing. It simply means recognising that their feelings are real. When teenagers feel understood, they're much more likely to listen.

INSTEAD OF...

"You're overreacting."

"It's not a big deal."

"You'll get over it."

TRY...

"That makes sense."

"I can understand why you'd feel that way."

EXAMPLE

Your teenager is devastated because a friend excluded them. It may seem small to you. To them, it feels enormous. Instead of minimising it, simply say: "That makes sense. I can see why that hurt."

04

“I was wrong. I'm sorry.”

WHAT YOUR TEENAGER NEEDS

Parents who model accountability.

We all lose our patience sometimes. The goal isn't to be perfect. The goal is to repair. One sincere apology teaches more about responsibility than a hundred lectures.

INSTEAD OF...

Pretending nothing happened.

Or: “I'm sorry you felt upset.”

TRY...

“I shouted earlier and that wasn't okay. I'm sorry.”

EXAMPLE

You snapped after a stressful day. Later, when everyone is calm: “I've been thinking about earlier. I shouldn't have spoken to you like that. I'm sorry.” Your apology doesn't weaken your authority. It strengthens trust.

05

“I love you, and I’m here with you while we figure this out.”

WHAT YOUR TEENAGER NEEDS

To know they don't have to face life's challenges alone.

Teenagers don't need parents who solve every problem. They need parents who stay alongside them while they learn to solve problems themselves. Connection comes before correction.

INSTEAD OF...

“Don't worry.”

“I'll sort it out.”

“You'll be fine.”

TRY...

“I love you.”

“We'll figure this out together.”

“I'm here with you.”

EXAMPLE

Your teenager is anxious about exams, friendships or making a difficult decision. You don't have to have all the answers. Sometimes the greatest gift is knowing someone is beside them.

This week

Choose one sentence. Just one.

Use it three times this week — even if it feels awkward, even if nothing seems to change straight away.

Notice what happens in the seconds after you say it. Not what your teenager says. What shifts in the room.

THE SENTENCE I'M CHOOSING

WHAT I NOTICED

FIVE SENTENCES YOUR TEENAGER NEEDS TO HEAR

- 1 “I’m really glad you told me.”
- 2 “Help me understand.”
- 3 “That makes sense.”
- 4 “I was wrong. I’m sorry.”
- 5 “I love you, and I’m here with you while we figure this out.”

One final thought

Our teenagers won't remember every conversation. But they will remember how they felt when they were with us.

When they felt safe. When they felt heard. When they felt accepted.
When they knew they could come to us, even after making a mistake.

These five sentences won't transform a relationship overnight. But spoken consistently, and backed by genuine curiosity and care, they can help create something every teenager needs: a home where they feel safe to be themselves.

And perhaps that's what most of us want for our children. Not perfection. Not constant happiness. But the confidence to be who they are, the resilience to navigate life's challenges, and the security of knowing there's always someone in their corner.

*Connection isn't built through perfect words.
It's built through thousands of small moments.*

IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO FURTHER

The Connection Reset

These five sentences are a beginning.

If they helped, there's a short course that goes deeper — three simple shifts that change the atmosphere at home, in under an hour.

3 short video lessons

The Connection Reset Workbook

Lifetime access

€29



Scan the code, or visit eglishiakalli.com/connectionreset

Get instant access — €29



Hello, I'm Egli

I support parents of teenagers as they rebuild connection through calmer conversations, a deeper understanding of what's really going on, and practical tools for real life.

I'm a mum of two teenagers, an educator, parent coach and mediator. For over 30 years, I've worked with teenagers and their families in classrooms, around kitchen tables, and during some of life's most difficult conversations.

If there's one thing I've learned, it's this...

Behind every slammed door, eye roll, or argument is a young person trying to figure out who they are... and a parent doing the very best they can.

I don't believe in perfect parenting. I believe in curiosity over judgement, connection over control, and the skills that make small shifts possible.

From my home in Cyprus, I support families around the world through coaching, workshops and talks. You can also find me on [Instagram](#) · [@eglishiakalli](#).

THE BOOK

Learning How to Learn by Learning Who I Am: A Handbook for Mindful Students

A practical guide that helps students develop the self-awareness, mindset and habits that support meaningful learning and personal growth. It also gives parents valuable insights into how they can better support their teenager's learning journey. It's available on Amazon.

Egli Shiakali.
communicating from the heart