



Ten Scripts for Defensiveness

MASTER YOUR RESPONSE

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Hi, I'm Dr. Tracy Dalglish

As a psychologist and couples therapist, I help people like you break old relationship cycles and find joy in their relationships.

If we wait for something to change, we know that nothing changes.

I commonly hear from couples that the conversations they hoped would bring them closer end up in the same painful loop – one partner shares something, the other defends, and suddenly they feel miles apart. Defensiveness is one of the most common patterns I see in my work, and it shows up most when we feel criticized, blamed, or like our character is on the line. The instinct to protect ourselves isn't a flaw – it's human. But over time, it keeps us from being heard, and from truly hearing the person we love most.

The good news is that defensiveness is something you can soften, in real time, with the right language. When we have words ready for the hard moments – words that take a small piece of responsibility, slow the conversation down, or signal "I'm with you, not against you" – we create space for repair instead of escalation. It isn't about being perfect. It's about having a few go-to phrases that help you stay in the room when everything in you wants to push back.

So inside this guide, you'll find 10 scripts you can use the next time defensiveness shows up – yours, your partner's, or both at once. You don't need to use all of them, and you don't need to get it right the first time. Even trying one in your next hard conversation counts. Pick the one that feels most like you, practice it, and notice what begins to shift.



Warmly, Dr. Tracy D.

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“When you stop
hearing your
partner's words as a
verdict about you,
you can finally hear
what they're actually
asking for”

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Before You Start

Here are some important considerations before using the scripts. The language used in the scripts are words that I teach my clients to use - and also ones I use in my own relationship. The key is for you to take the theme of the script and put it into your own words.

View Them as Predictable

People are predictable. It's a core truth of most human behavior. We can use this to our benefit. When you're entering into a difficult conversation, prepare yourself for your loved one's defensive response. Your response to them is where you have the most control.

Say Less

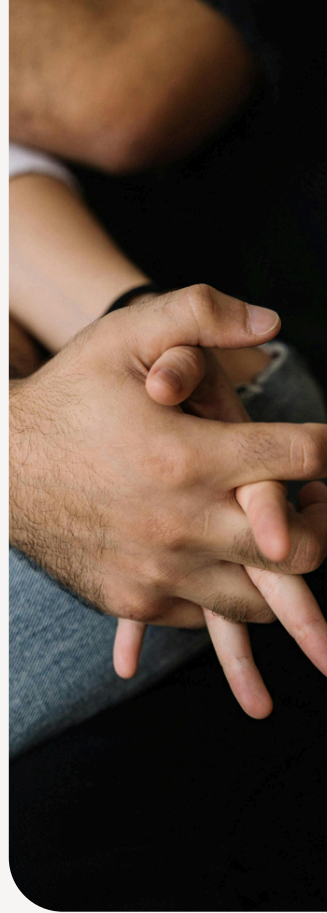
You'll notice the scripts are short. This is intentional. Great communicators are not long-winded. Instead, they're focused on understanding our internal experience, sharing it, and asking questions. Instead of spiralling into all the times this person gets defensive, stay focused on the issue at hand.

Practice Being A Good Listener

We listen to respond, rather than actually trying to understand what the other person is saying. When you use one of these scripts, practice being curious and try to understand what your partner is sharing with you.

Choose One

It can be overwhelming to deal with defensiveness. Often, we end up getting triggered and escalating in the conversation, activating our negative cycle that keeps you both stuck (I teach you how to stop the cycle and to discover what your arguments are really about inside the lessons in Be Connected). Choose ONE statement below to prepare yourself for the next time your loved one is defensive.



10 Scripts for Defensiveness

"It seems you got defensive when I shared this. I want you to know that I'm not trying to attack you, and I'm sorry if it came out that way. Could you try hearing the feedback that I am giving you as a way for us to be a team?"

"What did you hear me say? It sounds like you might have heard me say something critical."

"This is really important. I need you to put down your defensiveness. I know this is a hard subject for us."

"It's okay if we don't see this the same way. We still love each other, even if we disagree."

"I think we're getting side tracked. Let's focus on this one issue, and we can come back to what you want to talk about later."

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"When I bring up [topic], I notice that you get defensive. What happens for you when I bring this topic up?"

"I know sometimes when I share things, it feels like a personal attack on you. This isn't my intention. Is there something I can do to share these things to help you listen?"

"I would love for us to resolve this issue but as you get defensive, I start to get more angry. I need you to listen to what I'm saying first."

"We would feel more like a team if we can find a common path forward from this issue. Should we revisit the conversation now or later to do that?"

Consciously decide that this is not the most important issue to press forward. Practice seeing and validating your loved one's emotion underneath their defensiveness

What's Next?

You've taken an important step by slowing down, reflecting, and seeing each other more clearly. The truth is, change doesn't come from one big moment. It comes from small, steady shifts over time.

If you're craving guidance as you move into the next chapter—tools you can use together, scripts that make hard conversations easier, and a place to return to when life feels overwhelming—there's a path already waiting for you.

Here's how you can keep building the relationship you're choosing together.

Meet **Be CONNECTED**

SUPPORT THAT MEETS YOU WHERE YOU ARE - EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MESS

The most effective tools are the ones you can access instantly—the ones that meet you in the exact moment when you are feeling stuck.

IMAGINE A PRIVATE TRUSTED SPACE WHERE YOU COULD

Get step-by-step guidance in the middle of a fight. Learn to de-escalate tension before it boils over. Reconnect in ways that feel natural, not forced. Stop repeating the same exhausting patterns.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT ALL ALONE

What if you had someone in your corner who's been there? Who's done the work with real couples just like you and can give you clean next steps that actually fit into your life.



Did you know?

Even strong couples get stuck in patterns. What matters isn't avoiding those moments.

It's having the tools and language to navigate them together. Be Connected gives you those at your fingertips.

Get the Support You Need The Moment You Need It

[JOIN BE CONNECTED](#)

A Powerful Relationship Solution at Your Fingertips

Evidence-Based Lessons

Feel grounded and understood, knowing you have a stable foundation to return to—no matter what challenges come up between you.

Cutting Edge AI

Feel supported and understood with guidance that helps your conversations move from tension to genuine teamwork.

Supported by Expertise

Feel steady and supported, knowing you have expert guidance to return to any time your relationship feels uncertain.

Library of Resources

Rediscover warmth, playfulness, and desire—so your relationship feels alive again rather than like two ships passing in the night.

Be Connected is designed to give you back energy, not take it away.

As a Thank You for working through this guide, you can click the exclusive link below to save 50% on access to Be Connected. Start today and do something different for you and your relationship.

[SAVE 50% HERE](#)

"I can't speak highly enough of Be Connected... I feel like it's really helping me strengthen my relationship with my partner."

– Kristen L.

"Be Connected provided useful, research-based information as well as practical tools to improve relationships."

– Megan N.