

HOW TO HAVE A SERIOUS CONVERSATION WITH YOUR PARENTS

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If you've read the title, then you would know this task is a daunting one. This might even be equivalent to walking into a lion's den. However, it's also very important to discuss any serious matter with your parents in a constructive way, whether it's about your mental health or life decisions.

Take some notes.

NO HEADS UPS

Contrary to what you might think, it's not always a good option to give your parents a heads up that you are going to talk about something really serious. Personally, whenever I have started a conversation in a casual way setting the precedent that it's perfectly normal for us to be having this conversation, it prevented my parents from having a big reaction or being dramatic. This doesn't mean you should drop a bomb from nowhere. Rather stay composed and try to bring up the matter as casually but sincerely as possible.

REVERSE THE ROLES

Sometimes it's also important to treat your parents as the children and let them know that you are willing to listen to their opinions with as much as support you yourself would have wanted. Tell them in clear words that you are open to their opinion and want to have a free discourse with them.



When your parents see you actually taking their opinions into consideration, they will also treat your opinions with more seriousness. Showing that you think all of you are comrades in the same battle conveys your feelings and perspective way better than you'd imagine. Besides, it's important to also check their mental health state and be considerate.

SHOW THEM YOU'RE AN ADULT TOO

Not that they mean any harm by it, but parents often find

it difficult to understand their children have grown up and are capable of being rational and logical beings too. But when you do show your mature side to them, they start considering you as confidants. Being concise, clear and honest about yourself is always the best way to show them where you stand. After striking up a conversation, often it's not possible to continue it in a peaceful way. But in that case, you must try your best to let them know that you want to reach a consensus or go right to the bottom of it.

That doesn't necessarily mean instantaneous unanimity, rather if it's suitable, take breaks and give them space. You also take your time and establish the fact that you want to be heard and understood too. Respectfully let them know what hurts you and what you think might be wrong on their part. This often enables parents to calm down and see your point of view better than ever.

Not everything goes by the book but it's always important to remember that at the end of the day, a successful conversation is one where both sides have gotten their points across. Sometimes a conversation might take time; it's important to persist and not give up after the first try.

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How (Not) to Treat Your Friend in a Toxic Relationship

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It might be infuriating that the wonderful person you know and love and call your friend is stuck in a relationship that is clearly bad for them. Situations like these are delicate; it's not easy to deal with them without causing more harm than good. Here's a tentative guide on things to avoid when your friend is in a toxic relationship.

SHAMING

At this point it's likely you are frustrated because why doesn't your friend just understand the obvious – that they deserve better? If you think tough love will work here, I'll save you the time and tell you that it won't. Saying "I'm disappointed in you" or "I can't believe you're being so dumb" will only shame your friend and make them feel worse about their situation. Oftentimes, toxic relationships involve layers upon layers of manipulation, which makes the obvious much harder to grasp. Or worse – they are aware of their own situation, but are willfully in denial because it's much easier than accepting that someone they love and trust is treating them so poorly.

EXCUSING OR BEING DISMISSIVE

The opposite of shaming is downplaying the severity of the situation your friend is



in. But they're equally bad. When you excuse or flat out dismiss someone's trauma, you're only going to lead them on further. Most importantly, playing devil's advocate isn't the best response to someone telling you they might be in an abusive situation.

UNSOLICITED ADVICE

It is likely that your friend already knows what they have to do, but they are feeling trapped. So perhaps they just want someone to vent to. Giving unsolicited advice like "Maybe you should try positive

thinking" will only make them feel more misunderstood and isolated in this case.

ULTIMATUMS

I'd like to first mention that it is completely okay for you to remove yourself from a draining situation. If you feel this is too much for you, by all means, prioritise your own mental health. With that being said, if threatening your friend with ending the friendship and making them choose between you or their partner is your plan: then it's time to hit the brakes. You're only

putting your friend in another incredibly difficult situation.

What do you do instead? Read on to know what you can do that will actually help.

Remind them they're loved. Remind them that they're an individual who is appreciated and valued outside of their relationship. Being in a toxic relationship is extremely suffocating, so a reminder of these seemingly basic things will help to ground them.

Show compassion, and listen. If someone is in a toxic relationship, they perhaps don't feel like their feelings are being properly acknowledged. It would be helpful to listen actively without judgement, but with compassion. Make them feel heard, validate their feelings, and help them identify their issues. They need to know that at least they have a good friendship to fall back on, and that they're not completely alone. Let your friendship be an example that healthy love exists and that they already have it in their life.

It is understandably very hard to see a loved one going through a difficult time. Sometimes what truly helps is letting them make their own mistakes and figure out life in their own terms knowing you're going to be there for them when they need you.