



Point out what you have in common: *"We're both worried about [Jessie's cursing]."*

Ask for help: *"I need your input on [the cell phone] problem."*

Ask for advice: *"What do you think about [Chris getting a weekend job]?"*

Be honest about how you're feeling: *"I won't say this doesn't upset me, but I'll listen to you."*

Be UNassuming: *"Are you upset about [what the kids ate at my house]?"*

Admit you got it wrong: *"I misunderstood what you were telling me."*

Take responsibility: *"I shouldn't have said it that way."*

List what you CAN do and plan the rest: *"I can deal with [curfew] now. Can we decide on the [driver's permit when Jamie turns 16?]"*

Acknowledge your responsibilities: *"I know it's my job to work out the [transportation], but can we discuss some details?"*

Take a step back and reflect: *"Why do you think we keep fighting about [Rory's homework]?"*

Melt the blame: *"No one meant for this to happen."*

Don't assume the worst of intentions: *"I know you didn't intend to sound [mean], but when you talk like that I get [sad]."*

Brainstorm together: *"What [bedtime] rules would work for both us and the kids?"*

Admit the limitations: *"We'll never agree about [chores]; maybe we should each do our own thing."*

Drop the defense: *"I know I'm not your favorite person."*

Recognize touchy topics: *"I know it's a sensitive issue, but can we discuss [how Alex disciplines Jordan]?"*

Acknowledge how important the other person is: *"What you say matters to me."*

Bring respect back into the mix: *"I think you're a good parent. I like the way you [talk to] the kids."*

Don't shut down for good: *"Can we talk about this Monday? I need to think about it over the weekend."*

Validate concerns: *"I understand why [you worry] when [I don't answer the phone]."*

Name the other person's value: *"I know [honesty] matters to you."*

Name your own value: *"[Being on time] is important to me."*

Use "I feel _____ statements" GENUINELY:

"I feel [upset] when you [laugh at my cooking] because [the kids have been doing the same thing]."