

# Let's Talk! A Relationship Check-In

Guiding conversations about “How We’re Doing.”

Talking about relationships shouldn't be something that only happens in a fight. Thinking and reflecting on your relationship can be a great growing experience, no matter where it is. Think about a relationship that you are currently in (like a friend, a family member, a partner) and let's talk through it together.

## Start with something positive!

Start the conversation on a positive note! It can be really difficult to have a productive, understanding conversation if they are feeling attacked or defensive. This can be something simple like a compliment, acknowledging a struggle they've been going through, affirming your relationship, or emphasizing that you care about them.

Examples:

I really value your friendship.

I think that you have a great sense of humor.

I know that you've been going through a hard time lately.

I really care about you.

## Clarify intent

Explain the reasons you want to talk to them and discuss goals for this conversation. This could look like saying that you feel like things are going well and you want to reflect on that, or saying that there is a problem you would like to talk about. As a listener, it's helpful to know where the conversation is going - especially if you're talking about a difficult issue. This can include specifically asking someone to listen to you fully before responding.

Examples:

There's been something on my mind lately and I wanted to talk to you about it.

I think we're doing great and wanted to take some time to appreciate this.

I have a lot to say, and would really appreciate it if you could hear me out before responding.

## Make an Observation:

Try to keep this observation neutral and judgment-free, as the next part is expressing how it makes you feel. This can take some translating, like changing “You always get mad at me for \_\_\_” to “I noticed that yesterday you were upset after \_\_\_\_\_ happened..” Make the observation specific, give context, and avoid generalizations like “always” and “never.”

Example:

You made a joke about \_\_\_\_\_ last week..

I heard you telling my friend that you didn't feel happy with me.

I remember how you brought me food when I was having a hard time last week.

## Express Your Feelings:

Say how you feel! Use an “I” statement paired with an emotion word. This can be a good space to also pinpoint what emotions you're really feeling.

Example:

I feel angry when...

I feel upset and stressed when....

I feel sad when....

I feel grateful because...

## Where I'm Coming From:

Explain why you feel the way that you do, and connect this back to your own experiences and personal boundaries.

Example:

I personally don't like when people hug me because it makes me feel uncomfortable.

I grew up with a lot of shared possessions, so I don't mind you using my phone.

## Concrete Suggestion:

Offer something that you think would help you feel more happy, respected, and safe in your relationship.

Example:

I would appreciate if you asked me if you can hug me.

If there is something that you want to talk about, please tell me.

If you're upset with me, please come talk to me first.

If you want to borrow my things, just

let me know ahead of time.

## Putting It All Together!

Here are several examples of what these can sound like if you put them all together.

Example: I really value our friendship, and there's something that's been on my mind that I want to talk to you about.

Last week, when we were studying for CS together, I left the room and when I came back you were using my phone. I

felt upset and hurt by this, because I personally don't like when other people use my things without asking first,

especially because I have a lot of personal stuff on my phone. I'm honestly okay with you using my phone, but I

would really appreciate it if you just ask me first and also tell me what you're using it for.