



A FREE GUIDE FOR PARENTS

PHRASES THAT KEEP YOUR TEEN TALKING

உங்க teen உங்ககிட்ட மனசு விட்டு பேசணும்.

What to say in the moments that usually turn into arguments

English & Tamil

For parents of 9 to 19 year olds

14 phrases · 5 moments

THE PPP UNIVERSE™

with Pongal Punitha

25+ Years in School Leadership · Parenting Coach / Mentor · Author



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

THE FIRST FEW SECONDS DECIDE THE CONVERSATION

Dear Parent,

In my years as a School Principal, I learned that children don't stop talking to their parents all at once. It happens one reaction at a time. A child shares something, the adult reacts with shock, a lecture or a comparison, and the child quietly decides it's safer not to share next time.

The good news is that it works the other way too. A few different words, at the right moment, can reopen a door that has been closing for months.

This guide gives you those words for five everyday moments. Each phrase is in Tamil with the English meaning, so you can use whichever feels natural in your home.

3
SECONDS

BEFORE ANY PHRASE, ONE RULE

When something upsets you, pause for three seconds before you speak. Your face reacts before your mind decides. The pause turns a reflex into a choice, and every phrase in this guide works better after it.

THE FIVE MOMENTS

1

Bad marks &
results day

2

Screen time & the
phone

3

Back-talk & anger

4

The silence & "I'm
fine"

5

The big
conversations

How to use it: pick one phrase this week, only one. Say it the next time that moment comes up, then notice what changes. At the end you'll find all the phrases on one page to keep on your fridge.

Pongal Punitha



MOMENT 1 OF 5

BAD MARKS & RESULTS DAY

The first few seconds after the report card decide whether your child brings you the next one.

THE REPORT CARD COMES HOME

INSTEAD OF

"What happened? Why so low?"

TRY

Marks பத்தி அப்பறம் பேசலாம். முதல்ல சொல்லு, நீ எப்படி feel பண்ணு?

We'll talk about the marks later. First tell me, how are you feeling?

Your child already feels the marks. Starting with the feeling tells them you're on their side.

BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING

INSTEAD OF

A sigh, a frown, a raised voice

TRY

Pause for three seconds and keep your face calm.

Your face reacts before your mind decides. Three seconds turns a reflex into a choice.

COMPARING WITH A COUSIN OR CLASSMATE

INSTEAD OF

"Look at your cousin, look how well he does."

TRY

கடந்த மாசம் இருந்தது, இப்போ இருக்கிறது – எவ்வளவு change ஆயிருக்கு பாரு.

Look at where you were last month and where you are now. See how much you've changed.

The only fair comparison for your child is who they were yesterday.



MOMENT 2 OF 5

SCREEN TIME & THE PHONE

Screens need limits. But the way we set them decides whether we get cooperation or a daily war.

SWITCHING OFF A GAME

INSTEAD OF

"OFF. Now."

TRY

10 நிமிஷத்துல stop பண்ணனும்.

You'll need to stop in 10 minutes.

A predictable boundary works better than a sudden one. Warn, then follow through.

PHONES AT NIGHT OR AT DINNER

INSTEAD OF

"Put your phone away!"

TRY

இன்னிக்கு இருந்து எல்லாரோட phone-உம் இந்த basket-ல, என்னோடதும் சேர்த்து.

From today, everyone's phone goes in this basket, mine included.

When the rule is the same for everyone, it stops being a punishment and becomes family culture.

SELFIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

INSTEAD OF

"You look nice."

TRY

Filter இல்லாம இது உனக்கு பிடிக்குமா?

Would you like this without the filter?

Help them notice they're comparing themselves to someone else's highlight reel.



MOMENT 3 OF 5

BACK-TALK & ANGER

Accept the feeling. Set a limit on the behaviour. You can do both in one breath.

SHOUTING OR RUDE WORDS

INSTEAD OF

"Stop shouting!"

TRY

நீ ரொம்ப angry-ஆ இருக்கன்னு எனக்குப் புரியுது. But இந்த மாதிரி பேசுறது okay இல்லை. கொஞ்சம் calm ஆனதும் பேசலாம்.

I can see you're very angry. But talking like this is not okay. Let's talk once you're calmer.

Validate the feeling. Bound the behaviour.

WHEN YOU NEED A BREAK YOURSELF

INSTEAD OF

Going silent for hours to show you're upset

TRY

நமக்கு இப்போ பேச வேண்டாம், ஆனா நான் உன்ன love பண்ணேன்.

We don't need to talk right now, but I love you.

Taking space is fine. Withholding connection teaches fear, not insight.

SAYING NO TO A REQUEST

INSTEAD OF

"No means no. Don't argue."

TRY

நீ ஏன் கேக்குறன்னு எனக்குப் புரியுது. ஆனா என் answer இன்னும் no. ஏன்னு சொல்றேன்.

I understand why you're asking. But my answer is still no, and I'll tell you why.

Authoritative, not authoritarian. They may not like the answer, but they feel heard.



MOMENT 4 OF 5

THE SILENCE & "I'M FINE"

When a child stops talking, the question is not "Why won't they talk?" but "What happens when they do?"

SOMETHING WENT WRONG

INSTEAD OF

"WHY did you do that?"

TRY

என்ன நடந்துச்சுன்னு சொல்லு. அப்போ நீ
எப்படி feel பண்ண? இப்போ என்ன
பண்ணலாம்னு நினைக்குற?

*Tell me what happened. How were you feeling? What do you
think you can do now?*

Listen first. Correct later.

"I'M FINE" THAT DOESN'T LOOK FINE

INSTEAD OF

"Why are you always so
moody?"

TRY

நீ நல்லா இருக்கணும்-னு நான் expect
பண்ணல... நீ எப்படி இருந்தாலும் நான்
இங்க இருக்கேன்.

I don't expect you to be fine. However you are, I'm here.

A child who performs happiness is protecting you. Give them permission to stop.

SADNESS OR LOSS

INSTEAD OF

"Don't cry. Be strong."

TRY

நீ சோகமா இருப்பது சரி. நான் இங்க
இருக்கேன்.

It's okay to be sad. I'm here.

Don't rush to fix it. Being present is the help.



THE BIG CONVERSATIONS

How you react to one difficult disclosure decides whether there is a second one.

THEY TELL YOU ABOUT BULLYING

INSTEAD OF

"I'm going to the school right now!"

TRY

நீ என்னிடம் சொன்னதுக்கு நன்றி, நாம சேர்ந்து இதை handle பண்ணோம்.

Thank you for telling me. We'll handle this together.

Children hide bullying because they fear what happens after they tell. Make telling safe.

A FIRST CRUSH

INSTEAD OF

"You're too young for all this!"

TRY

என்ன பிடிக்கும் அவங்கள் பத்தி?

What do you like about them?

Feelings don't disappear when judged. They just stop being shared with you.

BEFORE THEY POST ONLINE

INSTEAD OF

"Never post anything, the internet is dangerous!"

TRY

Post பண்றதுக்கு முன்னாடி ஒரு நொடி நில்லு – இது 10 வருஷம் கழிச்சு பாத்தாலும் ok-ஆ இருக்குமா?

Before you post, pause for a second. Will this still be okay if you see it ten years from now?

Teach judgement, not fear. That one pause is the best protection.



KEEP IT WHERE YOU'LL SEE IT

YOUR POCKET LIST

Cut along the line and stick it on the fridge, or take a photo on your phone.

The report card comes home	Marks பத்தி அப்பறம் பேசலாம். முதல்ல சொல்லு, நீ எப்படி feel பண்ண? <i>We'll talk about the marks later. First tell me, how are you feeling?</i>
Comparing with a cousin or classmate	கடந்த மாசம் இருந்தது, இப்போ இருக்கிறது - எவ்வளவு change ஆயிருக்கு பாரு. <i>Look at where you were last month and where you are now. See how much you've changed.</i>
Switching off a game	10 நிமிஷத்துல stop பண்ணனும். <i>You'll need to stop in 10 minutes.</i>
Phones at night or at dinner	இன்னிக்கு இருந்து எல்லாரோட phone-உம் இந்த basket-ல, என்னோடதும் சேர்த்து. <i>From today, everyone's phone goes in this basket, mine included.</i>
Selfies and social media	Filter இல்லாம இது உனக்கு பிடிக்குமா? <i>Would you like this without the filter?</i>
Shouting or rude words	நீ ரொம்ப angry-ஆ இருக்கன்னு எனக்குப் புரியுது. But இந்த மாதிரி பேசுறது okay இல்லை. கொஞ்சம் calm ஆனதும் பேசலாம். <i>I can see you're very angry. But talking like this is not okay. Let's talk once you're calmer.</i>
When you need a break yourself	நமக்கு இப்போ பேச வேண்டாம், ஆனா நான் உன்ன love பண்ணேன். <i>We don't need to talk right now, but I love you.</i>
Saying no to a request	நீ ஏன் கேக்குறன்னு எனக்குப் புரியுது. ஆனா என் answer இன்னும் no. ஏன்னு சொல்றேன். <i>I understand why you're asking. But my answer is still no, and I'll tell you why.</i>
Something went wrong	என்ன நடந்துச்சுன்னு சொல்லு. அப்போ நீ எப்படி feel பண்ண? இப்போ என்ன பண்ணலாமன்னு நினைக்குற? <i>Tell me what happened. How were you feeling? What do you think you can do now?</i>
"I'm fine" that doesn't look fine	நீ நல்லா இருக்கன்னும்-னு நான் expect பண்ணல... நீ எப்படி இருந்தாலும் நான் இங்க இருக்கேன். <i>I don't expect you to be fine. However you are, I'm here.</i>
Sadness or loss	நீ சோகமா இருப்பது சரி. நான் இங்க இருக்கேன். <i>It's okay to be sad. I'm here.</i>
They tell you about bullying	நீ என்னிடம் சொன்னதுக்கு நன்றி, நாம சேர்ந்து இதை handle பண்ணோம். <i>Thank you for telling me. We'll handle this together.</i>
A first crush	என்ன பிடிக்கும் அவங்கள பத்தி? <i>What do you like about them?</i>
Before they post online	Post பண்றதுக்கு முன்னாடி ஒரு நொடி நில்லு - இது 10 வருஷம் கழிச்சு பாத்தாலும் ok-ஆ இருக்குமா? <i>Before you post, pause for a second. Will this still be okay if you see it ten years from now?</i>

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

A PHRASE OPENS THE DOOR. PRACTICE KEEPS IT OPEN.

Words help, but patterns we have repeated for years don't change from reading alone. If you'd like to go further, here is how I can help.

1 FOLLOW THE DAILY LESSONS

One short parenting lesson a day on Instagram @pongapunitha.

2 JOIN A LIVE PARENT WORKSHOP

Practical sessions on one real problem at a time. Message me on WhatsApp for the next dates.

3 THE PPP PARENTING SHIFT™

A guided programme to turn understanding into daily practice. Ponder. Progress. Prosper.

4 1:1 PARENT COACHING

Private sessions for your family's situation.



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