

THE MUSLIM PARENT SCRIPT LIBRARY

*Exactly What to Say — and What Never to Say — in 30 of the Hardest
Parenting Moments*

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Muslim Parenting Matters

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This is not a book to read from beginning to end. It is a reference tool.

When a hard moment happens — or before you know one is coming — find the situation, read the scripts, and go.

Each situation gives you five things:

THE MOMENT	What just happened — described exactly.
WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY	The instinctive response that usually makes it worse.
WHY IT BACKFIRES	Two sentences on the damage it causes — rooted in Islamic scholarship.
WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD	Two or three script options, short and usable immediately.
WHAT NEVER TO SAY	Specific phrases to avoid in this situation — and why.
ISLAMIC ANCHOR	A hadith or scholar quote that grounds the approach.

About Discipline Without Damage

The framework behind every script in this guide comes from Discipline Without Damage by Nur Al-Qalam Dar — a full guide to classical Islamic parenting from Al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Khaldun, and Ali ibn Abi Talib. This guide is complete on its own. But if you want the full scholarly foundation — the why behind every what — Discipline Without Damage is where it lives. Get it at nuralqalamdar.com

One note on the scripts:

These scripts are starting points, not scripts to read verbatim. Your child knows your voice. Speak in your own words — but let these show you the direction.

PHASE ONE — DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT | Situations 1-10

These are the moments that test a parent's sabr most directly. The child is pushing against authority. The instinct is to push back harder. These scripts show a different way.

SITUATION 1 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Ignores You Completely

THE MOMENT

You call their name three times. You are standing right there. They do not look up, do not respond, act as if you do not exist.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Are you deaf? I am talking to you! You will answer me when I speak to you."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Shouting at a child who is ignoring you confirms to them that their silence has power over you. It also models exactly the emotional dysregulation you are trying to correct. The child learns: when I am overwhelmed, I shout.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Move closer, lower your voice:

"I need you to stop what you are doing and look at me. I will wait."

Option 2 — Name what you see without accusation:

"It seems like you did not hear me. When you are ready, I need two minutes of your time."

Option 3 — For repeated ignoring:

"I notice that when I call you, you do not respond. I want us to talk about that — not now, but tonight after Maghrib."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "You are so disrespectful. I did not raise you like this."
- ✗ "Fine. Do whatever you want. I am done."
- ✗ "Your father/mother will hear about this."

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Make things easy and do not make them difficult."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 2 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Shouts Back at You

THE MOMENT

You give a simple instruction. Your child raises their voice, talks back sharply, or shouts "No!" directly at you.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"How dare you raise your voice at me! I am your parent! You will lower your voice right now!"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Matching a child's volume teaches them that shouting is how conflict is resolved. Your nervous system is also escalating — which means neither of you can think clearly. The argument will get worse before it gets better.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Drop your volume deliberately:

"I am going to speak quietly. I need you to do the same. We will talk about this when we are both calm."

Option 2 — Name the behaviour without attacking the person:

"The way you just spoke to me is not acceptable. I am not going to continue this conversation in this tone. I will come back to you in ten minutes."

Option 3 — For younger children:

"I can see you are very upset. Let's both take a breath. I am listening — but not like this."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You will not speak to me like that in my house!"**
- ✗ **"I carried you for nine months and this is what I get?"**
- ✗ **"Keep talking. See what happens."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"The strong person is not the one who wrestles others down. The strong

person is the one who controls themselves when they are angry."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 3 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Says "I Hate You"

THE MOMENT

In the middle of a conflict — or after a consequence — your child looks at you and says "I hate you" directly.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"How dare you say that to me. You are so ungrateful after everything I have done for you."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

"I hate you" from a child almost never means hatred. It means "I am in so much pain right now that I need you to feel it too." Responding with hurt or anger confirms to the child that their words can destabilise you — and they will use them again.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Stay steady, do not absorb the attack:

"I heard you. And I still love you. When you are ready to talk about what is actually wrong, I am here."

Option 2 — Name the pain underneath:

"Something has really hurt you. I am not going anywhere. Take your time."

Option 3 — Later, when things are calm:

"Earlier you said you hated me. I want you to know that did not change anything for me. But I do want to understand what was hurting you so much in that moment."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "I hate you too right now."
- ✗ "Say that again and see what happens to you."
- ✗ "After everything I sacrifice for you — this is how you talk to me?"

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for

himself."

— *Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)*

SITUATION 4 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Slams the Door

THE MOMENT

After a disagreement or correction, your child walks away and slams their bedroom door hard enough for the whole house to hear.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Open that door right now! You do not slam doors in this house!"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Demanding immediate re-engagement when a child is at peak emotional flooding almost always escalates. Their nervous system needs time to regulate before they can hear you. Forcing the door open or threatening consequences in that moment teaches fear, not respect.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Do not chase immediately. Wait, then knock:

"I am not going to come in. I just want you to know I am here when you are ready."

Option 2 — Address the door separately, later:

"What happened earlier — the door slamming — we need to talk about that. Not because I am angry. Because I want us to have a better way of handling big feelings in this house."

Option 3 — If it is a pattern:

"I have noticed that when things get hard, the door gets slammed. Help me understand what is happening for you in those moments."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

✗ **"You have five seconds to open that door or I am taking it off the hinges."**

✗ **"Fine. Stay in there. I do not care."**

✗ **"You are grounded until you learn how to behave."**

"Do not be angry. Do not be angry. Do not be angry."

— *Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)*

SITUATION 5 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Refuses Salah

THE MOMENT

Prayer time comes. You call your child. They say no, ignore you, roll their eyes, or say "I don't want to pray."

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"You will pray right now or you will face serious consequences. Prayer is fard. This is not optional."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Forced salah performed in anger, resentment, or fear does not build a connection to Allah — it builds a resentment of salah itself. Al-Malal. The child who is forced to pray without understanding why eventually stops the moment they have freedom. The goal is not compliance. The goal is love of salah.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Invite rather than command:

"Come pray with me. I want the company."

Option 2 — Connect before correcting:

"I notice salah has been hard lately. I am not going to fight about it. But I want to understand — is something making it difficult?"

Option 3 — For teenagers especially:

"I cannot force you to pray and I will not. But I want you to know that every salah you miss is between you and Allah — not between you and me. My door is always open if you want to talk about it."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

✗ **"What kind of Muslim are you? Your grandfather would be ashamed."**

✗ **"Fine. Explain that to Allah on the Day of Judgement."**

✗ **"No phone, no food, no anything until you pray."**

"Play with them for seven years. Discipline them for seven years. Then befriend them for seven years."

— *Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA)*

SITUATION 6 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Lies to Your Face

THE MOMENT

You know the truth. Your child looks at you and tells you something that is clearly false — with confidence.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"You are lying. I can see it on your face. Tell me the truth right now or the punishment will be much worse."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

When children lie, it is almost always because the truth feels too dangerous to tell. Threatening worse punishment for lying confirms exactly that fear. The child learns: the truth is more dangerous than the lie. You will get more lies.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Lower the cost of the truth:

"I already know what happened. I am giving you the chance to tell me yourself. If you tell me the truth, I will handle it much more calmly than if I have to find it another way."

Option 2 — Name what you know gently:

"I think something different happened from what you told me. I am not angry. I just want us to be able to tell each other the truth."

Option 3 — After the moment, address the pattern:

"I want to ask you something honestly. When you felt like you needed to lie to me — what were you afraid would happen if you told the truth?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "Liar. You are a liar. I cannot trust anything you say."
- ✗ "Allah is watching you lie to my face right now."
- ✗ "You learned this from your friends. This is what they are teaching you."

"Truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 7 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Disrespects the Other Parent

THE MOMENT

Your child speaks rudely to, ignores, or dismisses your spouse in front of you.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Jumping in immediately with loud correction, or staying silent and letting it pass.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Intervening loudly makes the scene bigger and can humiliate the child in a way that hardens rather than softens them. Staying silent teaches the child that this behaviour is acceptable. The parent being disrespected also needs to feel supported.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Calm, immediate, and firm:

"Stop. That is not how we speak to each other in this family. Apologise to your mother/father."

Option 2 — Address it privately with the child later:

"What I saw earlier — the way you spoke to your father/mother — I need you to understand that it is not acceptable. Not because of rules. Because they deserve your respect. Tell me what was going on for you."

Option 3 — If it is a pattern:

"I want to ask you something I need you to answer honestly. What is your relationship with your father/mother like right now? Because what I am seeing worries me."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You are disrespectful and ungrateful. Both of us sacrifice everything for you."**
- ✗ **"Your father/mother is going to hear about this and deal with you."**
- ✗ **Staying completely silent to avoid conflict.**

"The best of you are those who are best to their families."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Tirmidhi)

SITUATION 8 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Uses Foul Language

THE MOMENT

Your child uses profanity — either directed at you, at a sibling, or casually in conversation.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Where did you learn that word? You will never use that language in this house again!"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Shock and escalation draw more attention to the word than the behaviour. Children often use profanity to test boundaries or to signal that something is wrong. The word itself is less important than what it is communicating.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Calm and clear, no drama:

"We do not use that word in this home. Find another way to say what you mean."

Option 2 — If it seems to be communicating frustration:

"I can hear that you are very frustrated. Tell me what is actually going on."

Option 3 — For teenagers who use it casually:

"I want to talk to you about the language you have been using. Not to lecture — I want to understand where it is coming from and tell you why it matters to me."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"Your mouth is filthy. You are disgusting."**
- ✗ **"You sound like a street child. Is that who you want to be?"**
- ✗ **"I will wash your mouth with soap."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"A good word is a form of charity."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 9 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Walks Out Mid-Conversation

THE MOMENT

You are trying to talk to your child about something important. They stand up and walk away while you are still speaking.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Don't you walk away from me! Get back here right now! I am not finished!"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Demanding a child return mid-escalation when their nervous system has already left the conversation physically means you will get their body back but not their mind. The conversation you force will not land. You will both say things you regret.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Let them go. Say this as they walk:

"I am not going to chase you. This conversation is important. We will finish it tonight."

Option 2 — Later, when calm:

"Earlier you walked away while we were talking. I want to understand — what was happening for you in that moment that made you need to leave?"

Option 3 — Build a protocol for the future:

"Can we agree on something? When either of us needs to step away from a hard conversation, we say 'I need five minutes' — and then we come back. Can we try that?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You are so rude. You will respect me in my own house."**
- ✗ **"Fine. We will see how you feel when you need something from me."**
- ✗ **Following them to their room and continuing the argument through the door.**

"When one of you becomes angry while standing, let him sit down."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Abu Dawud)

SITUATION 10 · DEFIANCE & DISRESPECT

Your Child Says "You Don't Understand Me"

THE MOMENT

During a conflict or conversation, your child says "You just don't get it" or "You never understand me" — and shuts down.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"I understand perfectly well. I was young once too. You think you are the first person to go through this?"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Dismissing a child's sense of being misunderstood — even if you believe you do understand — closes the door. They are telling you something important: they do not feel heard. Arguing that you do understand proves that you don't.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Agree with the possibility:

"You might be right. Help me understand. I am listening."

Option 2 — Acknowledge before explaining:

"Before I say anything — tell me what it feels like to not be understood. I want to hear it."

Option 3 — Be honest about your limits:

"I will not pretend I know exactly what you are going through. But I want to. Will you help me?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"I understand you better than you understand yourself."**
- ✗ **"When I was your age I had real problems. You do not know what difficult is."**
- ✗ **"You are just being dramatic."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Speak to people according to their level of understanding."

— *Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA)*

PHASE TWO — ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE | Situations 11-18

These are the moments where a parent's dreams and a child's reality collide. The scripts here are built on Ibn al-Jawzi's understanding that every child has a different vessel — and the parent's job is to find it, not force it.

SITUATION 11 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Fails an Exam

THE MOMENT

The results come back. The grade is bad. Your child comes home already knowing you will be disappointed.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"How did this happen? What were you doing instead of studying? Do you know how much money we spend on your education?"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

A child who has already failed is already in pain. Adding shame to that pain teaches them to hide failure from you in the future — not to work harder. They also stop being able to learn when they are in a shame state.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Lead with the relationship, not the result:

"I can see this is upsetting. How are you feeling about it?"

Option 2 — Separate the person from the result:

"This result is not who you are. It is information. Let's look at it together and work out what happened."

Option 3 — Problem-solve together:

"What do you think got in the way this time? What would you do differently if you could go back?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "Your cousin got 90% in the same exam. What is your excuse?"
- ✗ "With grades like this, what do you think your future looks like?"
- ✗ "I am so disappointed in you."

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Intellect is a Rizq — a provision from God — just like money or health."

— Ibn al-Jawzi, Sayd al-Khatir

SITUATION 12 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Refuses to Study

THE MOMENT

Homework time. Your child refuses to open a book, stares at the wall, or says "I am not doing it."

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"You will sit at that table until every piece of homework is done. I do not care how long it takes."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Power struggles over studying almost always produce compliance without comprehension. A child who is forced to sit with a book but whose mind is not present is not studying — they are serving time. The goal is engagement, not endurance.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Find the real blocker first:

"Tell me what is actually going on. Is it that you don't understand the work, or is something else making it hard to start?"

Option 2 — Negotiate the conditions:

"I am not going to force you to sit there for three hours. Can we agree on thirty focused minutes — and then a break? You choose what comes after."

Option 3 — Remove yourself from the power struggle:

"I am not going to fight about this tonight. But I need you to know that the consequences of not doing it are yours to carry — not mine. I will help you if you want help."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You will fail and end up with nothing. Is that what you want?"**
- ✗ **"You are lazy. Pure laziness."**
- ✗ **"No phone, no food, no sleep until this is done."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Every son of Adam makes mistakes. And the best of those who make mistakes

are those who repent."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Tirmidhi)

SITUATION 13 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Says "I'm Stupid"

THE MOMENT

Your child says — about themselves — "I am stupid," "I can't do this," or "I am just not smart."

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Don't say that! You are not stupid! You just need to try harder."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Dismissing the statement — however lovingly — teaches the child that their internal experience is not valid. "You are not stupid" also does not give them any information about what is actually true. They need specificity, not reassurance.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Take it seriously first:

"When you say you are stupid — what makes you feel that way? Tell me what happened."

Option 2 — Offer specific truth:

"I have watched you figure out things that I cannot figure out. Let me tell you what I actually see in you."

Option 3 — Introduce the Islamic framework:

"Allah gave every person a different kind of intelligence. The scholars called it Rizq — a provision, like money or health. Yours just might not be the kind that shows up in school tests. Let's find out what it is."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"Stop being dramatic. Of course you are not stupid."**
- ✗ **"Your brother never talked like this."**
- ✗ **"You are smart — you just do not apply yourself."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Every person is facilitated to do what they were created for."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Muslim)

SITUATION 14 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Compares Themselves to a Sibling

THE MOMENT

Your child says "You always treat [sibling] better" or "How come [sibling] doesn't have to do this?"

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"I treat you both the same. Stop comparing yourself and focus on yourself."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Children who feel compared — even if the comparison is unfair — are telling you they feel unseen as individuals. Dismissing the comparison dismisses the feeling. The feeling will come back louder.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Validate before explaining:

"It sounds like you are feeling like things are unfair. Tell me more about that — I want to understand what you are seeing."

Option 2 — Acknowledge difference without ranking:

"You and your brother/sister are different people. I try to give each of you what you each need — and sometimes that looks different. It does not mean I love one of you more."

Option 3 — Turn it back to them:

"What do you need from me right now that you feel like you are not getting?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"Your sibling works harder. That is why."**
- ✗ **"Stop being jealous. It is ugly."**
- ✗ **"I do not have favourites — you are all the same to me." (This dismisses individuality)**

"Be just between your children."

— *Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)*

SITUATION 15 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Wants to Quit Something You Paid For

THE MOMENT

After weeks or months — and significant money — your child says they want to stop the class, the lessons, the team.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Absolutely not. I have spent money on this. You will finish what you started."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Forcing a child to continue something they have genuinely lost connection to teaches them to endure things they hate — which is not the same as perseverance. It also produces Al-Malal — soul-level resentment that poisons their relationship with the activity permanently.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Understand before deciding:

"Tell me what is making you want to stop. Has something happened, or is it just not feeling right anymore?"

Option 2 — Distinguish difficulty from wrong fit:

"Is it that this is hard and you want to avoid the hard part — or is it that this genuinely is not the right thing for you? Because those are different, and I will respond differently to each."

Option 3 — Negotiate an exit with integrity:

"I am not going to force you to continue. But I need you to finish the current term/session — we made a commitment to the coach/teacher. After that, we talk."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "Do you know how much money I have spent on you?"
- ✗ "You are a quitter. You will quit everything in life."
- ✗ "Fine. Quit. And do not ask me for anything ever again."

"If you try to force the water of a whole sea into a small cup, you will only spill the water and ruin the cup."

— Ibn al-Jawzi, Sayd al-Khatir

SITUATION 16 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Has No Motivation

THE MOMENT

Your child seems flat, disengaged, going through the motions — not excited about anything, not working toward anything.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"You need to get up and do something with yourself. Life is not going to wait for you."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Lack of motivation in a child is almost always a symptom — of Al-Malal (being pushed into the wrong room for too long), of unresolved emotional pain, of feeling like nothing they do matters. Pushing harder into something a child has switched off from does not reignite the switch.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Get curious instead of corrective:

"I have noticed that things seem a bit flat for you lately. I am not going to lecture. I just want to ask — is there anything you actually want right now? Anything that excites you even a little?"

Option 2 — Look backward for the spark:

"Do you remember a time when you were really into something — when you would do it without anyone asking? What was that?"

Option 3 — Take pressure off completely:

"I want to try something different. For the next two weeks, I am not going to push you about anything. I just want to watch what you naturally move toward when there is no pressure."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "You are wasting your life and your potential."
- ✗ "Other children your age are already achieving things."
- ✗ "This laziness will destroy you."

"Allah did not create you in vain."

— *Qur'an 23:115 (adapted)*

SITUATION 17 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Is Being Bullied

THE MOMENT

Your child tells you — or you discover — that they are being bullied at school or online.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Just ignore them. They will stop. Don't let them see that it bothers you."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

"Just ignore it" is advice that almost never works and leaves the child feeling alone with their pain. It also signals that you will not actually do anything to help — which closes the door to future disclosure.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Validate completely first:

"Thank you for telling me. That took courage. What they are doing is wrong — full stop. Tell me everything."

Option 2 — Let them lead the response:

"I want to do something about this. But I need you to tell me what you think would help — and what you are worried might make it worse. We will decide together."

Option 3 — Check in on the deeper impact:

"How long has this been going on? How has it been making you feel about yourself — not about them, about yourself?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You must have done something to provoke them."**
- ✗ **"Fight back. Show them you are not weak."**
- ✗ **"Children can be cruel. That is just life."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Whoever of you sees a wrong, let him change it."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Muslim)

SITUATION 18 · ACADEMIC & AMBITION PRESSURE

Your Child Is the One Bullying

THE MOMENT

You discover — from a teacher, another parent, or directly — that your child has been bullying another child.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"You are grounded. I am so ashamed of you. What is wrong with you?"

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Shame does not produce empathy — it produces defensiveness and secrecy. A child who is punished hard for bullying without being helped to understand the impact will simply learn to bully more carefully. The goal is genuine empathy, not performance.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Stay calm and get the full picture:

"I have heard something serious about what happened at school. I need you to tell me your side — and I need it to be honest."

Option 2 — Build empathy through specificity:

"I want you to think about the child you treated that way. How do you think they felt when it happened? Not in general — specifically, in that moment."

Option 3 — Hold accountable with a path forward:

"What you did was wrong. You and I are going to work out how to make it right — not just say sorry, but actually repair what you broke. And I also want to understand what was going on with you when you did it."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"I did not raise you to be a bully. You have shamed this family."**
- ✗ **Minimising it: "Children will be children."**
- ✗ **"You are just like your uncle/cousin/that child at school."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for

himself."

— *Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)*

PHASE THREE — EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS | Situations 19-26

These are the moments that determine whether your child will come to you with the hard things — or go somewhere else. They require less talking and more listening than almost any other parenting situation.

SITUATION 19 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Is Crying and Won't Talk

THE MOMENT

Your child is clearly upset — crying, withdrawn, shut down — but says "nothing is wrong" or refuses to speak.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Tell me what is wrong right now. I cannot help you if you do not talk to me."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Demanding words from a child who is emotionally flooded is like asking someone to run while they are drowning. Their capacity for language shuts down when emotion takes over. Pressure to explain makes the shutdown worse.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Sit with them, no words required:

"I am not going to ask you anything. I am just going to sit here with you."

Option 2 — Offer without requiring:

"You do not have to talk. But I am here — for as long as you need."

Option 3 — Give them a way in that does not require explanation:

"Is it something at school, something at home, or something inside you? You can just nod."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "Stop crying and tell me what is wrong."
- ✗ "You are too old to be crying like this."
- ✗ "I will not sit here and watch you cry for nothing."

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"The Prophet ﷺ wept. And he ﷺ said: This is mercy that Allah has placed in the hearts of His servants."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 20 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Confesses Something Serious

THE MOMENT

Your child comes to you with something genuinely serious — a mistake, a secret they have been carrying, something that will require a real response from you.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Reacting immediately with shock, anger, or punishment in the very moment of disclosure.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

The moment a child chooses to tell you something serious is one of the most fragile moments in parenting. How you respond in the first thirty seconds determines whether they will ever come to you with something serious again.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Buy time to regulate yourself:

"Thank you for telling me. I need a moment to take this in properly. I am not going anywhere — give me five minutes and then we will talk."

Option 2 — Lead with the relationship:

"The fact that you came to me with this — that matters more to me than what you have told me. We will work through this together."

Option 3 — Separate disclosure from consequence:

"Right now I just want to hear everything. We will talk about what happens next — but first I need to understand fully what you have been carrying."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **Immediate anger:** "How could you do this? I cannot believe you."
- ✗ **Immediate punishment before hearing them fully.**
- ✗ **"What will people say? What will the community think?"**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Cover the faults of others and Allah will cover your faults."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Muslim)

SITUATION 21 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Asks About Something Haram

THE MOMENT

Your child asks about something clearly haram — alcohol, relationships, content they have seen online — either out of curiosity or because they have already encountered it.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Where did you hear about that? You should not be asking these questions. This topic is closed."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Shutting down questions about haram does not make the curiosity go away — it makes the child go elsewhere for the answers. The internet, friends, and strangers will answer questions you refuse to answer. The question is: do you want to be the trusted source?

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Thank them for asking you:

"I am glad you came to me with this. Let me answer it properly."

Option 2 — Answer honestly at their level:

"That is a real question and it deserves a real answer. Here is what Islam says and here is why — not just that it is haram, but the wisdom behind it."

Option 3 — Invite ongoing conversation:

"I would rather you come to me with questions like this than go somewhere else. My door is always open — even for the hard ones."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "Good Muslims do not ask questions like that."
- ✗ "You have been mixing with the wrong people."
- ✗ Complete silence and walking away.

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Make things easy, do not make them difficult."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 22 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Is Pulling Away from Islam

THE MOMENT

You notice your child is less interested in prayer, resistant to Islamic practice, or saying things that suggest they are questioning their faith.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"You are a Muslim. This is not optional. You will pray, you will fast, and you will not question what Allah has commanded."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Faith cannot be forced into a heart. A child who performs Islam out of fear of a parent will stop the moment the parent's authority no longer reaches them. The scholars understood this — which is why befriending comes after disciplining in Ali ibn Abi Talib's framework.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Get curious about their inner experience:

"I have noticed that salah seems to feel like a burden lately. Tell me — what does Islam feel like to you right now? I am not going to lecture. I just want to understand."

Option 2 — Share your own faith journey honestly:

"Can I tell you something about my own relationship with Islam? There were times it felt distant to me too. I want to tell you what helped."

Option 3 — Remove pressure, keep the door open:

"I am not going to force you. What I am going to do is keep my door open, keep making du'a for you, and keep showing you what Islam looks like when it is lived with love — not fear."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ "You are going to hellfire if you keep this up."
- ✗ "What will people say? You are embarrassing us."
- ✗ Removing all privileges until they perform religious compliance.

› **ISLAMIC ANCHOR**

"There is no compulsion in religion."

— *Qur'an 2:256*

SITUATION 23 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Is Heartbroken Over a Friend

THE MOMENT

Your child is devastated over a friendship that has broken down — betrayal, exclusion, or a falling out.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"It is just a friend. You will make other friends. This is not the end of the world."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Friend loss at a child's developmental stage feels exactly as serious to them as relationship loss feels to an adult. Minimising it teaches them that their pain is disproportionate — which is both untrue and disconnecting.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Take it as seriously as they do:

"That sounds really painful. Tell me what happened — from the beginning."

Option 2 — Validate without fixing:

"Losing someone you trusted is one of the hardest things. I am not going to try to make it better right now. I just want you to know I understand."

Option 3 — Introduce the Islamic perspective gently and later:

"When you are ready — not now — I want to share something the Prophet ﷺ said about the people who stay in your life and the ones who leave. But only when you are ready."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You are better off without them. They were not a good friend anyway."**
- ✗ **"Stop being so sensitive. This is normal."**
- ✗ **"Forget them. Make new friends."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"The example of a good companion is like a perfume seller — you benefit just

by being near them."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 24 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Asks Why Bad Things Happen

THE MOMENT

Your child — after something difficult they have experienced or witnessed — asks: "Why would Allah let this happen?"

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"Do not question Allah. Everything He does is for a reason. Have faith."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Shutting down theological questions with "just have faith" does not build faith — it builds silence. A child who learns that their deepest questions are unwelcome will take those questions somewhere else, or stop asking altogether.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Honour the question:

"That is one of the most important questions a person can ask. The scholars spent centuries on it. Let me try to answer it properly."

Option 2 — Be honest about the mystery:

"I will be honest with you — I do not have a complete answer. No human does. But here is what I believe, and here is what the Qur'an says about hardship."

Option 3 — Share Surah Inshirah simply:

"Allah says in the Qur'an: with every hardship comes ease. Not after — with. In the same moment. That has always helped me. Would you like me to read it to you?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"It is a test. Just accept it."**
- ✗ **"Questions like that are dangerous. Be careful."**
- ✗ **"Something bad must have happened to deserve it." (Never imply this)**

"Verily, with hardship comes ease."

— *Qur'an 94:5*

SITUATION 25 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Is Anxious or Afraid

THE MOMENT

Your child expresses fear, worry, or anxiety — about school, about the future, about something specific, or about nothing they can name.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

"There is nothing to be afraid of. You are worrying for nothing. Be strong."

WHY IT BACKFIRES

"There is nothing to be afraid of" is factually contradicted by the child's nervous system, which is telling them there is very much something to be afraid of. It also communicates that their emotional experience is wrong — which is both untrue and shaming.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Sit with the fear before addressing it:

"Tell me what it feels like. Where do you feel it in your body? I want to understand before I say anything."

Option 2 — Normalise it Islamically:

"Did you know the Prophet ﷺ also experienced fear? The companions did too. Feeling afraid is not a sign of weak faith — it is a sign of being human."

Option 3 — Give them a tool:

"When I feel afraid, I say this du'a. It does not always make the fear disappear — but it reminds me that I am not alone in it. Do you want to learn it?"

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"You are always worrying about something. It is exhausting."**
- ✗ **"Strong people do not get scared like this."**
- ✗ **"This is because you do not pray enough."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear."

SITUATION 26 · EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL MOMENTS

Your Child Asks a Question You Don't Know How to Answer

THE MOMENT

Your child asks something — about religion, about life, about death, about something in the news — and you genuinely do not know the answer.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Making up an answer with false confidence, or shutting the question down.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Children develop trust in parents who are honest about the limits of their knowledge. A parent who makes up answers gets found out — and loses credibility on everything. A parent who says "I don't know — let's find out" models intellectual humility and curiosity.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Be honest:

"That is a really good question. I do not know the answer. Let's find out together."

Option 2 — Point to a better source:

"I want to give you a proper answer to this, not a guessed one. Let me ask someone who knows more about this than I do — and I will come back to you."

Option 3 — Use it as a bonding moment:

"You ask questions that I cannot always answer — and I love that about you. Let's look this up together."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **Inventing an answer to maintain authority.**
- ✗ **"Children should not ask so many questions."**
- ✗ **"Because I said so — that is enough."**

» ISLAMIC ANCHOR

"Say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge."

PHASE FOUR — AFTER YOU SNAPPED | Situations 27-30

These are the moments after the moment — when the house is quiet, the damage is done, and you are wondering what to do next. The Islamic tradition is clear: return, repair, rebuild. These scripts show you how.

SITUATION 27 · AFTER YOU SNAPPED

After You Shouted

THE MOMENT

You lost your patience and raised your voice at your child — possibly said something harsh. The moment has passed. The house is quiet.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Either pretending it did not happen and going back to normal, or doubling down to justify it.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Pretending it did not happen teaches the child that adults do not have to account for their behaviour. Justifying it teaches them that whoever has more power is automatically right. Neither produces respect — both produce resentment.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Return, Repair, Rebuild:

"I want to come back to what happened earlier. I raised my voice at you and I should not have. I was frustrated — but that does not make it okay. I am sorry."

Option 2 — Be specific about what you regret:

"When I said [specific thing] — I should not have said that. It was not fair to you."

Option 3 — Rebuild the connection:

"I love you. I am still learning how to do this well. Thank you for being patient with me."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"I only shouted because of what you did. You brought it on yourself."**
- ✗ **Saying sorry but immediately listing what the child did wrong.**
- ✗ **Acting as if nothing happened and expecting the child to move on too.**

› **ISLAMIC ANCHOR**

"The one who repents from sin is like the one who has no sin."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Ibn Majah)

SITUATION 28 · AFTER YOU SNAPPED

After You Said Something You Regret

THE MOMENT

In anger or frustration, you said something to your child that you now wish you could take back — something cutting, unfair, or cruel.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Minimising it internally and hoping the child forgets.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Children do not forget the specific things parents say to them in anger. Research on adverse childhood experiences confirms this. The words you say in your worst moments often define how a child understands themselves for years. They need to hear you name it specifically.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Name it exactly:

"I said [exact words] to you earlier. That was wrong. Those words were not true, and they were not fair. I am sorry."

Option 2 — Replace the false message with the true one:

"I called you [word] in anger. That is not what I believe about you. What I actually believe about you is this: [specific true thing]."

Option 3 — Give them permission to feel hurt:

"If what I said hurt you — it is okay to be hurt. You do not have to pretend you are fine. I was wrong."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"I did not mean it like that. You are too sensitive."**
- ✗ **"I said it because I was frustrated — you should understand that."**
- ✗ **Giving gifts or being suddenly extra kind without addressing what was said.**

"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 29 · AFTER YOU SNAPPED

After a Long Cold Silence Between You

THE MOMENT

You and your child have been in a cold war — avoiding each other, speaking only when necessary, the tension sitting in the house like a third person.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Waiting for the child to come to you first, or pretending the distance is not there.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Children almost never break a cold silence with a parent first — they read the silence as rejection and stay behind their wall. The parent has to make the first move. Every day the silence continues, the wall gets thicker.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Break it simply:

"I feel like we have not really been talking. I miss you. Can we sit together?"

Option 2 — Own your part:

"I think I have been withdrawn. Whatever happened between us — I do not want this distance. I want to fix it."

Option 3 — Start with something small, not the issue itself:

Do something ordinary together first — a meal, a drive, something with no agenda. Then, when the ice has broken: "I want to talk about what happened between us. When you are ready."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **"I am not going to be the one to make the first move. They started it."**
- ✗ **"They know where I am if they want to talk."**
- ✗ **Bringing in the other parent to mediate without addressing it yourself.**

"Do not cut off ties. Do not harbour hatred. Be brothers and servants of Allah."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Bukhari)

SITUATION 30 · AFTER YOU SNAPPED

After a Major Punishment That May Have Been Wrong

THE MOMENT

You imposed a consequence — took something away, grounded them, said something final — and you now feel it may have been disproportionate, unfair, or given in anger rather than wisdom.

WHAT MOST PARENTS SAY

Maintaining the punishment to avoid looking weak, even though you know it was too much.

WHY IT BACKFIRES

Maintaining an unjust consequence to protect your authority teaches a child that power matters more than justice. It also teaches them that adults are not safe to come to when things go wrong. Revisiting a decision shows wisdom, not weakness.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Option 1 — Revisit it honestly:

"I have been thinking about what I decided yesterday. I think I reacted from frustration rather than from wisdom. I want to revisit it."

Option 2 — Adjust without completely reversing:

"The consequence stays — but I think the size of it was wrong. Here is what I think is fair instead."

Option 3 — Use it as a teaching moment:

"I am going to change what I decided. I want you to see that adults can get things wrong and fix them — because that is what I expect you to do too."

WHAT NEVER TO SAY

- ✗ **Maintaining a clearly unjust punishment to save face.**
- ✗ **Reversing it completely with no acknowledgement of why.**
- ✗ **Blaming the child: "If you had not pushed me, I would not have overreacted."**

"The just will be on platforms of light on the Day of Resurrection."

— Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Muslim)

YOU HAVE WHAT YOU NEED

The thirty situations in this guide cover the hardest moments most Muslim parents face. The scripts will not always work perfectly on the first try. Your child is not a formula. But the direction — away from shame, toward understanding; away from escalation, toward calm authority — is grounded in 1,400 years of Islamic wisdom.

If you want the full classical framework behind every script in this guide:

Discipline Without Damage by Nur Al-Qalam Dar walks through Al-Ghazali's Veil of Shame, the 7-7-7 Rule from Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn al-Jawzi's Wrong Room framework, Ibn al-Qayyim's strength-finding method, and the Sacred Vault — five classical systems for raising children who stay connected to Allah and to you.

Get it at: nuralqalamdar.com

May Allah make you among the parents whose children become the coolness of their eyes.

— Nur Al-Qalam Dar