Calm Conversation Checklist for Couples

For talks about money, family, chores or feelings. Tick the boxes you managed, and be kind to each other about the rest.

Name: _____ Week of: _____

Before

- [ ] We chose a calm time, not late at night or when hungry or rushed.
- [ ] Phones are away and children are busy.
- [ ] We picked one topic, not five.
- [ ] I know what I am asking for.

Starting gently

- [ ] I started with "I" rather than "You always".
- [ ] I said: "I feel ___ about ___, and I would like ___."
- [ ] I mentioned something I appreciate.

Taking turns

- [ ] One person speaks at a time, in short pieces.
- [ ] The listener sums up what they heard before replying.
- [ ] We stayed on this topic and did not bring up old fights.
- [ ] No name-calling, mocking, eye-rolling or silent treatment.

If it gets heated

- [ ] Either of us can say "Let's take a break."
- [ ] We agree a time to come back, after at least 20 minutes.
- [ ] During the break we calm down (walk, wudu, breathing), not rehearse arguments.

After

- [ ] We agreed one small next step: _____
- [ ] We repaired: a thank-you, an apology, or a kind gesture.
- [ ] We set a time to check how the step is going: _____

If there is fear, threats or violence in the relationship, this checklist is not enough: your safety comes first. Contact local emergency services or a domestic violence service.

Based on the speaker-listener technique from the PREP couples programme (Markman et al., 1993) and research on conflict and communication in couples (Gottman and Levenson, 2000; Overall and McNulty, 2017). Layout and wording: sherjeelawan.com. Free worksheet from sherjeelawan.com by Dr. Malik Sherjeel Awan (PsyD). For personal use; not a diagnosis or a substitute for professional care. In an emergency call your local emergency number.