BEFORE IT BREAKS

THE RELATIONSHIP SERIES / 01

ARE WE SLOWLY FALLING APART?

THE SILENCE AUDIT

Seven warning signs of emotional disconnection, real-life examples and practical tools for repair.

SCRIPTS / FRAMEWORKS / 14 DAYS

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01

THE WORK NOBODY SEES

At 6.45 am, one parent is packing lunches, looking for an excursion note and remembering the birthday present for Saturday. The other is getting ready for work. Neither is necessarily unkind. Both may be busy. But one carries the invisible job of noticing what the family needs before it becomes urgent. They ask for help and hear, 'Just tell me what to do.' They ask again and hear, 'I thought you had it covered.' Eventually the requests become shorter, sharper and then disappear altogether. The household keeps running because one person keeps running it.

The real injury may not be the lunches. It may be the belief that one person's time is more available, that one career comes first, or that responsibility is shared only when someone supervises it. A promise to 'help more' rarely repairs that imbalance. The work needs ownership: who notices, plans, completes and follows up, without reminders? Try assigning one recurring responsibility in full, with a date to review. If your partner responds with genuine involvement, that is useful information. If they argue about whether the work exists, that is information too.

A THOUGHT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Shared responsibility is not the same as helping when asked.

FROM THE ORIGINAL HURT TO A REAL NEXT STEP

IDENTIFY. TRACE. TRANSLATE. TEST.

01 **IDENTIFY**

Name one subject you have stopped raising. Use an observable description: “I no longer ask about time together” rather than “You never care.”

02 **TRACE**

Recall the last attempts. When were they made? What did each person do? What improved, if anything, and for how long?

03 **TRANSLATE**

Ask what the practical issue represents: fairness, belonging, reliability, affection, emotional safety or feeling seen.

04 **TEST**

Propose one small change, agree who owns it and decide when to review. The result is information, not a pass/fail judgment about your entire relationship.

SCRIPT 07 / WHAT TO SAY

AFTER ANOTHER BROKEN PROMISE

The issue is no longer only the task that was missed. It may be the accumulated loss of confidence that a conversation will lead to anything different.

THE FAMILIAR VERSION

'You promised. I knew you wouldn't bother. You always lie.'

A DIFFERENT WAY IN

'When we agreed on this last week, I felt relieved because I thought the responsibility would really change. It didn't happen, and I'm starting to lose confidence in our agreements. What got in the way? I need us to decide whether you can take this on reliably or whether we need a different arrangement.'

WHY THIS WORKS

It makes reliability discussable without confusing a missed task with deliberate deception. It also gives the partner a chance to be honest about capacity rather than agreeing again just to end the argument.

FIVE INDICATORS TO LOOK FOR

BEYOND “I’M SORRY.”

01 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Can your partner describe why the experience mattered to you without immediately dismissing it?

02 **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Can they name their own contribution without making your reaction responsible for their behaviour?

03 **ACTION**

Is there a change that can be observed, not merely a promise to be “better”?

04 **CONSISTENCY**

Does the change continue after the emotional intensity of the original conversation has faded?

05 **REVIEW**

Can you talk about a setback without returning to the same blame and defensiveness?