

# WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY TWIST YOUR WORDS

Practical Scripts for Difficult,  
Manipulative Conversations



Alex.B. Linden

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This book is for informational and educational purposes only and reflects the personal experiences and perspectives of the author.

First edition.

## Note to the Reader

I want to be clear about what this book is, and what it is not.

This is not a therapy book. I am not a psychologist, counsellor, or medical professional, and I am not offering clinical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The material in this book is not intended to replace professional mental health care, legal advice, or workplace mediation.

This book is a practical manual about language, specifically, about what to say in situations where boundaries are unclear, pressured, or repeatedly crossed. It focuses on communication, judgment, and proportion, not emotional processing or personal healing.

The scripts and guidance here are meant to reduce friction, limit harm, and make interactions more manageable. They cannot control how others behave, and they will not resolve every situation. In some cases, words are not enough, and this book is explicit about those limits.

If you are experiencing overwhelming distress, persistent anxiety, depression, thoughts of self-harm, or feel unsafe in your environment, I strongly encourage you to seek support from a qualified mental health professional, a trusted healthcare provider, or an appropriate support service in your area.

Seeking help is not a failure of boundaries or strength. It is a responsible choice.

Use this book selectively. Take what is useful, leave what is not. Adapt the language to your context and your judgment. The goal is not to say the perfect thing, but to communicate clearly, consistently, and with care for your own well-being.

This book is meant to support clearer decisions, not to replace care, expertise, or common sense.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

You spoke clearly.

You chose your words carefully. You stayed calm. You tried to be fair.

And somehow, the conversation went sideways anyway.

Hours later, maybe days, you find yourself replaying what you said, searching for the moment it shifted. What did you do wrong? How did your meaning get lost? Why are you now defending something you never intended?

If this sounds familiar, this book is for you.

There is a particular dynamic that happens in certain conversations - one that leaves thoughtful, articulate people feeling confused, diminished, or somehow at fault.

It is not that you were unclear. It is that your words were reframed, reinterpreted, or used in ways you did not intend.

Your concern became an accusation.

Your boundary became evidence of coldness.

Your calm response was dismissed as defensiveness.

And the more you tried to clarify, the worse it seemed to get.

This does not happen because you are inarticulate or oversensitive.

It happens, in part, because you are thoughtful.

People who communicate in good faith assume continuity. They assume that if they speak clearly, the conversation will stay anchored to what was actually said.

When that anchor is removed, they instinctively try to restore it. They explain. They soften. They add context.

And that is where the spiral begins.

This book is about how to speak clearly in conversations where clarity is not rewarded.

It is about how to hold your ground without escalating.

It is about recognizing when a conversation has shifted, and knowing how to respond without over-explaining, apologizing, or losing yourself in the process.

This book will not teach you how to win arguments. It will not give you techniques for persuading people who do not want to be persuaded.

It will teach you how to protect your clarity.

This is not a book about fixing other people.

It does not label, diagnose, or categorize the people in your life. It does not teach you to identify personality types or predict behavior patterns.

What it does is focus on you – your words, your boundaries and your ability to stay grounded when conversations you have become destabilizing.

Because the only person you can control in a conversation is yourself.

And sometimes, that is enough.

The core principle of this book is simple:

You are responsible for what you say - not for how others distort it.

This may sound obvious. But in practice, it is one of the hardest truths to hold onto.

Because when someone misrepresents your words, the instinct is to fix the misunderstanding. To clarify again. To explain more carefully.

But clarity is not always the issue.

Sometimes the issue is that the other person is not engaging with what you actually said.

And when that happens, more explanation will not help.

This book is for people who:

- Find themselves losing ground in conversations, despite speaking carefully
- Walk away from discussions feeling confused or diminished
- Struggle to hold boundaries without over-explaining
- Are tired of defending positions they never took
- Want to communicate with clarity and dignity, even when others do not.

It is for people in workplaces where words are scrutinized. For people in families where every conversation carries history. For people in relationships where communication has become a minefield.

And it is for anyone who has ever asked themselves: Why does this keep happening?

This book is structured around specific patterns that show up in difficult conversations.

Each pattern is explained clearly. The reasons it works on reasonable people are named. Common mistakes are identified. And practical language is offered - not as scripts to memorize, but as tools to adapt to your own situations.

The tone throughout is calm and direct. There is no drama, no moralizing, and no assumption that you are at fault for struggling with these dynamics.

Because you are not.

Some of the advice in this book assumes you have the freedom to speak, set boundaries, or disengage.

Not everyone does.

If you are in a workplace with power imbalances, a family with entrenched dynamics, or a relationship where consequences are real - this book acknowledges that. There is a chapter dedicated to navigating those contexts with care and strategy.

But even in constrained situations, there are choices. Quiet ones. Internal ones.

And this book will help you see them.

If you have picked up this book, you already know something is wrong.

You know that communication should not feel this hard. That clarity should not be this fragile. That holding your ground should not cost this much.

You are not imagining it.

And you are not alone.

This book will not fix everything. But it will give you language, clarity, and a different way of holding yourself in conversations that have, until now, left you feeling smaller.

That is enough to start.



# CHAPTER 1: WHEN YOUR WORDS ARE TURNED AGAINST YOU

There is a particular kind of confusion that follows certain conversations.

You walk away replaying what you said, wondering how it turned into something else entirely. You remember speaking carefully, even kindly, yet somehow you are now defending a position you never took.

This book begins there.

## **What's Actually Happening**

When someone twists your words, they are not responding to your statement. They are responding to a version of it - one that suits their needs in that moment.

This can look subtle:

- A slight exaggeration
- A loaded paraphrase
- A dramatic interpretation

Or it can be overt:

- “So you’re saying I’m incompetent.”
- “You’re accusing me of doing this on purpose.”
- “Wow. I didn’t know you felt that way about me.”

In each case, something quiet but important has happened: your meaning has been replaced.

### **Why This Is So Disorienting**

People who communicate in good faith assume continuity. If they speak clearly, they expect the conversation to remain anchored to what was actually said.

When that anchor is removed, they instinctively try to restore it.

They explain. They clarify. They soften. They add context.

And that is where the spiral begins.

Because the more you explain, the more material there is to distort.

### **The Hidden Trap**

The trap in this situation is believing you must defend yourself against an interpretation you never offered.

You do not.

Once your words are misrepresented, your task is no longer explanation. It is correction - or disengagement.

This is not about proving your innocence. It is about refusing a false premise.

## **Common Mistakes**

When words are twisted, reasonable people tend to:

- Over-clarify
- Apologize for unintended meanings
- Try to sound nicer
- Argue with the interpretation

Each of these responses keeps the distorted version alive.

## **The Reset Principle**

You are allowed to reset a conversation.

You do this by returning to what was actually said, without emotion or defense.

Not louder. Not longer. Just clearer.

## **What to Say Instead**

Use statements that separate your words from their interpretation.

Core scripts:

- “That’s not what I said.”
- “You’re responding to an interpretation, not my words.”
- “Let me restate this clearly.”

If they persist:

- “I’m not going to defend something I didn’t say.”
- “That meaning isn’t there.”

If the distortion continues:

- “We’re not having the same conversation.”
- “I’m going to stop here.”

These sentences are not aggressive. They are anchoring.

### **What These Scripts Do**

They do three things simultaneously:

1. They remove the false version from the table
2. They stop the escalation loop
3. They return control to you

They do not convince the other person. They do not fix the relationship.

They protect your clarity.

### **A Quiet Truth**

People who twist words often rely on your discomfort with firmness.

When you stop explaining, the dynamic changes.

Not because they suddenly understand - but because the distortion no longer works.

## **Takeaway**

You are not responsible for correcting every misunderstanding.

But you are allowed to refuse a rewritten version of yourself.

Sometimes, the most powerful sentence is simply:

“That’s not what I said.”

And nothing more.