

the sentences

what to actually say to a friend when you want them to know what they are to you. five sentences, who each one is for, and space to write the version you would really use.

this is a page to write on, not just read. pick one real person before you start, and write the sentence the way you would say it out loud to them, in your words and not mine. nobody sees this page but you.

01 say it plain, and say the kind

i love you, and i mean it as a friend. the second half is doing the work. without it the sentence is ambiguous and the other person spends the next hour deciding what you meant, which is the whole reason nobody says it.

FROM ME *naming the kind is what makes it landable. i have not regretted it yet.*

→ write your version, both halves, exactly as you would say it.

02 let it be weird for four seconds

the silence after is the hard part and it is short. four seconds, and the reflex is to rescue it with a joke, which takes the sentence back. do not take it back. wait.

FROM ME *the joke is the undo button. i know because i used to reach for it every time.*

→ what is your rescue reflex? the joke, the subject change, the follow-up text. name it so you can catch it.

03

if the big one will not come out, say the small one

this year would have been worse without you. i think about that thing you said. i would have been fine either way, and i am glad it was you. a small true sentence beats a big one you never say.

FROM ME *small does not mean less. it means sayable this week.*

→ write the smallest sentence you would actually get through.

04

say it to the one it is hardest to say to

in a 2021 survey of 2,019 americans, 49 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men said they had told a friend they loved them in the past week. if the person you thought of first is a man, that gap is the reason it feels like a big deal, and it is also the reason it is worth doing.

FROM ME *the number is not there to shame anyone. it is there so you know the difficulty is not personal.*

→ who came to mind that you then talked yourself out of? write their name.

05

then talk about it like people who can name things

the sentence is the opening, not the whole thing. what kind of love, what they are to you, what you want the friendship to be in ten years. none of that is embarrassing once the first sentence is out.

FROM ME *the embarrassment is all in sentence one. after that it is just a conversation.*

→ what would you want to be able to say next? write one line of it.

THE FOUR-SECOND RULE

say it, name the kind, and then say nothing for four seconds. the silence is not a mistake to fix.
it is the sentence being received.

☆ WHO ARE YOU GOING TO SAY IT TO, AND WHEN?

the whole idea, and the diagnostic for one specific person, live at riadms.com/name-it

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