



AN ARDENT WORKSHOP PRODUCT

The Driving Conversation

One script, with the replies you're most likely to get and what to say to each.

Free from Ardent Workshop · 1 of 24



The conversation families put off longest

This is one script out of the Caregiver Conversations Scripts & Letters Swipe Bank: **raising driving with a parent for the first time**. It is lifted unchanged from the paid Library, and it comes the way every card in that bank comes.

An opener is the easy half. You can find one anywhere. What nobody gives you is what happens twenty seconds later, when your father says “I’m fine, I’ve been driving for sixty years” and every sentence you prepared has stopped applying. That is where these conversations die — not at the start, at the first reply.

So the card below carries a **reply map**: the 5 answers you are most likely to get, what each one usually means underneath, and the words to say next to each. Then what not to say and why, what a good outcome actually looks like, what to do if it goes badly — and a written version to send if talking is too hard. After it, the same conversation **played out in full** for an invented family.

To use it: read the reply map before the opener — that is the part you will need. Then say the opener out loud once and change every phrase that isn’t yours. Everything in [BRACKETS] is a blank of yours; a bracket containing a slash is offering you a choice. Take one line in with you, not the page.

THE MOVE THIS WHOLE SCRIPT IS BUILT ON

Two observations, with dates — not a conclusion. “You can’t manage on your own anymore” is a verdict, and a verdict invites a defense. “There’s a scrape that wasn’t there in March, and on the 4th you turned up Kestrel instead of Fielding” is two facts, and facts invite an explanation — which is the conversation you wanted.

Free to use. Nothing here asks for an email.

A note on what this is. This is a conversation script and general guidance — **not medical, legal, or financial advice**, and not a substitute for any of them. Nothing here tells you what a doctor must, may, or will do about someone’s driving, or what a licensing agency does with a report; both differ by state and sometimes by county, so look up your own. And this script is written for **persuasion, not override**: an adult who has capacity has the right to make choices their family thinks are unwise, and whether a particular person can make a particular decision is a clinical and legal judgment, not a family one. If what you have seen is serious enough that waiting is not safe, that is a conversation with their doctor rather than one you have alone. The family in the played-out version is invented and its phone numbers use the 555-01xx range reserved for fiction.

SITUATION 01 · 1 OF 24 CONVERSATIONS

Driving — raising it, and what to do when the answer is no

Raising driving for the first time

01.1

You have seen something more than once — a new scrape on the same corner of the bumper, a wrong turn on a route they have driven for thirty years, a story about a light they "didn't see change" — and you have been carrying it around for weeks without saying it.

WHO RAISES IT

One person, on their own. Not two of you, and never a group.

WHEN AND WHERE

Their home, sitting down, mid-morning or early afternoon — not at the end of a visit, not in the car, not after dark.

HOW LONG TO GIVE IT

Twenty minutes, and be willing to stop at five.

BEFORE YOU SIT DOWN, HAVE THESE IN HAND

- Two things you saw, with the dates — flat, no adjectives
- The trips the car is genuinely for, in their order of importance to them
- One concrete replacement you have already priced or booked for the most important trip
- The smallest thing you would accept today (not the keys)

THE OPENER — the words to start with

[DAD/MOM/NAME], can I talk to you about something I've been sitting on for a couple of weeks? It's about driving.

I'm not here to take your keys. That isn't mine to take and I'm not going to try. I want to tell you the two things I've noticed, and then I want to hear what you've noticed — because you're in that car every day and I'm not.

[FIRST THING YOU SAW, WITH THE DATE.] And **[SECOND THING, WITH THE DATE.]**

What's your read on it?

If they say...

What it usually means

Say this

"I'm fine. I've been driving for sixty years."

They heard "you're finished," not "I'm worried." This is the most common first reply and it is not a refusal yet — it is a flinch.

I know. You taught me. I'm not telling you that you can't drive — I'm telling you I saw two things and they stayed with me, and I'd rather say it to your face than sit on it. Have you noticed anything at all? Even something small you brushed off.

If they say...	What it usually means	Say this
"Who put you up to this? Have you and [SIBLING] been talking about me?"	They are checking whether this is a conversation or a verdict already reached without them. Lie here and you lose the next five conversations.	Yes — [SIBLING] said something to me last month and I've been sitting on it since. I'd rather you heard it from me than found out later we'd been talking around you. That's exactly why I'm saying it out loud instead of managing it.
"So how am I supposed to get anywhere?"	This is the real conversation, and it is a good sign. They are no longer arguing about competence; they are asking about their life.	That's the actual question and I don't have the whole answer yet. Let's do it in that order instead — tell me the trips that matter, the ones you'd hate to lose, and I'll go and find out what covers each of them and what it costs. If nothing covers them, that changes the picture and I'll say so.
"Fine. Take them. Take the car, take everything."	Hurt, not agreement. Accepting this is a reliable way to turn one conversation into a year of silence.	That's not what I'm asking for and I don't want to leave it there. Can we stop for today? I'll come back [DAY] and we can pick it up then if you want to — or not.
"Maybe not at night. The headlights bother me now."	An offer. Take it exactly as given and do not push for more in the same conversation.	That would mean a lot to me. Can we call that the plan from this week — nothing after dark, and everything else stays as it is? And can we agree to sit down again in a month and look at it honestly, whichever way it's going?

DON'T SAY	WHY IT ENDS THE CONVERSATION
"You're going to kill someone."	It makes the conversation about their character instead of about the road. They will spend the next twenty minutes defending who they are, and you will not get to raise it again for months.
"The doctor says you shouldn't be driving."	If a doctor has not said that in those words, don't say it. If one has, it belongs in the doctor's mouth in the doctor's office — secondhand in a kitchen it sounds like a card you were saving.
"We've all been talking about it."	It turns a worry into a verdict already reached in their absence, and it makes every future conversation feel like an ambush.

WHAT A GOOD OUTCOME LOOKS LIKE One concession with an edge on it — not at night, not on the highway, not with the grandchildren in the car — and a date to look at it again. You are not trying to end driving today. You are trying to make driving something the two of you are now allowed to talk about.

IF IT GOES BADLY Stop early and say the line that keeps the door open: "I'm going to leave it. I'd rather be wrong about this than fall out with you over it." Come back in a week with one replacement trip already arranged rather than a second argument. If what you saw is serious enough that waiting is not safe, this stops being a conversation you can have alone — raise it with their doctor and ask about a formal driving evaluation, and look up what your own state allows and requires,

because it varies a great deal and it is not something to guess at.

MAKE IT YOURS Name one or two things you saw, each with a date. Two observations read as worry; five read as a case that has been building, and a case invites a defense rather than an answer.

THE WRITTEN VERSION — to send instead, or afterward

Subject: Following up on what I said [DAY]

[DAD/MOM/NAME],

I've been thinking about **[DAY]**'s conversation and I wanted to put it in writing, partly so you can read it when I'm not standing in front of you.

What I said, and what I still mean: I'm not trying to take the car away from you. I told you about **[THING YOU SAW, WITH DATE]** and **[SECOND THING]** because they stayed with me and I didn't want to be the person who noticed and said nothing.

What I'd like, and it's the whole ask: **[THE ONE SMALL THING — no night driving / not the highway / a check-up that includes an eye test]**. Nothing else changes.

On the practical side, I've looked into **[WHAT YOU FOUND — the ride service and what it costs / the shuttle and when it runs / who could drive you on [DAY]]**, so **[THE TRIP THAT MATTERS MOST]** is covered either way.

I'd rather have this conversation with you ten times than have it once behind your back. If you want to tell me I've got it wrong, tell me — I'll listen.

Love,
[YOUR NAME]

The same conversation, played out

Reading a script tells you the shape of a conversation. Watching one happen tells you the **register**: how firm is too firm, how much detail is enough, and when to say nothing at all. Every one of the 24 conversations in the paid bank is shown this way.

Raising driving for the first time

PLAYED OUT

Nadia has noticed two things in six weeks: a fresh scrape along the passenger side that her father says he doesn't remember, and a wrong turn on the way back from the pharmacy he has used since 1998. She drives over on a Tuesday morning and sits down at the kitchen table.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Nadia | Dad, can I talk to you about something I've been sitting on for a couple of weeks? It's about driving. |
| Ellis | Here we go. |
| Nadia | I'm not here to take your keys. That isn't mine to take and I'm not going to try. I want to tell you the two things I've noticed, and then I want to hear what you've noticed, because you're in that car every day and I'm not. |
| Ellis | Go on then. |
| Nadia | There's a scrape down the passenger side that wasn't there in March, and when I asked about it you said you didn't remember it happening. And on the fourth, coming back from Bellamy's, you turned up Kestrel instead of Fielding. You've driven that road since I was in school. What's your read on it? |
| Ellis | The scrape was a post in the lot at Bellamy's. And Kestrel gets you there too, it's just longer. I've been driving sixty-one years, Nadia. |
| Nadia | I know. You taught me. I'm not telling you that you can't drive — I'm telling you those two things stayed with me and I'd rather say it to your face than sit on it. Have you noticed anything at all? Even something you brushed off. |
| Ellis | ...The lights bother me now. Coming the other way. They didn't used to. |
| Nadia | Thank you for telling me that. |
| Ellis | It's only at night. It's fine in the day. |
| Nadia | Then can we say that's the plan from this week — nothing after dark, everything else stays exactly as it is? And we sit down again in a month and look at it honestly, whichever way it's going. |

- Ellis** How am I supposed to get to the Thursday thing? It doesn't finish until seven.
- Nadia** That's the actual question and I don't have the whole answer yet. Thursday is the one that matters — anything else?
- Ellis** Bellamy's. And Margery's grave, but that's daylight.
- Nadia** Then let me go and find out what covers Thursday and what it costs, and I'll tell you what I find, including if the answer is nothing good. Deal?
- Ellis** Deal. Don't make a thing of it with your brother.
- Nadia** I'll tell him what we agreed and nothing else.

AND THE NOTE THAT WENT AFTERWARD

Subject: Following up on what I said Tuesday

Dad,

I've been thinking about Tuesday's conversation and I wanted to put it in writing, partly so you can read it when I'm not standing in front of you.

What I said, and what I still mean: I'm not trying to take the car away from you. I told you about the scrape and about Kestrel Road because they stayed with me and I didn't want to be the person who noticed and said nothing.

What we agreed, so we both have it the same way: no driving after dark from this week, everything else unchanged, and the two of us sit down again in a month — the last Sunday — and say honestly how it's gone.

On Thursdays: Quillfern runs a door-to-door van in your area for \$9 each way, booked by Tuesday noon on 555-0166. I've put the number on the pad by the phone. If you'd rather I just came and got you, say so and I will — I only went looking because I said I would.

I'd rather have this conversation with you ten times than have it once behind your back. If you think I've got it wrong, tell me. I'll listen.

Love,
Nadia

The other twenty-three conversations

The full bank carries **24 conversations across eight situations**, with **125 replies mapped** in all, and every one of them also played out in full.

Situation	What it covers
01 · Driving	Raising it (this one), the follow-up when the answer is a flat no, and the conversation the same day something happens
02 · Help in the home	Suggesting it for the first time, briefing a new aide on day one, raising a problem without losing them
03 · Money & documents	Asking about money without it sounding like an audit, where the documents are, a bill or a caller that worries you
04 · A move or more care	Raising it early, the hospital conversation when discharge won't be home, and "you promised"
05 · Siblings	The first honest division of work, when one has opted out, calling a family meeting and setting its agenda
06 · Doctors & facilities	Being heard in a ten-minute appointment, asking for a referral, raising a concern and escalating it in writing
07 · Work & wider family	Leave and flexibility, telling everyone once, declining help that costs more than it gives
08 · Your own	Asking for a real break with dates on it, telling your household what this costs, a note for the bad days

AND WHAT COMES WITH THEM

A **Start Here playbook** — the four moves behind every script, twelve rewrites side by side, when to have each conversation and when not to, and the page on where persuasion stops and a professional starts. A **second book** playing all 24 out in full. **Eight print-and-fill worksheets** in US Letter and A4. **Twenty-four plain-text files**, yours to rewrite in your own words. And a **searchable index** — Ctrl+F and go.

[See the full swipe bank >](#)

ardentworkshop.com/products/caregiver-conversations-scripts-and-letters-swipe-bank/

More Life Admin & Peace of Mind tools at ardentworkshop.com. Free to use — please don't resell or redistribute it.