



EIN GUTER VATER

Guidance for fathers. Calm for children.

5 PHRASES

FOR A CALM END TO THE DAY

No magic formula. No three-minute neurological window. Five honest phrases for connection, safety, and repair.



For fathers, separated parents and anyone who wants connection rather than performance pressure at bedtime.



THE FIVE PHRASES

1

I love you - whatever today was like.

Love is not a reward for good behaviour.

2

You are safe right now. I am here.

Say this only when it is genuinely true in that moment.

3

I see your courage and effort - not only the result.

Notice effort and strategy without tying self-worth to performance.

4

Tomorrow is a new day. We can work through what was hard today.

A fresh start with accountability - not erasing mistakes.

5

I'm here for you. I'll be honest about when we'll see each other again.

When separated, promise only dates that are confirmed.



WHAT THE EVIDENCE ACTUALLY SUPPORTS

Routines can help

A randomized study of 405 families found that a consistent bedtime routine improved sleep onset, night waking, sleep continuity and maternal mood.

No three-minute magic window

Brain activity changes during sleep onset. Evidence does not establish a universal maximally suggestible three-minute period in which phrases become permanently embedded.

Relationships grow through patterns

Children learn emotion regulation through modelling, emotional guidance and the repeated family climate - not one verbal formula.

Praise process, not labels

A small longitudinal study linked early praise of effort and strategy with later growth-oriented learning beliefs. It was not a guarantee.

Attachment is not one sentence

Secure attachment grows through available, responsive care and repair. A phrase does not determine every later friendship.



A 10-MINUTE ROUTINE WITHOUT PRESSURE

1. ARRIVE

Dim the lights and slow the pace. Do not interrogate your child about the day.

2. CONNECT

Ask: "What felt easy today - and what felt hard?" Silence is allowed.

3. ONE PHRASE

Choose one phrase that is honest and useful tonight.

4. REPAIR

If you were loud or unfair: name it, apologize, and restate the boundary calmly.

5. LOOK AHEAD

Say what will happen tomorrow or when you will next see each other.

FOR SEPARATED PARENTS

If a date is confirmed: "We will see each other on [day]. Until then, I am thinking of you." Do not promise dates you do not control.



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Sources: Mindell et al. (2009, 2015); Mindell & Williamson (2018); Morris et al. (2007); Gunderson et al. (2013); Groh et al. (2014).