

Not in the Elevator

Three phrases to pause a fight when you can't leave the room.

| Learn one phrase per page.

| Play **phrases.mp3** and say each phrase out loud. You'll hear it twice.

| Try the quick check at the end.

I need a minute

You say this when you are upset or overwhelmed and want a short break to calm down or think. It doesn't mean you give up; you'll come back.

Examples

- Sorry, I need a minute to calm down before we continue.
- I need a minute alone, then I'll help you decide.

You can also say

- Give me a second to cool off.
- Let me take a moment.

A minute is not exact; it can be ten minutes. Say when you'll come back, or the other person may think you're avoiding them.

This isn't the place

You say this when a conversation or argument is too private or awkward for where you are, because other people can hear. It's polite but firm.

Examples

- Please, this isn't the place to talk about my salary.
- I know you're upset, but this isn't the place.

You can also say

- Not here, please.
- Let's not do this in public.

“This isn't the time” is similar but about timing, not location. Use “the place” when other people are nearby.

Can we talk later?

You ask this to delay a serious conversation while showing you still want to have it. It's softer than refusing to talk.

Examples

- Can we talk later? I'm about to walk into a meeting.
- I can't right now. Can we talk later tonight?

You can also say

- Can we pick this up later?
- Let's talk about it tonight.

Add a time to make it believable: "Can we talk after dinner?" Without one, "later" can sound like you're avoiding the topic.

Quick check

1. I'm too angry to talk. I need a _____
to calm down.

message / minute / mistake

2. People are staring at us. This _____
for a fight.

isn't the case / isn't the place / isn't the price

3. I'm too tired to discuss the bills.
_____ later?

Can we talk / Can we tell / Can we walk

Answers: 1 minute, 2 isn't the place, 3 Can we talk

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