



Sharing Stories at the Table: For Parents OK with Being Vulnerable

Here's the short version:

- I had a big struggle...
- The struggle had a big impact on me and others...
- I trusted someone to help me...
- Now...
- You have permission to protect me by....

Here's a few more ideas. Use what works for you:

1. **Choose one** or something similar:
 - Once upon a time...
 - There was a time in my life...
 - I remember when...
2. **Choose one** or something similar:
 - I had a real struggle.
 - I was really hurt.
 - I made a choice that had big consequences.
3. **Share the details of the story:** what's appropriate to share about the struggle, the hurt, and/or the choice that was made (e.g. I stole a movie from the store OR I lied to my parents about where I was spending the night OR I decided to drink when I went to a party OR...)
4. **Choose one** or something similar:
 - The struggle had a big impact on me and people that I loved
 - Because I was hurt, I chose to...
 - The consequences of my choice had a big impact on me and other people, too.
5. **Share the details of the impact and influence of the struggle:** the hurt and/or the choice that was made (e.g. I got arrested OR I kept lying to cover up the first lie OR I felt so guilty and was miserable. I kept drinking to numb my shame OR...)

6. Choose one or something similar:
 - (Name of a friend/relative) noticed something was wrong and told me they wanted to help me.
 - I knew (name of a friend/relative) would know what to do—and I could trust them to help me.
 - My (mom or dad) had told me before about some bad choices they'd made; they always told me they'd help me, so I decided to trust them and ask for help.
 - My (teacher, coach, youth pastor) was somebody I trusted, so I asked them to help me.

7. Share appropriate details about the kind of help you received or are still receiving. Be real about the highs and lows of recovering.

8. Give your children/spouse permission to protect you from falling back into an old struggle (e.g. Next time you see that I'm getting angry, you have permission to say, "Dad, you gave me permission to protect you from ____ when you're mad" OR "Mom, you gave me permission. Will you let me protect you from ____? Let's go for a walk.")