Zara West's Journal
Deep Dialogue Checklist

Name Tags

- Use sparingly
- Keep the verb simple – said, ask.
- Place the name before the verb
- Use dialogue, not tag, to show character mood
- Do not add an adverb

Action Tags

- Use in place of name tags
- Show what character is doing
- Show setting
- Show subtext
- Avoid cliché actions like nod
- Move plot forward

Emotion Tags

- Show POV's internal emotion
- Show external emotion for non-POVs
- Contrast inner state with what is being said
- Add more meaning to dialogue
- Add emotion to scene

Thought Tags

- Show what POV character is thinking
- Add subtext
- Break up long sections of dialogue
- Maintain clarity- keep it brief

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