What to say to someone who might fight.

01 **Go alone, or with one other.** Three people at once feels like an ambush and he will dig in. Take a backup and someone to ring for advice, but do not bring a crowd.

02 **Listen first.** Ask what he thinks fighting will get him. Ask what he is afraid of. Ask who is expecting him to act — often the pressure is coming from someone who will not be there when the shooting starts. You cannot offer a better path until you know what path he thinks he is on.

03 **Do not tell him his anger is wrong.** Say you understand what was taken from him, and that you still will not support killing. Both of those can be true at the same time, and saying both is what makes you worth listening to.

04 **Offer real choices — two or three, not "be peaceful".** Real means: he will demand justice publicly. He will name two witnesses to give statements. He will put men on the market and the school to keep them safe. He will ask for a meeting with police and a mediator. Those are strong, visible things. He is still leading. He is just not killing anyone.

This matters more than anything else here. Many men do not want a fight but believe that refusing one will make them look weak. Give a man a way to look strong without shooting and you have solved most of the problem.

05 **Ask what he will do, not only what he will not do.** A promise to do one specific thing holds far better than a promise to stay calm.

06 **Come back.** Especially after a funeral, after drinking, when a compensation deadline is near, when an election is coming, or when a new rumour starts.

CONTINUED · WHAT TO SAY TO SOMEONE WHO MIGHT FIGHT

Questions that work:

01 When this happens again, what do you want for your family six months from now?

02 Who might be killed if this spreads? Who carries that?

03 What would a strong answer look like that does not start another payback?

04 If we get this heard by the right people within a day, will you hold your men until then?

05 Who do you listen to when you are very angry? Can we ask him to sit with us?

06 What would you need to know before you decide who is responsible?