

The Workplace Boundary Scripts

A boundary isn't "no." It's a clear expectation and an honest trade-off. Here are the lines for the situations that usually leave you stewing.

The formula: Acknowledge + Trade-off + Offer

Name what they need, make the cost visible, and hand back a choice. Calm, not combative.

"I can take that on. To hit that deadline, I'd need to push **[the other thing]** to Friday — which would you like me to prioritise?"

The scripts

TOO MUCH ON YOUR PLATE

"I want to do these well. Right now I have A, B, and C all due this week — can you help me rank them so the most important one lands first?"

AFTER-HOURS MESSAGES

"Happy to pick this up first thing tomorrow. If it's ever truly urgent, call me — otherwise I'm offline in the evenings."

THE MEETING THAT COULD'VE BEEN AN EMAIL

"Could we handle this async? I'll send my notes by 2pm — and we keep the meeting only if something's still open."

A CONFLICT, CALMLY

"Here's what I saw **[facts]**, here's the impact **[on the work]**, and here's what I'd suggest **[request]**. Can we agree on a next step?"

Remember

- ☐ A trade-off makes the choice **their** call — that's why it doesn't read as rude.
- ☐ Boundaries protect the work, not just you. Say that out loud if you need to.