Dilemma one: The immediate yes

Recall a request you answered before checking what the answer would ask of you. Choose one you can examine at a manageable scale. Recover the actual request and your response, including what you understood then and what became apparent later. Let the record begin with the exchange rather than a conclusion about why you agreed.

Several explanations may be plausible. Identify which details support your own account and which parts remain uncertain. A quickly given answer may express genuine willingness, an underestimated cost, a felt obligation, or more than one consideration. The task is to distinguish them using your experience, rather than to select the explanation that makes the choice look most defensible.

An honest yes is not a yes without any cost. Many valued choices require effort, compromise, or a missed opportunity. The question is whether you understood and accepted the cost, and whether the arrangement remains workable.

Before making a judgment about yourself or the requester, examine the actual terms. Identify what was stated, what you assumed, what was already agreed, and whether there was room to discuss scope. Notice what made speed feel necessary and whether that urgency belonged to the request or to your interpretation of what hesitation would mean.

The wish to be generous deserves respect. So does the wish to retain time for yourself. Neither needs to be made shameful so the other can win. You can decide which

commitment to honor and how to communicate the limits of that decision.

Map the answer

Use the actual request you recalled. Complete these four lines with specific information:

The request, as actually stated:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The cost I understood at the time:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The cost I understood later:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The reason I answered so quickly:

Write three possible responses now: keep the commitment; renegotiate its scope; withdraw with an accurate explanation. Name a consequence of each, including effects on the other person.

Which response best fits the facts, your capacity, and the responsibility you have already accepted?