First layer: The episode, not the identity

A broad label can feel explanatory because it is familiar. Difficult. Needy. Avoidant. Unreliable. Yet the label may tell you less than the sequence of a single episode.

Choose a recent instance of your thread. Begin before the response you regret. What was happening? What did you know? What did you assume? What options did you see at the time? Describe the episode as if someone needed to understand it without already agreeing with your judgment.

Recover a detail your broad account usually skips. It may concern timing, privacy, clarity, workload, or a resource that was absent. Use the details actually present in your episode. They do not automatically excuse a response; they help identify the conditions in which it occurred and the scale at which a change could be useful.

Read your actual sequence once without the familiar identity label. Notice where the account becomes more specific and where a question appears. Separate missing information, a practical limit, an expectation about how you would be seen, and a preference you had not acknowledged. You may find more than one, or none of these. A useful next action depends on the condition actually present. The record should make the thread easier to understand without choosing a hidden cause merely because it sounds compelling.

An account can include missing information. You may not remember the exact order. You may know what you

thought but not what the other person intended. Keep those limits visible. Precision includes the boundaries of your knowledge.

Record one episode

The circumstances immediately before the response:

What I observed, and what I assumed it meant:

What I did or did not do, in sequence:

What happened next, including effects on other people:

Which part of the record is fact, which is interpretation, and which is uncertain?