



Find it. Say it.

How to find the deal you made in your head that the other person never agreed to, and two sentences that make it real.

1 Find it

Most of the time, when someone lets you down, they broke a rule they didn't know existed. You made it. You never said it. Then you graded them on it.

The sentence that gives it away

"If they cared, they'd _____." Every time that shows up in your head, there's a deal behind it that you made by yourself. Listen for the sentence, not the dishes.

Why "they should just know" feels so reasonable

People consistently overestimate how visible their feelings are to others. You felt it all day, so you assumed it was obvious. It wasn't. Feelings are much less visible from the outside than from the inside.

Three questions (one minute, before you say anything)

01 Finish the sentence: "If they really cared, they would..."

Whatever comes out is the deal. Don't clean it up. The petty version is the real one.

02 Have I ever said this to them, out loud, in those words?

Not hinted. Not sighed loudly in the room. Said.

03 How much does this actually matter to me?

Picture them never doing it. Mildly annoying? Small deal, let it go. Stings, feels like proof they don't care? Big deal, and the big ones are the ones you have to say out loud.

2 Say it

Two sentences, in this order. The order is what makes it work.

Sentence one: admit you had a picture in your head

"I realize I had a picture of how this was going to go, and I never told you about it."

Sentence two: turn it into a real agreement

"Here's what I was hoping for. Does that work for you, or what would work better?"

Sentence one takes the blame off them first. Nobody gets defensive about a plan they're hearing for the first time.

AT HOME

"I walked in tonight annoyed about the kitchen, and I realized I never told you today was a rough one and I could use a hand. Can we figure out a way to do this where I don't have to hope you'll guess?"

AT WORK

"I had it in my head that you'd loop me in before that email went out, and I realize I never said that. Going forward, can we agree on when I get a heads-up?"

The guardrail

Not "lower your standards." A deal only counts if they heard it and agreed. Said it, they agreed, and it still doesn't happen? That's real information, and a different conversation.

The deals I've been running

Fill this in before the next conversation, not during it. One row per person. If column two is "no," column three is your next move.

"IF THEY CARED, THEY'D..."	SAID OUT LOUD?	THE TWO SENTENCES, IN MY WORDS
...want a slow Saturday too.	No	"I had a picture of Saturday and never said it. What works for you?"

Think Sharper. Stay Sovereign.

From: Why You Keep Getting Let Down by People · allenstafford.com

SOURCES — Gilovich, Savitsky & Medvec 1998 (illusion of transparency) · Burns 1980 / Ellis ("should" statements)

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