

The Protest Behaviour Log

You did not ask them to ring. You put the phone face down where you could still see it, replied four hours later with one word, and mentioned that someone at work had been very kind to you lately. None of that was a plan. It is what happens when you need a response badly and cannot ask for one, and it has a name: protest behaviour. This log is one page per incident, filled in afterwards, because during is not available.

Who this is for: You go quiet, or keep score, or take five hours to answer someone you are desperate to hear from, and you can watch yourself doing it without being able to stop.

The five fields, and two things to do once you have six pages

Field one: what I did

The behaviour, written flatly, with no reason attached.

What I did, and when:

How long it went on for:

Was it visible to them, or only to me?

Have I done the same thing before with this person?

Field two: what I was trying to make happen

The response you wanted the behaviour to produce.

What I wanted them to do in response:

How quickly did I want it?

What would have counted as enough?

Field three: what I actually wanted

The plain request underneath the manoeuvre.

The plain request, in one sentence:

Why I could not say it directly:

What I thought would happen if I asked plainly:

Have I ever asked this person outright? What happened?

Field four: what happened

Their response, and how long the relief lasted.

What they did:

How long the relief lasted:

Did I get the thing I actually wanted, or a substitute?

Field five: what it cost

The bill, including the parts that arrive later.

Cost to me, in hours or sleep:

Cost to them:

What it will make slightly harder next time:

Was it worth it? Answer honestly, either way.

The other direction: going quiet to be chased

Protest with no visible protest in it.

What I withdrew, and for how long:

What I was waiting for them to do:

What would I have done if they had not come looking?

The read across six incidents

Where the same shape turns up more than once.

The request that appears most often:

The situation that appears most often:

The behaviour that costs the most:

The sentence I could say instead, word for word:

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