RemoteHeR · Module 1 · Decision game

MODULE 1 DECISION GAME

Nine o'clock

A message arrives at 21:00 in your second week. Every choice leads to a consequence three weeks later, and then to the next decision.



Before you start

You started two weeks ago as a remote HR assistant. You work from home, 09:00 to 15:00, because you collect your child from school. Your manager, Marta, works in another city. It is going well, and nobody has said anything about your hours, because nobody has needed to.

Nothing here is graded and no score is stored. Each choice shows what happens three weeks later, then leads to the next decision. Play it once as you would really behave, not as you think you should. Then play it again.

Decision 1 · Week 2, Tuesday 21:00

Your manager, Marta, messages: "Quick one — can you send me the new starter list?"

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. Send it now. It takes two minutes.	Three weeks later: Marta now messages most evenings. This week there were three, all answered within minutes. Nothing bad happened, and that is the problem: you have both learned that you answer at nine in the evening, and nobody decided it.	bad
B. Reply now: "Saw this — I'll send it first thing tomorrow."	Three weeks later: Marta sends the odd evening message. You still reply at night, even if only to say "tomorrow". From Marta's side, a reply is a reply: you were available. If you would not send the answer at 21:00, do not send the acknowledgement either.	mixed
C. Leave it until 09:00 and send it then, with a short note.	Three weeks later: Marta's next requests say "for tomorrow". Evening messages have stopped. She had the list before she needed it. What she noticed, without thinking about it, is that you answer in the morning.	good

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Decision 2 · Week 5, your Wednesday one-to-one

There is time at the end of the call.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. Say nothing. Things are going fine.	Three weeks later: Nothing is agreed, so each evening message is a new decision for you. Every message now asks you to decide again, late in the evening, when nobody decides well.	bad
B. Agree contact hours (09:00–15:00) and what counts as urgent: a phone call, not a message.	Three weeks later: Your hours are in your signature and chat status. Urgent things come by phone, and there have been none. It took one sentence. Agreeing what is urgent is what makes everything else easy to leave until morning.	good
C. Say you are happy to be flexible "whenever needed".	Three weeks later: "Whenever needed" has come to mean evenings and one Sunday. A promise with no limit gets used without a limit. Flexibility works when you say what it covers.	bad

Decision 3 · Week 8, Friday 18:30

A line manager messages: a new starter's laptop has not arrived for Monday.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. Spend the evening sorting it out with IT.	Three weeks later: The line manager now sends you Friday-evening problems directly. Solving it at night taught a second person that you are the evening route.	bad
B. Check: is it urgent under what you agreed? It is not, so you reply at 09:00 Monday and fix it first thing. The starter begins at 10:00.	Three weeks later: The starter began on time, with the laptop at 11:00. Nobody noticed the gap. Your agreed rule did the deciding for you. The problem was real but could wait until Monday morning.	good
C. Forward it to Marta tonight so it is "off your plate".	Three weeks later: Marta had to deal with it on Friday night and asked you to use the agreed route next time. Passing it on moved the evening work to someone else instead of to the right time.	mixed

Decision 4 · Month 4

A busy period. You wake up tired, and tasks that used to be easy take longer.

Choice	What happens	Verdict

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A. Push through. It is temporary.	Three weeks later: It was not temporary. You are more tired, and two deadlines slipped anyway. Working longer is how overload grows. Tiredness and slower work over weeks are early signs worth acting on.	bad
B. Raise it with Marta at your one-to-one, with facts: what is on your plate and what does not fit. Agree what moves.	Three weeks later: The survey analysis moved by two weeks. The busy period passed without anything slipping. Facts make it a conversation about the work, not about you. Your manager can only re-plan what she knows about.	good
C. Take a day off without saying why.	Three weeks later: The rest helped for a few days, but the workload is unchanged. Rest helps, but if nothing changes in the workload, the signs come back.	mixed

Decision 5 · Month 8

A new manager, Sven, starts. On his first day he messages you at 21:10.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. Reply straight away to make a good first impression.	Three weeks later: Sven assumes you are available in the evenings, like the person before you seemed to be. A first impression sets a pattern. This one says that evenings are working time.	bad
B. Reply at 09:00, and share your agreed hours and the urgent route in your first one-to-one.	Three weeks later: Sven adopts the same arrangement. It took one sentence. A boundary you have already agreed is easy to pass on. Said once, early, it is information, not a complaint.	good
C. Ask Marta to explain your hours to him.	Three weeks later: Sven hears it second-hand and asks you about it a week later. Your boundary is yours to state. Second-hand, it sounds like a rule about him rather than an arrangement with you.	mixed

Ending · Your evenings are yours

You set the pattern early, so keeping it cost a few sentences. That is the point of the game.

Ending · Mostly yours, with leaks

The boundary held where you named it and leaked where you did not. Try it again choosing to agree hours in decision 2.

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Ending · Always on

Nothing was ever unreasonable on its own. Together, the choices made you available every evening. Play again and set the boundary in week two.

Debrief

Boundaries are cheap early and expensive later. Agreeing what counts as urgent is what makes saying no to everything else easy. The rules on contact outside working hours differ by country. Check yours in the case study.

My decision log

What I chose on my first play, and what happened

What I changed on a second play, and why

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