



The People-Pleasing *Map*

Where saying yes started, which relationships still run on it, and one small boundary to try this week.

Before you *start*

Two minutes of reading before you pick up a pen. Of everything in here, this is the page I would not skip.

What this is. Three short pieces of work. Where the habit of saying yes began, which relationships still run on it now, and one boundary small enough to actually try this week.

What this is not. This is not a diagnosis and it is not clinical work. If you are already working with someone clinically, keep working with them.

If something big comes up. Stop and put the pen down. Look around the room and name three things you can see, out loud. Put both feet flat on the floor and press down.

Come back another time. This page will wait.

How to *use* it

Twenty minutes, one sitting, on paper if you can.

Work in order, because part two uses what part one gives you, and part three only makes sense once you can see the map in front of you.

Nobody else reads this, and that matters more here than in most worksheets. Half the answers involve people who are still in your life, and you will write a softer version if you are picturing them reading over your shoulder.

Do not act on anything until part three. The first instinct after seeing the map is usually a large announcement to somebody, and large announcements are how this gets abandoned by Thursday.

Where it *started*

Think back to the first place where being easy to be around was the safest thing you could be.

It is usually a house rather than a friendship, and it is usually earlier than people expect. A parent whose mood set the temperature of the room. A sibling who needed more than you did. A stretch of illness that made everybody quiet.

Write the earliest time you can remember reading somebody's mood and adjusting yourself to fit it. What you noticed, what you did, and roughly how old you were.

Stay with one scene rather than summarising the whole childhood. A summary keeps you at a comfortable distance from it, and a scene puts you back in the room, which is where the useful detail is.

What it *bought* you

That adjustment worked, or you would have stopped doing it.

Write what it got you at the time. Quiet in the house. Being the one who never caused any trouble. Somebody's approval that was otherwise difficult to come by. Being allowed to stay in the room while the adults talked.

Give it full credit while you write. A strategy that never worked would have been dropped decades ago, so what you are looking at is a solution that was correct for the situation you were in at the time.

The rule you *made*

Somewhere in there you made a rule, and you have been following it since.

Write it in the box, in the words a child would use rather than the words you would use now. Most people land on something close to: if I keep everybody happy, I get to stay. Or: my needs make people tired.

If a familiar phrase fits it, use the familiar phrase. “I’m not enough” and “I don’t belong” are common because they are accurate for a great many people, and the recognition is the part that does the work.

● PART TWO

The *map*

This is the page that surprises people.

List the people you say yes to. Family, work, friends, the group chat, the neighbour who asks for lifts. Aim for six to eight names rather than the two obvious ones, because the two obvious ones are already known to you and the pattern lives in the rest.

For each one, write what you say yes to, and what you honestly expect would happen if you said no. That last column is a prediction rather than a fact, and it is the most interesting thing on this page.

NAME	WHAT I SAY YES TO	WHAT I EXPECT IF I SAY NO

Reading your *map*

Three questions about what you have just written.

Which name takes the most, and how long has that been true?

Which of these people has never actually asked you for any of it? Most maps have a good deal of volunteered yes on them, and volunteered yes is the easiest kind to take back.

Where is the yes automatic, meaning it is out of your mouth before you have checked whether you have the room for it?

What it has *cost*

Write what all of this has already taken from you.

Figures will not help here, because most of the cost sits in things that never happened. Write what you can see instead. The evening that was yours. The thing you did not say. The number of times you have been the one who moved.

One line each is enough.

Small enough to *do*

The instinct at this point is to pick the hardest name on the map, and that is how this fails.

Pick a small one. One request, from one person, in the next seven days. Small enough that you can already picture the exact moment, and low enough in stakes that you would be fine if it went badly.

Small is doing something specific here. You are testing whether the prediction in your third column is accurate, and a small test answers that question just as well as a large one, at a fraction of the cost.

Your boundary, *written out*

Write three things in the box.

The person, the request, and the sentence you will actually say. Write the sentence out in full, in your own words, because being firm is an intention and a sentence is a thing you can say, and only one of those survives the moment somebody is actually asking.

Then write the day you will do it. An intention with no day attached quietly becomes next week, and then next month.

What happens *afterwards*

Three things to expect, so that none of them talk you into taking it back.

The guilt arrives on time. Usually within minutes, and strong enough to feel like proof you did something wrong. Guilt turns up for a first no in much the same way it turns up for a genuine wrong, so on this occasion the feeling tells you very little.

Most people are fine. What actually happens is usually milder than the prediction in your third column, and you will not really believe that until you have one example of your own.

One person will test it. Somebody will ask again, slightly differently, fairly soon. Expect that one, because the second ask is where most first boundaries quietly come apart.

What this *cannot* do

Straight with you about the limits of what you have just done.

Seeing the map does not stop the yes. You can know exactly who is on it and still hear yourself agreeing to something on Tuesday before you have finished reading the message, because the yes moves faster than the insight does.

So one small boundary held once is worth more than the whole map understood. That is why part three asks for so little, while the rest of this takes twenty minutes.

If the yes happens anyway this week, nothing here has failed. You will have watched it happen with your eyes open, and that is where this starts.



Where I would go *next*

If you want to take it further, the next thing I would point you to is a recorded session called The First Shift.

It runs about fifty minutes and it is free. It is guided rather than written, so there is nothing to answer. You listen, in a quiet room with headphones, and I take you through the same ground the way I would with someone in a session.

www.unwindflow.com/the-first-shift

Take your map with you. This worksheet shows you where the yes lives and what it costs. The recording is where you go to work on the part of it that argument has never reached.

You have your map now, and that is worth something on its own.

Vineetha

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