

THE 5 SCRIPTS YOU'LL USE THIS WEEK

Someone just asked you for something. **Before you say yes, ask two questions.**

QUESTION 1 · THE PURPOSE

What is this really for?

QUESTION 2 · THE OWNER

Who decides, and did they?

**Try it now: 60 seconds, one real request**

Pick one request on your list this week that you have not started. Fill in three lines. Unknown is a fine answer: it tells you what to ask.

① **What is it really for?** The result someone will use, and when.

② **Who decides, and did they say yes?** One name, or Unknown.

③ **The fact only I hold** My free hours, a date, what was already agreed.

Now send this (copy, fill the blanks, stop)

"Happy to help. Before I start: what is this really for, and who signs off on it? I have _____ free hours before _____."

Filled in (fictional): 1. Finance wants to know if one vendor can go. 2. Margo in Finance; not asked yet. 3. Six free hours before Thursday.

That is script 1. The next pages give you one script a day for the rest of the week, each with the words, versions for different people, and a short example.

One move. Five scripts. One week.

Every script in this guide is the same three-step move. You do not need to learn it first; the scripts do it for you.

1 Share your half

Say the one fact only you hold first: your free hours, a date, what was agreed.

2 Ask two questions

What is this really for? Who decides, and did they? One gets you the purpose, one gets you the owner.

3 Say only that yes

A plain yes, a scoped yes, or "not yet" with a time. Only the yes the facts support.

Your week

Day	The moment	The script	Page
MON	A request lands with a deadline and no reason.	1. What is this really for?	p. 3
TUE	It does not fit your week, but you want to help.	2. Yes, if _____ / Not yet, because _____	p. 4
WED	Two things collide, or something new pushes the plan.	3. Which one moves?	p. 5
THU	Someone says "approved", or a summary says "agreed".	4. Who decides, and did they?	p. 6
FRI	You agreed something in a call, a hallway or a chat.	5. In writing, please	p. 7

How each script page works

Say this	The words, with blanks. Fill every blank with a fact: a number, a time, a name or a record.
For each person	The same script worded for your manager, a peer, a client and someone you lead.
See it work	A short fictional exchange, so you can hear how it sounds.
Then stop	The one mistake that undoes the script, and how to avoid it.

Pages 8 to 11: what to say when they push back, five messages to copy, a one-page planner with a pocket card to cut out, and a one-page checklist for AI-made work.

What counts as a fact in a blank

Not a fact (sounds busy, decides nothing)	A fact (the other person can act on it)
"I'm swamped this week."	"I have 6 free hours before Thursday."
"It's a lot."	"This needs about 9 hours."
"I think they're fine with it."	"Margo approved the date in Tuesday's email."
"Soon."	"By 3 p.m. Wednesday."

Out of order is fine. If Thursday's moment happens on Monday, use Thursday's script on Monday.

MONDAY THE MOMENT

A request lands with a deadline and no reason: "Can you pull together a full report by Thursday?"

1. What is this really for?

Say this (fill every blank with a fact)

"Happy to help. Before I start: what is this really for? What will someone do with it on _____?"



For each person

Your manager	"Before I start, who will use this, and on what day? Then I can size it right."
A peer	"What do you need it to do for you? If I know that, I can probably make it smaller."
A client	"What decision will this help you make? Then I can tell you what we need from you by _____."
Someone you lead	"Who asked you for it, and what did they say it is for? Let us check before you start."

See it work (fictional)

Casey "Can you pull together a full report on our vendor costs by Thursday?"
Alex "Sure. What is it really for?"
Casey "Finance wants to know if we can drop one vendor."
Alex "Then a one-page comparison of the two biggest vendors by Wednesday answers that. A full report only if Finance asks for it."

Why it works. The purpose usually shrinks the work. A full report became a one-page answer, a day early.

Then stop. Ask once, then wait. Do not fill the silence with a promise ("...but I can do all of it anyway").

My version, for a real request this week

☐ **Used it this week.** With whom: _____ What happened: _____

TUESDAY THE MOMENT

It does not fit your week, but you want to help: "Can you review my deck today? It is only an hour."



2. Yes, if ____ / Not yet, because ____

Say this (fill every blank with a fact)

"Yes, if ____ comes off my list this week. Which one would you drop?"

Or, if the facts say not yet:

"Not yet: I have ____ free hours and this needs about _____. I can give you a real answer by _____."

For each person

Your manager	"Yes, if ____ comes off my list this week. Which one would you drop?"
A peer	"Yes, if it can start after _____. Until then I am on _____."
A client	"Yes, if we add ____ hours to the estimate, or swap out _____. Which do you prefer?"
Someone you lead	"Yes, if you can tell me what "done" looks like by _____. Then it is yours to run."

See it work (fictional)

Tomas "Can you review my deck today? It is only an hour."
Jo "Yes, if it can wait until 3 p.m. Until then I am on the client brief that is due at 2."
Tomas "3 works. Thanks."

Why it works. You keep the yes and name its cost in the same sentence. The other person chooses with real facts, not your guess.

Then stop. Name a real condition with a number or a time. "Yes, if I have time" is a hidden no; it will come back on Friday.

My version, for a real request this week

☐ **Used it this week.** With whom: _____ What happened: _____

WEDNESDAY THE MOMENT

Two deadlines collide, or something new arrives mid-week and quietly pushes the plan.



3. Which one moves?

Say this (fill every blank with a fact)

"Both will not fit by _____. Which one moves: _____ or _____?"

For each person

Your manager	"With this added it is _____ hours against _____ free before _____. Which moves: _____ or _____?"
A peer	"I can do _____ or _____ by _____, not both. Which matters more to you?"
A client	"With this added it is _____ hours against _____. Which moves: the scope or the date?"
Someone you lead	"You have _____ and _____ due on _____. Which one do you want to finish first? I will tell _____ about the other."

See it work (fictional)

Morgan "Can you add the launch checklist to this week?"

Dana "With the checklist it is 14 hours of work against 9 free before Friday. Which moves: the checklist or the training slides?"

Morgan "The slides can move to Tuesday."

Why it works. You hand the choice back to the person who owns the priorities, with a number they can check. Nobody has to guess what slips.

Then stop. Offer two named options, not a complaint. "I am swamped" gets sympathy; "which one moves" gets a decision.

My version, for a real request this week

☐ **Used it this week.** With whom: _____ What happened: _____

THURSDAY THE MOMENT

Someone says "it is approved", or an AI meeting summary says "agreed", and the person who owns it was not in the room.



4. Who decides, and did they?

Say this (fill every blank with a fact)

"Who decides _____, and did they say yes? I would like to check with them before we start."

If a summary or a tool says it was agreed:

"The summary says we agreed to _____. I do not see _____ on the attendee list. _____, did you agree, or is it still open?"

For each person

Your manager	"Is _____ your call, or does someone above you set it? I will plan once they confirm."
A peer	"I can start once _____ agrees. Who has to agree, and have they?"
A client	"Who on your side can confirm a change to _____? I will send it to them."
Someone you lead	"Who told you this was approved? Let us check with them before you start."

See it work (fictional)

Jo "Otto's meeting summary says the client agreed to the new launch date. Can I send the updated plan?"

Priya "Who owns the launch date on their side? Morgan was not in that meeting."

Jo "Morgan. I will ask Morgan to confirm before 3 p.m."

Why it works. A yes only holds if the person who owns the decision gave it. A summary, a tool or a confident colleague cannot give it for them.

Then stop. Ask about the decision, never about the person's honesty. "Did Morgan agree?" is a fact question, not an accusation.

My version, for a real request this week

☐ **Used it this week.** With whom: _____ What happened: _____

FRIDAY THE MOMENT

You agreed something in a call, a hallway or a long chat thread. By Monday, two people will remember it two ways.

5. In writing, please

Say this (fill every blank with a fact)

"Can you confirm that in a message? I will note _____ and the date."

Then send this the same day:

"Confirming what we agreed today: _____ (owner: _____, by _____). Open: _____ (owner: _____, by _____). Reply if I missed anything."

For each person

Your manager	"Can you confirm that in a message? I will note _____ and the date."
A peer	"Could you put it in the ticket, so we both work from one version?"
A client	"Please confirm in writing: _____ is in or out, and the date is _____."
Someone you lead	"Send me a two-line note: what you agreed, and with whom. I will add it to our 1:1 list."

See it work (fictional)

Rana "Great call. So we are good for the 12th?"

Priya "I think so. I will send a two-line recap now: the 12th for the pilot, owner Rana; budget still open, owner Margo, by Tuesday. Reply if I missed anything."

Why it works. A conversation is not a record. Two lines sent the same day stop the "that is not what we agreed" conversation next week.

Then stop. Send it the same day, and write facts only: what, who, by when. No "as I said" and no blame.

My version, for a real request this week

☐ **Used it this week.** With whom: _____ What happened: _____



When they push back on your script

Most people do not take "not yet" well the first time. That is normal, and it is not a sign the script failed. Pick the reply that matches, fill the blanks, and stop.

They say	You can say	Why it works
"Just make it work."	I want to. Right now it is _____ hours of work against _____ free. Which part can wait, or who can I borrow time from?	Turns pressure back into a fact and a choice.
"It's only two hours."	Two hours from where? My week is already full with _____. If it comes in, _____ moves to _____. Is that OK?	Names the real cost of "only".
"The AI already did it."	Great, that saves time. Before it goes out, who checked _____? I can do that check by _____.	Credits the tool, then asks who owns the result.
"Your manager already approved it."	Thanks. I will confirm with _____ so we plan from the same version. Did they approve the date or the scope?	Checks the yes at its source.
"Can't you just try?"	"Try" would hide a risk from you. Here is what I can promise: _____ by _____. The rest depends on _____.	Swaps a vague promise for a real one.
"Why all the questions?"	Because I want my yes to hold. Two questions: what is this really for, and who decides?	Says the method out loud, warmly.

If it gets heated: lower the stakes, not the facts. "Let me check ____ and come back to you by ____" is always available.

Never guess at someone's motives or argue about who is right. Ask for one fact or one owner, then write down what was said.

Five messages to copy

Say it, then send it. One message per script, for email or chat, so the agreement becomes a record everyone works from. Copy, fill the blanks, cut anything you do not need.

After script 1: the purpose check

Hi _____, before I start on _____: what will it be used for, and by when? If it is for _____, a shorter version by _____ may do the job. Which do you need?

After script 2: the scoped yes

Hi _____, quick follow-up. Yes to _____ by _____. That uses _____ of my _____ free hours. _____ does not fit as things stand; can you decide on it separately by _____? Thanks.

After script 3: which one moves

Hi _____, with _____ added, my list is _____ hours against _____ before _____. Which should move: _____ or _____? I will plan as soon as you pick.

After script 4: to the person who decides

Hi _____, _____ asked me for _____ by _____. I understand the call on _____ is yours. Can you confirm, or tell me what you need from me first?

After script 5: confirming what we agreed

Hi _____, confirming what we agreed today: _____ (owner: _____, by _____).
Open: _____ (owner: _____, by _____). Reply if I missed anything.

Tip: save these five in your notes app or a text expander with a short code (for example ;scope, ;moves, ;confirm), so the follow-up takes ten seconds.

One-page script planner

Use it for the one conversation this week you most want to get right. About five minutes.

1 What was asked, in their words

2 What is it really for?

3 Who decides, and did they?

4 The fact only I hold A number, a time or a record.

5 My script Circle one or two.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

My words:

6 Their reply

7 Message sent the same day?

☐ Yes, at _____

Friday check: one script a day

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

2Q

BEFORE YOU SAY YES

What is this really for?

Who decides, and did they?

1 What is this really for? · 2 Yes, if... / Not yet, because... · 3 Which one moves? · 4 Who decides, and did they? · 5 In writing, please.

Fact first. Ask. Then stop.

✂ cut out

Cut out the card, fold it once, and keep it in your wallet, your badge holder or behind your phone.

Before you forward, approve or act on AI-made work

AI tools write summaries, plans, numbers and status updates in seconds. They can look finished before anyone has checked what they are for or who agreed. Run this list in two minutes. Credit the tool, then ask the person.

QUESTION 1 What is this really for?

- ☐ I can say in one sentence what result someone will use from this, and when.
- ☐ It answers that question, not a bigger or different one.
- ☐ I picked the one part that matters, instead of passing on everything the tool produced.

If a box is empty, say: "There is a lot here. Which one result will someone actually use on _____?"

QUESTION 2 Who decides, and did they?

- ☐ A named person, not the tool, owns the final version.
- ☐ Any "agreed", "approved" or "decided" in a summary was said by the person who decides, and that person was in the meeting.
- ☐ If a vendor's chat agent promised a date or a price, the order record says the same thing.

If a box is empty, say: "The summary says we agreed to _____. _____, did you agree to this, or is it still open?"

THE FACTS What a person checked

- ☐ Every number, date and quote I will repeat was checked against its source by a person.
- ☐ "Done" comes with the list of checks that were run, and the ones that were skipped.
- ☐ Scope matches what was agreed: nothing was quietly added or dropped while the wording was tidied.
- ☐ Anything going to a client, a customer or leadership was read in full by a person first.

If a box is empty, say: "Where does _____ come from? I could not find the source."

Keep it fair. The tool is not the problem, and neither is the colleague who used it. The only questions are what is this for, and who decides. Otto and every AI named in this guide are fictional; their lines do not describe how any real product behaves.

You have five scripts. *Here is your next step.*

Use one script this week, on one real request. That is the whole assignment. Then, if you want more:

1 Do the Friday check (page 10)

Which script did you use, and what happened? One line is enough. The one you used most is your habit.

2 Free practice at asktwoquestions.com

Short fictional cases where you spot the trap before it costs a week, plus the printable one-page prep card. No sign-in needed: asktwoquestions.com/practice/ and asktwoquestions.com/prep-card/

3 The full Before You Say Yes kit

When five scripts are not enough: all 25 scripts for five kinds of people, ten replies for when they push back, a 1:1 agenda in two versions, nine templates, a 52-card deck and a nine-chapter e-book of worked cases. Details at asktwoquestions.com/products/

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