

The Exhausted Striver

"I was not finished."

Say it. Then stop. Let the silence work.

"That is not mine to carry."

When asked to do unpaid emotional labour.

"I need [X] to continue."

State the condition. Not the feeling. The condition.

"I will get back to you on that."

When the cost of responding now is too high.

The Anxious Ally

"I don't know. Let me check."

Do not guess. Do not fill the silence with uncertainty.

"I noticed [name] was interrupted."

Centre the person. Do this immediately, not later.

"I did some reading on this."

Say this before asking. Not instead of asking.

"I got that wrong. I'm sorry."

Short. No elaborate explanation. Just the repair.

The Unconscious Default

"Let's hear from [name]."

When the same people are talking. Every time.

"I want to go back to what [name] said."

When an idea was missed or talked over.

"I'm going to listen more today."

Say it at the start of a meeting. Then do it.

"What am I not seeing here?"

The most powerful question you can ask.

The In-Between

"I understand both sides."

Then stop. You do not have to pick one.

"I'm standing in the middle."

Name it. It is a location, not confusion.

"That's not my job to explain."

When asked to translate your experience for free.

"I need a moment before I answer that."

When the question costs too much to answer quickly.