

SUGARCOAT

The 7-Day Sugar-Free Challenge

A companion workbook

Ready to break the habit for good? Seven days. Seven challenges. One complete reset of how you communicate.

Each day builds on the last. By the end of the week, you will have practiced every part of sugar-free communication - saying the hard thing clearly and kindly, without wrecking the relationship.

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DAY 1

The Awareness Day

Mission: Count your sugarcoating.

Today, you are just observing. Every time you catch yourself about to sugarcoat - or actually sugarcoating - make a note.

Keep a simple tally on your phone or a piece of paper. Don't try to change anything. Don't judge yourself. Just count.

When the day is done, look at your number. That's your baseline.

Reflection

When were you most tempted to sugarcoat? With whom? In what situations?

DAY 2

The “It's Fine” Fast

Mission: Eliminate “It's fine” from your vocabulary.

Today you are not allowed to say “It's fine,” “No worries,” or any variation.

If something IS actually fine, say specifically what's fine about it: “That works for me because...”

If something ISN'T fine, say what you actually mean: “Actually, I'd prefer...” or “That doesn't work for me because...”

This is harder than it sounds. Those phrases are reflexes.

Reflection

How many times did you almost say “It's fine” when it wasn't? What did you say instead?

DAY 3

The Opinion Day

Mission: State one genuine opinion you'd normally hide.

Not a rude opinion. Not a hurtful opinion. Just a REAL opinion.

At work: “I actually disagree with that approach.” With friends: “I don't really want to go to that restaurant again.” With family: “I have a different perspective on that.”

One genuine opinion. Out loud. Without apologizing for having it.

Reflection

How did it feel to state your actual opinion? How did people respond?

DAY 4

The Feedback Day

Mission: Ask someone for honest feedback and actually receive it.

Choose someone you trust. Ask them: “What's one thing I could do better?” or “Is there anything about how I communicate that bugs you?”

Then - this is the hard part - LISTEN. Don't defend. Don't explain. Don't immediately respond.

Just say: “Thank you. I'm going to think about that.”

Reflection

What did you learn? What was hard about hearing it?

DAY 5

The Giving Feedback Day

Mission: Give someone feedback using the REAL method.

Think of something you've been wanting to say to someone - something you've been sugarcoating or avoiding entirely. Today, you say it.

R - Recognize you've been avoiding this.

E - Evaluate if it's necessary, kind, and helpful (it probably is).

A - Articulate it clearly and directly.

L - Listen to their response.

Reflection

What truth did you finally speak? How did it land?

DAY 6

The Boundary Day

Mission: Say “no” to something you'd normally say “yes” to out of guilt.

Someone asks you to do something. You don't want to. You'd normally say yes anyway and resent it later. Today, you say no.

Not “Maybe” or “I'll see” or “Let me get back to you.” Just: “No, I can't do that.”

You don't owe an elaborate explanation. You don't need to justify your no. You need to say it.

Reflection

How did it feel to set a boundary? What did you make space for by saying no?

DAY 7

The Hard Conversation Day

Mission: Have the conversation you've been avoiding.

You know the one. The thing you need to say to someone. The truth that's been sitting in your chest for weeks, months, maybe years.

Today's the day. Not perfectly. Not fearlessly. Just honestly.

Use everything you've learned this week. Go in with compassion. Lead with truth. Stay present for the response. This is your graduation moment.

Reflection

What happened? What did you learn about yourself? About the relationship?

SAY THIS, NOT THAT

Pocket scripts for the conversations you've been avoiding

Setting a boundary with a friend

Don't say: "Oh, I might be busy that day... let me check my calendar... I'll get back to you."

Say this: "I appreciate you thinking of me, but I can't commit to that. I've been overextending myself lately and I need to protect my time. I hope you understand."

Addressing a problem with your partner

Don't say: "It's fine. No, really, it's fine. Forget I said anything."

Say this: "I want to talk about something that's been bothering me, and I need you to hear me out before responding. When it happened, I felt hurt. I need you to know how it affected me."

Confronting someone who hurt you

Don't say: "It's whatever. I'm over it. Let's just move on."

Say this: "I need to address something, even though it's uncomfortable. What you said hurt me. I'm not looking for an apology unless you mean it - I just need you to know it affected me. Can we talk about it?"

POST-DETOX ASSESSMENT

After completing the 7 days, answer these:

- What was the hardest day? Why?
- What surprised you most about how people responded to your honesty?
- Which day produced the most positive outcome?
- What relationship improved most during this week?
- On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you now feel about speaking truth kindly?
- What ONE practice from this week will you continue permanently?

The Maintenance Plan

Detoxes don't work if you go right back to old habits. Here's how to stay sugar-free:

- Daily: use the REAL method in at least one conversation.
- Weekly: have one feedback conversation, giving or receiving.
- Monthly: audit your relationships. Where is sugarcoating creeping back in? Address it.
- Quarterly: re-do the 7-day challenge. It gets easier every time.

You did the detox. Now go make the delivery.