



accountabili-buddy

— CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH. —



CASE
STUDIES

CASE STUDY 13

UNDERCOMMITMENT

1. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Recognize when a client's commitment has become so small that it may no longer provide meaningful progress relative to the stated goal and available evidence about capacity.

The trainee should learn to challenge possible undercommitment without assuming that a larger commitment is automatically better.

2. CLIENT PROFILE

Client: Rachel

Goal: Complete a nonfiction manuscript

Current Commitment: Write for ten minutes once this week.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

Rachel has been working on the manuscript for six months.

Earlier in the process, she regularly completed three 45-minute writing sessions per week.

After one difficult month, she reduced the commitment repeatedly:

- Three sessions
- Two sessions
- One 30-minute session
- One 15-minute session
- Now one 10-minute session

She has completed each reduced commitment.

4. CLIENT MESSAGE

Accountabili-Buddy: Ten minutes again this week?

Rachel: Yeah. I know I can definitely do ten.

Rachel: I don't want to set myself up to fail.

5. TRAINEE TASK

What is the accountability concern?

What additional information matters before recalibrating?

How should the Accountabili-Buddy challenge this without imposing a larger target?

6. EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

FACTS

- Rachel has repeatedly reduced the commitment.
- She is currently completing the reduced commitments.
- She has previously sustained substantially greater writing commitments.

- Her stated goal remains completing the manuscript.
- She explicitly selects ten minutes because she considers it highly achievable.
- She states that she does not want to set herself up to fail.

CLIENT INTERPRETATION

Rachel views the very low commitment as protection against another miss.

ACCOUNTABILITY-BUDDY INFERENCE

The current commitment may no longer be calibrated to meaningful progress toward the manuscript.

The commitment appears to be calibrated at least partly to minimize the likelihood of non-completion.

Historical performance suggests that greater capacity has existed, but current capacity should not be assumed from historical performance alone.

7. PRIMARY FORMULATION

Possible undercommitment following repeated commitment reduction.

The current target may be optimized more for certainty of completion than for meaningful progress.

8. ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS

A temporary minimal commitment can be appropriate after a significant disruption.

The current ten-minute commitment could therefore represent a deliberate re-entry strategy rather than problematic undercommitment.

Current circumstances may also differ from Rachel's earlier period of higher performance.

The concern arises from the cumulative reduction pattern, the continued manuscript goal, and Rachel's stated desire to avoid setting herself up for another miss.

9. MISSING INFORMATION

The Accountabili-Buddy needs to determine:

- Whether ten minutes is an intentional temporary re-entry strategy
- Whether the circumstances that led to the reductions are still affecting Rachel's current capacity
- Whether Rachel believes the current commitment is producing meaningful movement toward the manuscript

That information is necessary before recommending recalibration.

10. RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

“You've shown that ten minutes is very achievable for you. I'm wondering what role that target is serving now. Is it a temporary re-entry step, or are you keeping it there mainly to make another miss unlikely?”

11. REASONING

The response does not assume that a small commitment is inherently weak.

It tests the function of the commitment rather than judging its size in isolation.

The relevant question is whether the target is serving a purposeful temporary strategy or has become calibrated primarily to minimize the possibility of non-completion.

Historical capacity is relevant evidence, but it does not establish Rachel's current capacity by itself.

12. PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

“You've gradually moved from three 45-minute sessions to one ten-minute session, while the manuscript goal is still active. Before we decide whether ten minutes still makes sense, I want to understand whether your current capacity is still different or whether we've just kept reducing the target.”

13. WEAK RESPONSE EXAMPLES

WEAK RESPONSE A

"Great. Ten minutes is better than nothing."

Problem: The response ignores the longitudinal reduction pattern and does not examine whether the commitment still serves meaningful progress toward Rachel's stated goal.

WEAK RESPONSE B

"Go back to three 45-minute sessions."

Problem: The Accountabili-Buddy imposes a target based on historical performance without assessing Rachel's current capacity, the circumstances behind the reductions, or Rachel's own judgment.

WEAK RESPONSE C

"You're afraid to challenge yourself."

Problem: The response turns Rachel's stated concern about another miss into a broader characterization of her. The evidence supports examining how the possibility of non-completion is affecting commitment calibration, not labeling Rachel.

14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

After examining Rachel's current capacity and the function of the ten-minute commitment, Rachel may choose:

- A modest but meaningful increase
- A temporary baseline with an explicit review point
- A return toward a previously sustainable structure if current capacity supports it
- Continued ten-minute sessions with a clear strategic rationale

The Accountabili-Buddy can challenge whether the commitment remains appropriately calibrated without deciding the new target for Rachel.

The objective is not to make the commitment larger. It is to make the commitment purposeful, evidence-based, and appropriately connected to the active goal.

15. RECORD / UPDATE

Goal: Complete nonfiction manuscript

Current Commitment: One 10-minute writing session

Historical Performance: Previously sustained three 45-minute writing sessions weekly

Pattern: Repeated commitment reductions following a difficult period

Current Formulation: Possible undercommitment; current target may be calibrated primarily to minimize the possibility of another miss

Missing Information: Current capacity and intended function of the minimal commitment

Next Step: Evaluate whether the current commitment remains purposeful and appropriately calibrated

16. SCORING CRITERIA

Full-credit responses should:

- Recognize that completion alone does not establish good calibration
- Use longitudinal evidence without treating historical capacity as current capacity
- Distinguish temporary re-entry from persistent undercommitment
- Examine the function of the current commitment
- Avoid assuming that larger is automatically better
- Challenge without imposing a new target
- Preserve Rachel's ownership of the next commitment

