

# MAX PARADOX

PROBLEM? RELAX. YOU'VE GOT THIS!

*Self-Help with a Sense of Humor ;)*



# I Overexplain Everything

**How to Stop Writing a Three-Page  
Defense of Every Decision**

*We have a problem. Relax. We can solve it—and  
have a laugh along the way.*

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# INTRO

You send a perfectly normal message to someone at work:

"Thursday works for me."

Then you stare at it.

Something feels wrong.

Too abrupt? Too confident? What if they think you are being difficult? Maybe you should explain why Thursday works. Not because they asked, obviously. They did not ask. Nobody has asked. But your brain has apparently opened a legal department.

So you add:

"Thursday works for me because I have another meeting Wednesday afternoon, and Friday is a little complicated, although I could probably move a few things around if Thursday is inconvenient for everyone else."

Better.

Except now it sounds as if you have made Thursday your final demand in an international hostage negotiation. You soften it.

"Of course, I'm flexible, so please don't feel like Thursday has to be the day. I just thought it might be easiest based on the current schedule, but I'm happy to adjust."

You read the message again.

It is now eleven lines long.

The original question was: "Does Thursday work?"

Welcome to overexplaining, the fascinating human habit of answering a simple question with enough supporting documentation to survive a congressional hearing.

Overexplaining usually does not feel ridiculous while you are doing it. It feels responsible. Thoughtful. Safe. You are not rambling; you are providing context. You are not defending yourself; you are making sure nobody misunderstands. You are not writing a three-page explanation of why you bought a different brand of coffee; you are simply ensuring that all relevant stakeholders understand the strategic beverage environment.

There is usually a reasonable motive underneath it. You want people to understand you. You do not want to seem rude, selfish, careless, lazy, unreasonable, difficult, ungrateful, arrogant, irresponsible, or like the kind of person who says "No, I can't" and then calmly continues eating lunch.

So you explain.

Then you explain the explanation.

Then, because one sentence could theoretically be misinterpreted by a person with enough determination and free time, you add another sentence to prevent that possibility.

Soon your answer has footnotes.

The problem is not that explaining yourself is bad. Explanations are useful. If you cancel an important commitment, make a decision that affects someone else, miss a deadline, change plans, or do something that genuinely requires context, a clear explanation can be respectful and helpful.

The problem begins when explanation becomes insurance.

You are no longer giving information because the other person needs it. You are giving information because you want protection from their possible reaction. You are trying to control what they think of you by making your reasoning so

complete, reasonable, sympathetic, and beautifully documented that nobody could possibly object.

Unfortunately, people remain extremely committed to having their own opinions.

You can write six paragraphs explaining why you cannot attend Saturday dinner, including your schedule, your exhaustion level, your aunt's birthday, your dog's emotional needs, the current traffic situation, and a brief overview of your immune system. Someone may still think, "Oh. That's a shame."

Your brain hears:

"They are furious."

Now we need paragraph seven.

Overexplaining also appears in tiny places where almost nobody notices it except you. Someone asks why you chose the blue one, and instead of saying, "I liked it better," you begin describing the lighting conditions in the store, the discount, the available sizes, what your partner thought, and how you originally intended to buy black but had concerns about fingerprints.

Someone asks whether you want dessert.

"No, thanks."

Perfect answer.

But your nervous system would like to make a statement.

"No, thanks. I had a late lunch, and I'm actually pretty full, plus I've been trying not to eat too much sugar in the evening—not in a strict way or anything, I'm not on some weird diet—I just notice I sleep better, although the cake looks amazing."

Nobody accused you of crimes against cake.

You were allowed to say no.

That is one of the central ideas of this book: a decision does not automatically become more legitimate because you attach a documentary series to it.

Sometimes "I can't make it" is enough.

Sometimes "I prefer this" is enough.

Sometimes "No" is enough.

Sometimes "I changed my mind" is enough, even though somewhere inside you a tiny attorney has just fallen dramatically out of a chair.

Why is this so difficult? Because overexplaining can create immediate relief. The extra details make you feel safer. If you explain every angle, maybe the other person will not judge you. Maybe they will not be disappointed. Maybe they will not ask another question. Maybe they will recognize that you had no other possible choice and officially certify you as A Reasonable Person.

That relief is real.

It is also expensive.

Every time you automatically defend a normal preference, boundary, mistake, or decision, you quietly teach yourself that the decision alone was not strong enough. You needed evidence. You needed permission. You needed the other person to understand before you were allowed to feel comfortable.

So the next explanation gets longer.

This is why overexplaining can become strangely exhausting. A ten-second conversation turns into a mental

project. You prepare arguments before anyone objects. You predict objections nobody has made. You revise messages for tone until the phrase "Thanks, I'll pass" begins to look aggressive.

By revision twelve, English itself has become suspicious.

And there is another problem: the more you explain, the less confident you may sound.

Imagine someone says:

"Why did you choose this supplier?"

Answer one:

"They had the best combination of price and delivery time."

Clear.

Answer two:

"Well, there were several factors, and obviously I did consider the other option, because I know we used them before, and I definitely wasn't trying to change things unnecessarily. I compared the prices, although price wasn't the only consideration, because there was also delivery, and I spoke to Mark briefly, not that Mark made the decision..."

At some point the listener begins wondering whether there is a body.

Too much explanation often creates the exact impression you were trying to prevent. Instead of sounding careful, you may sound uncertain. Instead of sounding transparent, you may sound defensive. Instead of reassuring the other person, you may accidentally suggest that this very ordinary decision requires reassurance.

This book is about stopping that cycle without turning you into a cold, robotic person who responds to every question with "Noted."

You will not be learning how to become rude.

You will be learning how to stop treating every preference like a court case.

We are going to separate useful explanation from anxiety-driven explanation. You will learn how to notice the exact moment when context turns into defense, how to shorten messages without sounding harsh, how to answer questions directly, how to handle the uncomfortable silence after a short answer, and how to survive the terrible possibility that someone may not fully approve of your decision.

Yes, this may happen.

Civilization will probably continue.

You will also learn what to do when someone genuinely pushes for more information, how to deal with people who use questions as a way to pressure you, how to explain mistakes without writing an autobiography, and how to stop rehearsing imaginary arguments with people who are currently doing something completely unrelated to you.

Because that is another delightful feature of overexplaining: sometimes the other person has already moved on.

You are still composing your defense.

They are microwaving soup.

The goal is not to eliminate explanations. The goal is to make them intentional. Give the amount of information the situation needs—not the amount your anxiety requests at 2:17 a.m.

You do not need to become mysterious.

You do not need to become blunt.

You just need to stop submitting supporting evidence for decisions that were never on trial.

# Chapter 1 - Why Are You Still Talking?

You are explaining why you were ten minutes late.

There was traffic. That is the explanation.

Unfortunately, your brain has requested the extended edition.

"There was an accident near the exit, and I actually left earlier than usual, but then the navigation app rerouted me, except the reroute was somehow worse. I almost took the other road, which probably would have been faster, although there was construction there yesterday, so I thought—"

The person you are talking to says, "No worries."

This should end the matter.

It does not.

"Yeah, I just didn't want you to think I left late."

There it is.

That last sentence is the important one.

You were no longer explaining what happened. You were explaining who you are.

Responsible person. Respectful person. Person who values your time. Person who definitely did not spend twenty minutes choosing between two shirts and then leave the house at the exact time Google Maps had described as "arrival time."

This is the engine underneath a lot of overexplaining. The information is not really there to clarify the event. It is there to protect your identity.

You want the other person to understand not only what happened, but what it says about you.

Preferably nothing bad.

This sounds reasonable until you notice how often your brain attempts to manage your entire public reputation one conversation at a time. You do not simply decline an invitation; you provide evidence that you remain a loving friend. You do not just ask for more time; you submit proof that you are not lazy. You do not choose one option over another; you explain your reasoning until nobody could possibly accuse you of being random, selfish, careless, uninformed, or influenced by an attractive package design.

Your life begins to resemble a permanent press conference.

The microphone is always on.

The Hidden Question Behind the Explanation

Overexplaining often begins with a normal question and a hidden one.

The normal question might be:

"Why did you leave early?"

The hidden question in your head is:

"Do you still think I am a good person?"

Someone asks:

"Why didn't you answer?"

Your brain hears:

"Please defend your entire character."

Someone says:

"You went with the cheaper one?"

Your brain translates: