


UNITED WISDOM

# Denying an unwelcome fact and the time needed to acknowledge it

Human Nature and Inner World

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

I-12-N02 · EN

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

# Denying an unwelcome fact and the time needed to acknowledge it

## Epigraph

*“a time to speak”.*

Ecclesiastes3:7, King James Version: a short original fragment. A religious poetic perspective, not a timetable of psychological stages.

## What this article is about

Imagine an illustrative scene. A joint project has stopped: a partner has said in writing that they will no longer participate. Someone has read the message but continues preparing the joint presentation. Asked about the next meeting, they reply that everyone is overwhelmed at present. Their words may preserve hope that the decision will change. Yet today’s working plan still assumes the participation of someone who has already declined. A distance has opened between received information and the organisation of life.

Calling this denial is easy. Understanding exactly what remains unacknowledged is harder: the letter’s contents, the refusal’s finality, the loss of a familiar future, or the need to tell the team unwelcome news. These questions require different conversations. A person may know perfectly well what happened and not yet have words for what comes next. They may also doubt the letter’s authenticity or be clarifying conditions. Visible delay alone does not reveal an inner cause.

This article proposes distinguishing a fact, its meaning, and the time someone needs to change their actions. Acknowledgement does not require immediately feeling everything, abandoning hope, or agreeing with another’s interpretation. It begins where a confirmed event receives a place in today’s choices. This is an editorial way of reasoning, not a diagnostic test or a universal sequence of experiences.

## I. Which fact are we trying to name?

Statements about an unwelcome reality often contain several assertions at once. The partner declined participation is one. Nobody wants the project anymore is another. I turned out to be a poor leader is a third. The latter two conclusions do not become facts merely because the first is confirmed. Arguing with them is not necessarily refusing to see the letter. The person may be protecting precision in a conversation that quietly turned an event into a verdict.



@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

In our illustrative scene, we can say: a message declining participation arrived yesterday; further collaboration is not agreed today. This description does not require declaring the project doomed forever. It leaves room for negotiation, a different team, or ending the work. At the same time, it no longer permits treating the partner's participation as confirmed. A careful formulation can be more modest than a dramatic conclusion and stricter than a comforting guess simultaneously.

The source of the information matters for acknowledgement. Did the partner announce the decision, did a colleague relay a rumour, or did someone interpret silence? These grounds differ in strength. Ask which part is known directly, which needs checking, and who can answer a specific question. Demanding acknowledgement before verification sometimes means demanding acceptance of another's version. Respect for reality includes the right to establish exactly what happened.

Clarification nevertheless has a limit. If a direct answer already exists, endlessly seeking another intermediary may preserve the previous picture without new grounds. The question a person hopes to answer reveals the difference between reasonable checking and this loop. Establishing the date participation ends is a defined task. Finding someone who will say the refusal means nothing is another. Both may feel like seeking clarity, but they seek different results.

It is unnecessary to resolve every cause immediately. For the coming week, knowing whether a two-person presentation can be promised to the client is enough. An honest answer can be limited: the second person's participation is unconfirmed; I will clarify the new format. The fact enters the plan before a complete story of the separation emerges. This limitation protects against both exaggeration and promises that currently lack support.

## II. Not finding out, not believing, and not reorganising

In a scientific review by Kate Sweeny and colleagues, information avoidance is defined through preventing or delaying acquisition of available unwelcome information. Only the abstract has been read here, not the full review. This definition concerns acquiring information; it does not justify calling every delay after receiving news the same mechanism. An unopened letter and a read letter after which the plan remains unchanged require different questions.

In the first case, an action can be observed: someone does not open a message despite knowing its sender. In the second, its contents are already available. They may consider it temporary, not know how to inform others, or await clarification. In a third case, they explicitly say the partner has left but continue using the old budget. Verbal acknowledgement has not yet entered the work. These distinctions are not a new scientific classification; they help keep observable situations separate.

Sometimes the dispute concerns the meaning of acknowledge. One person demands a final conclusion; another is prepared to name only the current decision. The former hears evasion of truth; the latter hears pressure to close off the future. Specifying the time resolves part of this conflict: there is no joint presentation today; whether there will be collaboration later is unknown. That answer faces today's circumstance without presenting a prediction about the future as knowledge.

There can also be a simple organisational delay. The old presentation may be easier to revise tomorrow when a new contributor arrives. The person is not concealing the refusal but choosing the order of tasks. A single mismatch between file and letter therefore cannot establish denial. Consider the explanation for postponement, available resources, and promises to others too. If the team knows about the change and does not rely on the previous arrangement, the document's appearance says little about an inner process.

The working question is gentler than a label: which part of the information I received is not yet affecting my plan? The answer may be unpleasant, but it can be checked. A joint rehearsal remains in the calendar, for example, while the client invitation has already gone out. These specific places permit choosing a small correction. Doing so does not require proving that one's entire character is built on avoidance or discovering the final cause of every delay.

A separate difficulty arises when acknowledgement is distributed among several people. The leader already knows of the refusal; an assistant awaits permission to revise the invitation; the client sees the old programme. Each may think someone else should make the clarification. The old picture persists without necessarily involving personal denial by every participant. Establish who communicates the change, to whom, and in what form. Otherwise, discussion of inner causes continues while a specific inaccurate promise remains active. Sometimes the first step is assigning clear responsibility for the message. This does not settle the partners' relationship, but it stops using information the team already considers outdated.

## III. A person needs time; an action has a deadline

Events require responses at different speeds. You can spend a long time making sense of a collaboration's end while warning the team today that the composition has changed. Inner understanding and practical action need not finish together. Linking them too rigidly creates a false choice: either everything has been accepted or nothing can be done. In practice, actions are often available that do not require readiness for an event's whole emotional meaning.

In our scene, the person can write a short notification without describing their feelings. They can say they are not ready to discuss the reasons, but the joint rehearsal must be cancelled. This acknowledges a particular consequence. It does not make them calm, grateful, or agreeable to the partner's decision. Such states cannot be demanded as obligatory proof of

maturity. Sometimes someone acts accurately and remains angry; these circumstances are compatible.

A pause becomes clearer when it has a subject and a point of return. I will not discuss the relationship until this evening, but tomorrow morning I will check the project obligations. After the weekend, I will decide whether to seek another partner. This does not guarantee feelings will settle by the appointed hour. The deadline concerns the next available step, which can be revised. It preserves contact with the task without turning personal understanding into a submission requirement.

If every deadline moves without new grounds, look at postponement's cost. People continue reserving time, materials become outdated, and promises need clarification. A conversation about consequences need not start with reproach. Naming who currently relies on what is sufficient. Sometimes this makes a fact bearable: instead of an immeasurable loss, there is one notification that can be composed with another person's help.

Not everyone has access to an unrestricted pause. Some have children nearby, shift work, no substitute, or dependence on a manager's decision. Suggestions to give oneself time must consider these conditions. Look for a smaller response, assistance, or postponement of a particular obligation. An available evening cannot be presented as a characteristic of people who accept reality better. Time and support are real circumstances, not rewards for a correct attitude.

## IV. Hope can remain without the old promise

Hoping for a changed decision does not necessarily require denying the refusal that has already happened. Someone can want the partner's return while preparing the meeting alone. The desired and the agreed are distinct. The former preserves a future possibility; the latter defines today's obligations. Tension arises when the desired quietly takes the place of the confirmed: someone promises a joint result because they cannot imagine another outcome.

Let us continue the illustrative scene. The partner writes that they will not participate now but are open to a conversation in a month. Acknowledging this information means listing them neither in today's team nor among people who will never return. A plan can allow room for changes. Room differs from concealed dependence, however: the current presentation must remain feasible even if the future conversation does not happen.

Another version is harder: no future conversation has been promised. The person can still hope, but naming it as hope helps. This is a possibility in my imagination, not part of an agreement. The distinction sometimes hurts because it reduces certainty. It also avoids imposing an obligation the other person never accepted. Acknowledging the fact preserves the reality of another's choice beside one's own desire.

Abandoning the previous plan does not forbid attachment. One can miss working together, keep successful recordings, and continue valuing the past. Acknowledgement does not require rewriting the whole collaboration as a mistake. If clarity requires destroying everything good in the past, the conversation has again acquired excessive scope. Today's change does not establish the sole correct assessment of all the years preceding it.

Sometimes a specific new circumstance supports hope: a letter, proposal, or agreed deadline appears. Revising the plan is then natural. The criterion is what supports the change, not how many times the person hoped before. Acknowledging reality does not forbid updating information. It assumes that a new step responds to new grounds rather than only to the need to restore a convenient version of events.

There is also a distinction between hope and a planning scenario. Imagining the partner's return may help identify which conditions of collaboration would change. Yet a scenario without their return can also be drawn: who receives the materials, which tasks are reduced, and what can be retained independently. Having this second scenario is neither a prediction nor an expression of a secret wish for separation. It supports the plan across different outcomes. Someone may notice that this particular version is difficult to write and seek help with one part. Nobody needs to force themselves to experience the entire imagined outcome in advance. Making the present obligation feasible without participation that has not yet been promised is enough.

## V. Testing a belief must not become humiliation

In Discoursesl.28, Epictetus discusses assent to what appears true and withholding judgement about uncertainty. This is a philosophical position, not an experimental model of acknowledging loss. One narrow question helps here: what currently seems established to me? The Stoic assessment of external losses does not make harm inflicted by others insignificant for this article.

Changing a belief is difficult if acknowledging one's stupidity is demanded alongside it. In our scene, a colleague says: I warned you long ago; now admit everything has failed. Even accurate information in this conversation is mixed with an assertion of superiority. Someone may start defending the entire project because they do not want to agree to humiliation. This does not prove a hidden mechanism; it shows how a particular exchange is arranged.

Separating the past choice from current information helps more. When collaboration began, the partner really did participate. Today they announced their withdrawal. The previous plan may have fitted previous conditions and now need revision. Even if signs were missed, analysing them can be separated from an urgent notification. The opportunity to learn from a

mistake grows when correction does not first require accepting a global negative assessment of oneself.

This does not remove responsibility for promises. If someone kept assuring the team of the partner’s participation after a direct refusal, the consequences need correction. Name the inaccurate message, clarify the fact, and propose a next step. Responsibility has a subject: I communicated unconfirmed participation. It need not expand into a claim that I can never be trusted about anything again. Specificity makes correction possible and lets others assess it.

This approach preserves room for disagreement. One can acknowledge an event and dispute its fairness. One can accept that a presentation is cancelled and consider the way notice was given rude. A demand to see reality gives nobody exclusive rights over its moral assessment. Separating these levels means someone need not deny the letter to retain their judgement about how they were treated.

## VI. Another person does not own my acknowledgement

Conversations about unwelcome facts often give power to an interpreter. Someone declares another has not accepted the situation because they are angry, silent, or not saying the required words. These signs do not establish an inner state, however. The person may have changed every necessary agreement and remain irritated. They may also speak calmly while concealing a crucial circumstance from the team. Expression and practical acknowledgement do not automatically coincide.

In our scene, the departing partner demands immediate friendliness. The leader replies: the decision is accounted for, participation is cancelled, and I am not ready to discuss this in a friendly tone now. This answer acknowledges the fact and sets a boundary. Courtesy can be discussed as a communication norm, but its absence cannot prove the person fails to understand what happened. The answer’s substance remains separately open to examination.

If you are beside someone who delays, offer specific help. Shall we compose the notification together? Which part of the letter is unclear? When shall we return to the presentation question? These questions let the person participate in defining the next step. They do not require explaining the delay in language chosen by the helper. Help can also mean tolerating the absence of a complete account while a limited task is being resolved.

The other participant has boundaries too. If uncertainty affects their work, they can request an answer by a particular deadline or act on available information. Respect for another’s pace does not mean indefinitely reserving resources. One can say: today I am cancelling my part of the rehearsal; we can arrange a later meeting afresh. This boundary concerns one’s own availability and does not explain another person on their behalf.

There are situations where the dispute about acknowledgement is secondary altogether. The document is unavailable, translation inaccurate, or reports contradict each other. Before discussing denial, provide a comprehensible source. A person needs adequate grounds for the conclusion expected of them. Distrusting unchecked information can be reasonable caution. The subject of inner resistance must not close the question of an external message's quality.

## VII. Do not turn time into obligatory stages

Ecclesiastes3:1–8 enumerates different times in human life, including silence and speech. This is religious poetry about time, not instructions for acknowledging unwelcome news. In an editorial comparison, it reminds us that a response can take different forms. No obligatory sequence, identical duration, or requirement to consider every pause correct follows from it.

In our scene, a practical answer is needed today, a conversation about reasons may be needed tomorrow, and the person may return to memories much later. Another person may want to discuss the event first and only then be able to revise a document. Neither order proves greater depth. Look at whether an available task is resolved and updating remains possible, rather than sorting people onto imagined steps of correct experience.

Acknowledgement sometimes returns several times. Someone has cancelled the presentation, then habitually prepares to send the partner a new text version. They notice and choose another recipient. This moment does not cancel earlier clarity. A familiar arrangement may reappear in particular actions. Every repetition need not be treated as a return to the starting point, with a demand that one uttered sentence permanently transform every habit.

The reverse risk is invoking one's own pace as though it removes every decision's consequences. If a notification deadline passed, the team's lost time remains a fact. It can be acknowledged separately from the broader experience. I still do not understand everything, but I delayed the message and will correct it now. This sentence permits unfinished inner work while restoring responsibility for a particular action.

The time required for acknowledgement therefore cannot be judged solely by duration. A day may be a necessary pause or another postponement; a month may involve complex reorganisation or complete immobility. The task's substance, conditions, available support, and consequences establish the difference. We have no universal calendar. We can clarify what is already known, what remains undone, and which next step is actually available.

Distinguishing personal acknowledgement from public announcement also helps. Someone may understand that collaboration ended without wanting to tell every acquaintance. Not all information must immediately become public. The question is who needs it to resolve their own task. The team needs the current composition; the client needs an accurate programme; casual observers may not need the relationship's history. A limited notification preserves

privacy without falsely promising something to those directly affected. Judging acknowledgement solely by readiness to tell everything publicly turns the criterion into another's demand for disclosure. Practical clarity can coexist with the right to a private meaning of the event.

## VIII. Acknowledgement expands available actions

When a fact enters today's plan, the future may initially look narrower. The joint presentation disappears, the familiar conversational partner is unavailable, and part of the work must be redone. These are real constraints. Yet the previous version of the plan also restricted choice: it required reliance on absent participation. Change may open other options precisely because it stops treating an unavailable resource as already promised.

In our scene, the leader considers three possibilities: present alone, invite another participant, or postpone the meeting. While they continued treating the old team as active, these options looked like betrayal of the project. Now they become ways of responding to changed conditions. Not all options are good or available. Acknowledgement does not guarantee success, but it permits assessing options on today's grounds.

Some questions remain unanswered. Why did the partner leave? Will they regret it? Could the refusal have been prevented? Having no answer need not block cancelling the rehearsal. An open question can sit beside a definite action. This requires patience with incompleteness: my story is unfinished, but today's calendar can already be made more accurate. Such accuracy does not pretend to be a final understanding of the relationship.

Inner language can become more modest too. Instead of I have finally accepted everything: I no longer promise unconfirmed participation. Instead of I cannot acknowledge anything: informing others of the change is difficult, and I am seeking help. These formulations describe what can be observed. They allow progress to be seen without a ceremonial self-report and delay to be noticed without accusing the whole personality.

Acknowledging an unwelcome fact sometimes means leaving two truths together: I wanted something else, and today these are the circumstances. Neither cancels the other. Questions about action, boundaries, support, and new information arise between them. A person remains the author of a response while not being the author of every event that happened. This is enough for a beginning; complete agreement with the past or flawless calm are not entry requirements for the next step.

## What this means in practice

Choose one current situation of moderate difficulty if there is room for this reflection now. Write the confirmed event in one sentence, without adding reasons or a general conclusion about yourself. Separately name the source: a direct message, document, observation, or second-hand account. If reports still conflict, checking them may be the next task. You need not declare your doubt denial in advance to begin clarification.

Write beside it what the event changes for the coming days. Participation is unconfirmed; a meeting must be rearranged; an old promise needs clarification. Choose one consequence you can actually work with. If it depends on another person, formulate a question for them. If you are not ready to discuss the personal meaning of what happened, state that separately. A practical notification need not become an obligatory confession.

Separate three entries: what is known, what I hope to receive, and what I currently promise others. Hope can remain in its own line. Check whether it is being presented as an existing agreement. Update the entry if new information appears. If nothing new exists, assess the plan so it accounts for present uncertainty. This check does not require forbidding yourself a desired outcome; it concerns the grounds of current obligations.

If a pause is needed, define its subject and the next available return point. A large conversation can be postponed while a short correction is made today. Ask for help with a letter, translation, or organising a meeting. If the chosen step is unavailable now, reduce it or name the obstacle. Declining the exercise is also acceptable: the proposed practice does not measure maturity or establish whether you are experiencing the event correctly.

After acting, ask whether at least one promise, decision, or question became more accurate. If so, acknowledge that limited result without concluding everything is finished. If not, examine what was missing: information, time, resources, agreement, or a suitable formulation. A different conversation may be needed. Keep open questions open and confirmed circumstances in the part of the plan they already affect.

## Key quotation

> *“withhold judgement regarding what is uncertain”.*

Epictetus, DiscoursesI.28§1, W.A.Oldfather1925–1928: a short original fragment. A philosophical position, not a clinical recommendation.

## Connections between traditions

| Perspective | Comparison | Significant difference |
|---|---|---|
| Sweeny and colleagues' scientific review | Clarifies the handling of information under discussion. | Only the abstract was read; acquiring information differs from subsequent emotional processing. |
| Epictetus's Stoic philosophy | Offers a question about grounds for assent to a judgement. | His assessment of external losses is not transferred as denial of real harm. |
| Ecclesiastes | Its poetic perspective on time permits comparing silence and speech. | A religious text does not establish psychological stages or deadlines. |

These are editorial comparisons, not assertions of shared doctrine or proven practice effectiveness.

## Primary sources

• S1.Kate Sweeny, Darya Melnyk, Wendi Miller, JamesA.Shepperd. Information Avoidance: Who, What, When, and Why. Review of General Psychology14(4),2010,340–353. DOI10.1037/a0021288. Abstract and edition details read; full review not read. RightsUNKNOWN, APAcopyright2010.

• S2.Epictetus, recorded by Arrian. DiscoursesI.28, W.A.Oldfather1925–1928, TheStoicLibrary. This chapter and notes read, not the whole book. Digital-edition rightsUNKNOWN.

• S3.Ecclesiastes3:1–8, KingJamesVersion, BibleGateway. This passage read. Page marks PublicDomain; jurisdictions and presentation not separately checked. Dating and historical authorship are not established here.

## Tags

denial, acknowledgement, unwelcome fact, time, information, uncertainty, hope, action, choice, autonomy, boundaries, responsibility, communication, partnership, joint project, waiting, promise, clarification, sources, verification, losses, pause, silence, speech, Epictetus, Ecclesiastes, Stoicism, religious poetry, practical distinction, United Wisdom

## About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a coauthor of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.