Access Has Office Hours

Professional relationships don't require 24/7 access to you.

LADIES VS Lust
COMMUNITY

Professional access is still access. Just because someone has a business relationship with you doesn't mean they automatically have unlimited access to your time, attention, personal life, or energy.

A professional relationship can start at 2:00 p.m. with a conversation about a contract and somehow become a 10:47 p.m. text asking, "What are you doing tonight?"

A client starts calling after hours because you answered once.

A networking contact follows you on Instagram and suddenly the conversation is happening in your DMs.

A potential business partner wants to "talk business over drinks" every time.

Someone you've met professionally begins treating your availability as evidence of your interest in **them.**

Access is not the same thing as availability.

You can be accessible to someone professionally without being personally available to them.

You can answer emails without answering personal texts.

You can take a business call without taking a late-night call.

You can network without giving someone access to your social life.

You can be friendly without becoming accessible around the clock.

Your professional relationship does not automatically grant someone personal access to you.

Question the Access

When can they contact me?
Business hours? Evenings? Weekends? Anytime?

Where do professional conversations happen?
Email? Phone? Text? DMs? In person? My home? Social media?

How am I communicating and what methods am I willing to use?
Email? Calls? Text? Video? Social DMs?

What are they actually getting access to?
My expertise? My time? My personal life? My emotional energy?
My social circle? My physical presence?

Why am I allowing this level of access?
Is it genuinely necessary? Is it convenient?
Have I always done it this way? Do I feel guilty saying no?
Am I afraid I'll lose the opportunity?

Welcome to Office Hours

Boundaries that define when and how professional access happens.

Email: Monday–Friday, business hours.

Calls: Scheduled in advance.

Text: Reserved for active clients or time-sensitive matters.

Social media: Networking and connection, not primary business communication**.**

Evenings: Personal time unless previously arranged.

Weekends: Generally unavailable.

No need to over explain to justify. Simply say:
“I’ll get back to you during business hours tomorrow”

Letting Professional Access Slip

Where small exceptions can create a completely different expectation.

You answer one 10 p.m. business text.	Now he expects nighttime responses.
You agree to move from email to personal texting.	Now the communication becomes increasingly personal.
You accept a “business dinner” that repeatedly turns into drinks afterward.	Now the business meeting has a different context.
You follow a professional contact on your personal Instagram.	Now he has access to your personal life that he didn't have before.
You take a spontaneous late-night call because you don't want to lose the opportunity.	Now urgency becomes the expectation.

None of these things automatically mean someone has bad intentions.
However, every exception teaches people what access to you looks like.

The Access Creep

When the connection slowly creeps from
Professional to Personal to Familiar and then Intimate

Check out
The Professional
Disclosure Ladder
for deeper insights!

Sometimes it happens gradually enough that you don't notice the transition.

A business conversation becomes texting.

Texting becomes late-night texting.

Late-night texting becomes personal conversation.

Personal conversation becomes flirting.

Suddenly you're in a relationship dynamic you never consciously agreed to enter.

Ask Yourself

"Did I intentionally expand this person's access to me, or did it happen one exception at a time?"

Decision Tool

Do I Need to Respond?

Is this urgent?

Am I responding because I want to, or
because I feel pressured to remain available?

Is this actually professional?

Would I respond differently if this person were someone I wasn't attracted to or someone I knew wasn't attracted to me?

Does this require my response right now?

If it can wait, let it wait.

vs

Boundaries are not prisons.

- Sometimes there genuinely is an emergency.
- Sometimes you're closing a major deal.
- Sometimes you're traveling.
- Sometimes your client operates internationally.
- Sometimes you want to take the late-night call.

Am I making the exception or has the exception become the expectation?

True Exceptions

Put it Back on the Clock

Late-night message:
"I'll respond to this tomorrow during business hours."

Personal conversation during a business interaction:
"Let's keep this focused on the project."

Repeated requests for after-hours meetings:
"I'm available during the week. Send me a couple of times that work for you."

Business moving into personal texting:
"Email works best for me for business."

Unnecessary personal access:
"I keep my personal and professional life pretty separate."

Someone pushing back:
"Those are the boundaries that work best for me."

Your Policy: Professional Access Hours

I respond to professional communication: .....

My preferred communication channels are: .....

I generally do not respond during: .....

My boundaries around texting are: .....

My boundaries around social media are: .....

My boundaries around meetings are: .....

When someone needs access outside those boundaries, I will: .....

My availability is something I choose; not something other people are entitled to.
You teach people how to access you. Intentionally.