

Uphold – Psychological Commitment Seal Proposal

Purpose of This Document

This document defines **concrete, implementable UX changes** to address the weakest psychological point in Uphold:

Users are financially committed after payment, but not yet **emotionally, morally, or socially bound** to their commitment.

The goal is to introduce a **Commitment Seal Moment** that creates gravity, identity alignment, and loss aversion **without adding feature complexity**.

This document is intended to be reviewed by Claude and mapped directly into the existing Uphold codebase.

The Core Problem (Summary)

Current flow: 1. User creates commitment 2. User pays stake 3. App redirects to dashboard 4. Commitment appears as Active

Issue: - Payment confirms a transaction - It does *not* confirm a promise

Psychologically, the user still feels there is a quiet escape hatch.

Design Principle

Uphold is not a motivational app.

It is a **promise-locking system**.

The UX must briefly shift tone from:

“Clean, helpful app”

to:

“You just gave your word.”

This requires **solemnity, not excitement**.

Proposal Overview

Introduce a **Commitment Seal Moment** immediately after payment success and before normal dashboard behavior resumes.

This is a **single UX interruption**, not a new feature.

Proposal 1: “I Give My Word” Moment (Primary Recommendation)

When

Immediately after payment success.

UX Behavior

Instead of redirecting straight to the dashboard, present a full-screen page or modal.

Copy (Exact)

Title

This is now a promise.

Body

You committed to:

“[Commitment Title]”

This is more than a transaction.
It's your word.

Primary Action

I give my word

Secondary Action (small, muted)

Cancel (return to dashboard)

Psychological Effect

- Forces conscious acknowledgment
- Activates identity (“I am someone who gives their word”)
- Creates moral friction before disengagement

Implementation Notes

- Add `word_confirmed_at` timestamp to commitments table
 - Commitment is considered fully active only after confirmation
 - No additional backend complexity required
-

Proposal 2: Concrete Loss Preview (Loss Aversion Trigger)

When

Displayed on the same Commitment Seal screen.

Copy (Exact)

If you don't follow through, \$[AMOUNT] will be donated to [CHARITY NAME].

Important Rules

- No percentages
- No explanations
- No hedging language

Psychological Effect

- Makes loss vivid and concrete
- Converts abstract risk into a specific outcome

Implementation Notes

- Amount already exists in your fee calculations
 - Charity display name already exists
-

Proposal 3: Future-Self Confrontation

When

Immediately after clicking “I give my word.”

Copy (Exact)

On [DATE], this commitment will be reviewed.

This is your future self.

Stay true.

Button

Continue to dashboard

Psychological Effect

- Forces future mental simulation
 - Triggers anticipated regret
 - Reduces procrastination behavior
-

Proposal 4: Private Signature (Optional, High Impact)

UX Element

Small input field on the Commitment Seal screen.

Type your first name to seal this commitment:
[_____]

Primary button remains disabled until input matches the user's name.

Psychological Effect

- Self-signaling
- Consistency bias
- Signature behavior increases follow-through rates

Implementation Notes

- Client-side validation only
 - No legal implication
-

Proposal 5: Witness Injection (Low Cost, High Credibility)

Copy (Displayed Briefly)

This commitment has been recorded and timestamped.

If buddy verification exists:

A trusted person may be asked to verify it.

Psychological Effect

- Creates perceived observability
 - Reduces “this is just for me” thinking
-

Proposal 6: Dashboard Reinforcement

Where

Active commitment cards on dashboard.

Copy (Subtle, Persistent)

You gave your word on [DATE].

Psychological Effect

- Reinforces identity
 - Prevents emotional disengagement over time
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Proposal 7: Email Reinforcement (Post-Seal)

Trigger

Immediately after `word_confirmed_at` is set.

Subject

Your promise to yourself

Body (Exact)

You gave your word:

"[Commitment Title]"

We'll check in on [DATE].

If you succeed, your money returns.

If not, \$[AMOUNT] is donated to [CHARITY].

Stay true.

Psychological Effect

- Extends commitment gravity outside the app
- Reinforces seriousness asynchronously

What NOT To Do

- Do not gamify
- Do not add streaks or points
- Do not add motivational quotes
- Do not add social feeds
- Do not over-explain

This moment should feel **quiet, serious, and irreversible**.

Minimal Implementation Summary

Required Changes: - 1 new UI screen or modal - 1 new database timestamp field - 1 email trigger (already supported by Resend)

No New Systems Required

Success Metric

If implemented correctly, users should think:

"Okay... this is real now."

Not:

"I'll deal with this later."

Final Note for Claude

This proposal intentionally avoids feature creep.

The objective is **psychological binding**, not engagement metrics.

If even **one** of these interventions is implemented cleanly, Uphold's completion rate should materially improve.