

TOP 10 TIPS FOR SAYING NO!

1. **Be firm** – say no, in a firm and calm tone (and as unemotionally as possible), without saying, “I’m sorry” which will weaken your stand.
2. **Explain** - say no, followed by an upfront explanation of what you are feeling, or what you are willing or prepared to do to help.
3. **Body language counts** - be aware of your body language. Ensure that you don’t come across in either a passive or aggressive manner. Remember that emotions that aren’t displayed in words can often be ‘seen’ through your nonverbal behaviour.
4. **Offer alternatives** - say no, and then give the person different options or alternatives, such as:
 - *“I cannot do this now; however, I can do it when I have finished this task, which will be in one hour”*
 - *“I don’t have time to do that today, but I could help you out first thing tomorrow morning”*
5. **Stay scripted** – stick to your ‘scripted’ response. This way of saying no involves using a one-sentence ‘knock-back’ statement and persistently repeating it as often as necessary. Select a concise, one-sentence statement and repeat it no matter what the other person says or does. This is useful when dealing with aggressive or manipulative behaviour and people who ‘won’t take no for an answer.
6. **Agree on your terms** – try saying yes! And then give your reasons for not doing it immediately or as they expect it to be done. Interesting? This can be used in situations when you are willing to consent to the request, but not within the timescales or in the manner in which the other party wants it e.g.:
 - *“Yes, I would be happy to help you out, but I just won’t have the time until tomorrow afternoon. Is that suitable?”*
 - *“Yes, I could have some of your report typed today, but not all twenty pages.”*
7. **Be quiet!** - Use silence to your advantage, this will convey the message that the other person’s statements and attempts to manipulate are ineffective.
8. **Take your time** - give yourself some “thinking time” to evaluate the request. This will help you assess it is reasonable or not. You do not have to always commit yourself to something the moment you are asked to do it. You might say:
 - *“Let me think about it and I’ll get back to you”. Then, of course, get back to them.*
9. **Natural No** - use the ‘no’ that’s natural to you. For example, you may well have developed your own particular style of saying no based on past experiences and through your personality. If this is the case, then use it!
10. **Clarify your reasons** – say no, then clarify your reasons. This should not include rambling statements filled with excuses and justifications. This clarification is given to provide the receiver of your response more information so that they can see and better understand your position.