



Draw Your Line in the Sand: How to Say 'No'!



There are only 24 hours in the day, and our energy levels are not infinite. When we say 'yes' to something we are also saying 'no' to something else. What is the opportunity cost? Is it a cost we are happy to pay?

Handy Hints for Saying 'No'

- **Be brief, clear and direct** (avoid long rambles).
- **Ensure the word 'No' is in the sentence.**
- **Speak slowly with warmth** (so it doesn't sound abrupt).
- **Be polite** (e.g. 'thank you for asking ...').
- **Honestly explain but don't justify or make excuses** (justification invites the receiver to place blame).
- **Don't over apologise** (the receiver will pick up the apology rather than the message).
- **Be honest about your feelings** (e.g. 'I find this difficult').
- **Acknowledge the feelings of the other person** (i.e. their right to be upset).
- **Emphasise that it's a request that is being rejected not the person.**
- **Watch your body language to make sure it's congruent** (e.g. verbal 'No' with nonverbal 'Yes' equals confusion).
- **Don't lay blame for your refusal at the feet of others** (take responsibility).
- **Watch out for the in-direct 'No'** (e.g. inventing excuses).
- **Develop different ways of saying 'No' depending on the situation.**

Different Ways of Saying 'No'

DIRECT 'NO':

The aim is to say NO without apologising or giving reasons. The other person has the need but you do not have to allow them to pass it onto you.

EMPATHIC 'NO':

Involves reflecting back the facts and feelings of the request (expressing your understanding of the other person), then adding your assertive refusal at the end.

REASONED 'NO':

This briefly gives the genuine reason for the refusal.

RAINCHECK 'NO':

This says NO to the present request but leaves room for negotiation. It is a NO but to soften it, the possibility of saying yes in the future is offered.

ENQUIRING 'NO':

This is not a definite NO and again could be a prelude to negotiation.

EXTRA TIME 'NO':

This asks for time to consider the request (time to reflect/gather more information/ask for advice) before responding to the other person. It is of course far easier to say NO after the half-NO of delaying an answer.

BROKEN RECORD 'NO':

This involves repeating a simple statement of refusal over and over again when the request is very persistent.

Note: See article by Saunders (2015) *Setting Boundaries and Saying No... Nicely*: [99u.com/articles/7076/setting-boundaries-saying-no-nicely](https://www.99u.com/articles/7076/setting-boundaries-saying-no-nicely)

To find out more information please contact:

www.transitioningwell.com.au | 1300 824 808 | info@transitioningwell.com.au | © 2021 Transitioning Well (TW)