

How to Say No

Being responsible for yourself means you need to be able to say no. If you rarely say no, it means other people are charting your course in life. Below are strategies for saying no respectfully and assertively.

Formulate your position before you speak.

Know what you are or are not willing to do before you respond. If you are unsure, state that you need some time to think about the request.

Do not feel compelled to explain or rationalize your “no.”

Often we contrive reasons why we cannot comply with a request. Rather, we should feel comfortable with our own decisions and verbalize them as choices, not reasons or excuses.

Be your own advocate.

Every so often people make decisions and then need others to comply in order to make the decision a reality. Remember that just because someone else has personally committed to a project or idea, you are not compelled to do so, regardless of how worthy the project may seem.

Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Be prepared to state your “no” several times before it is heard and accepted. You do not need to rephrase your “no” each time – simply restating that you are not able to help out is sufficient.

NO

“I am not able to do that.”

“I am not taking on any more commitments.”

NO & VALIDATION
(AND REASON IF YOU CHOOSE)

“I can see you are in a difficult position.”

“It sounds important to you.”