

Communication Work: How to Gracefully Say NO

How Requests from others arrive:

Direct request - *Yes or no answer*

Command - *I need you to do this for me*

Indirect Requests - *Can be unclear - you may need to help the person clarify request*

Request is assumed - *Everyone assumes you'll do it, including you*

How to respond:

What is your first thought, or your gut feeling, about doing this? Often when you say yes or no, you can get a positive or negative sense of it, or a funny feeling inside. When that happens, it's not too late to change your mind, if you catch it early.

Here are some possible responses & ways to say No:

1) Just saying Yes or No, depending on your time, your desire and your ability

2) Possible ways to say No:

a) *I understand this is something you want me to do, but I cannot/do not want to/am unable to.*

b) *I need more time or information. Let me think about it.*

c) *Someone or something else has priority – “Right now my health plan is to keep stress low”.*

d) *Thank you for asking – is there someone else who can assist you?*

e) *I'm terribly sorry but I'm afraid I just can't.*

You don't have to defend your answer. Often the hardest step is just to say No. You don't have to explain yourself, or apologize. Often when you say no, the person is ready to move on to look for other help.

If you have been doing something for a while, and you wish to change, it may take more explanation. *I know I've always helped with the holiday potluck, but I need to pull back this year. (More explanation if needed can be added). Who else might be due for a turn, for providing this service?*

Things to think about: How am I doing with what's on my plate? Is it OK or do I need to cut back? Where do I enjoy helping, and where do I dread the task? How might I shift the dreadful?

Credit to: developed by Jen Hofmann, <https://americansofconscience.com/author/jen/>