7 Simple Ways To Say “No”

Rather than avoid it altogether, it’s all about learning the right way to say no. After I began to say no to others, I realized it’s really not as bad as I thought. The other people were very understanding and didn’t put up any resistance. Really, the fears of saying no are just in our mind. If you are not sure how to do so, here are 7 simple ways for you to say no. Use the method that best meets your needs in the situation.

1. “I can’t commit to this as I have other priorities at the moment.”
   If you are too busy to engage in the request/offer, this will be applicable. This lets the person know your plate is full at the moment, so he/she should hold off on this as well as future requests. If it makes it easier, you can also share what you’re working on so the person can understand better. I use this when I have too many commitments to attend to.

2. “Now’s not a good time as I’m in the middle of something. How about we reconnect at X time?”
   It’s common to get sudden requests for help when you are in the middle of something. Sometimes I get phone calls from friends or associates when I’m in a meeting or doing important work. This method is a great way to (temporarily) hold off the request. First, you let the person know it’s not a good time as you are doing something. Secondly, you make known your desire to help by suggesting another time (at your convenience). This way, the person doesn’t feel blown off.

3. “I’d love to do this, but …”
   I often use this as it’s a gentle way of breaking no to the other party. It’s encouraging as it lets the person know you like the idea (of course, only say this if you do like it) and there’s nothing wrong about it. I often get collaboration proposals from fellow bloggers and business associates which I can’t participate in and I use this method to gently say no. Their ideas are absolutely great, but I can’t take part due to other reasons such as prior commitments (#1) or different needs (#5).

4. “Let me think about it first and I’ll get back to you.”
   This is more like a “Maybe” than a straight out “No”. If you are interested but you don’t want to say ‘yes’ just yet, use this. Sometimes I’m pitched a great idea which meets my needs, but I want to hold off on committing as I want some time to think first. There are times when new considerations pop in and I want to be certain of the decision before committing myself. If the person is sincere about the request, he/she will be more than happy to wait a short while. Specify a date / time-range (say, in 1-2 weeks) where the person can expect a reply. If you’re not interested in what the person has to offer at all, don’t lead him/her on. Use methods #5, #6 or #7 which are definitive.
5. “This doesn’t meet my needs now but I’ll be sure to keep you in mind.”
If someone is pitching a deal/opportunity which isn’t what you are looking for, let him/her know straight-out that it doesn’t meet your needs. Otherwise, the discussion can drag on longer than it should. It helps as the person know it’s nothing wrong about what he/she is offering, but that you are looking for something else. At the same time, by saying you’ll keep him/her in mind, it signals you are open to future opportunities.

6. “I’m not the best person to help on this. Why don’t you try X?”
If you are being asked for help in something which you (i) can’t contribute much to (ii) don’t have resources to help, let it be known they are looking at the wrong person. If possible, refer them to a lead they can follow-up on – whether it’s someone you know, someone who might know someone else, or even a department. I always make it a point to offer an alternate contact so the person doesn’t end up in a dead end. This way you help steer the person in the right place.

7. “No, I can’t.”
The simplest and most direct way to say no. We build up too many barriers in our mind to saying no. As I shared earlier in this article, these barriers are self-created and they are not true at all. Don’t think so much about saying no and just say it outright. You’ll be surprised when the reception isn’t half as bad as what you imagined it to be.
Learn to say no to requests that don’t meet your needs, and once you do that you’ll find how easy it actually is. You’ll get more time for yourself, your work and things that are most important to you. I know I do and I’m happy I started doing that.

http://zenhabits.net/say-no/

And yet, disappoint we must if, to paraphrase Lamott, we are to create a little glade around ourselves in which we can get the nourishment needed in order to serve people from a place of real abundance and health.
And if Albert Camus is right that a rebel is a (wo)man who says no, then so shall we be rebels!
Thus, I present to you 50+ ways to say no to various requests, social or otherwise, for time/sanity/control we simply can’t spare/compromise/relinquish:

MATTER-OF-FACT NO:
1) I can’t do that.
2) I have a conflict.
3) I’ll be out of town (or out of the country, or checked out, or out of range, etc.).
4) I never even considered that.
5) I’m not planning on it.
6) I have no intention of doing that.
7) It’s not part of my agenda for today (or this week, or this month, or this lifetime, etc.).
8) I’m unavailable.
9) I’m not interested.
10) It’s not my thing.
11) It’s not a priority for me.
12) No.
13) I’m just not good at that.
14) I don’t have room in my life for that right now.

**SAYING NO WITHOUT SAYING NO:**
15) Listen, I have to get going but thanks for asking.
16) I’ll be sure to let you know if it’s looking likely. (For the times when we just don’t know for sure if something is likely to happen.)
17) You go ahead. Let me know how it goes.
18) I promised my __________ some quality time. Insert “family”, “special someone”, etc. in the blank.
19) The last time I did that, I didn’t love it.
20) Been there, done that.
21) I’ll call you when I’m ready to do that.
22) My schedule’s up in the air.
23) I’m focusing on other things right now.
24) My spouse wouldn’t approve. (For more drama, *My spouse would divorce me.*)
25) I need some alone time right now.
26) If I agreed to this, it would be extremely low priority.

**PHILOSOPHICAL NO (ALSO APPLIES TO THOSE WITH COMMITMENT PHOBIA):**
27) It’s my policy to be more discriminating about what I commit to now that I’m older (or “wiser”, “experienced”, etc.).
28) Life is too short to commit to things and people we don’t love.
29) I have commitment issues.

**CURRENTLY NO THAT LEAVES ROOM FOR A YES:**
30) Let me check my calendar.
31) I’ll have to check with my family.
32) I’ll see if I can get a babysitter.
33) I need more information.
34) I’ll have to think about it.

**PASSING THE BUCK NO:**
35) It’s out of my hands.
36) My jurisdiction doesn’t cover that.
37) I love the cause, but I’m not the best person to execute.
38) I’m afraid I’m not the right person for it.
39) I’m slammed right now but let me recommend __________ who would be excellent at that.
40) I don’t want to hold you up so feel free to ask someone else.
41) I bet you’ll find someone who can do a better job than I can.
42) I’ll have to check with the powers that be.
43) My mother taught me not to say *yes* to everything.

**CONSIDERATE AND GENTLE NO:**
44) Sounds tempting but I’ll have to pass.
45) I wish I could but I simply can’t.
46) I better pass. I don’t want to make anybody sick.
FATAL ATTRACTION/RESTRAINING ORDER NO:
47) Absolutely not.
48) For the last time, no.
49) Talk to my lawyer.
AND FINALLY, SOME TONGUE-IN-CHEEK NO (aka as REJECTS):
50) I’d rather beat myself with sticks than do that (or crawl on broken glass while firewalking, or pose as a pinata for adolescent boys, etc.)
51) I prefer to lick my wounds in private (or with strangers, or with Dom & Beluga, etc.)
52) I no longer do things that depress me (or kill me softly, or rub out the thin line between truth and fiction, or confirm my ignorance, etc.).
53) I’ll do it if you do my grocery shopping for a year (or do my laundry, or pay my bills, etc.).
54) I’m on fire for the idea but the execution leaves me icy.
55) My window for this is now or never. Gotta go.
56) I’d like a hefty chunk of the back end. (Very presumptuous and very vague.)
57) Fax me about it when I’m on vacation. (Faxing is hopelessly out of date and being on vacation further de-prioritizes the request.)
58) My phone is ringing. (Phones are meant to ring. The mere sound of the phone ringing does not indicate its importance.)
59) Asking me to do this is like apples and oranges. (Purposefully does not make sense and meant to confuse the other person.)