

Assertion Skills

How to say "No!" without losing the relationship

1. **Perfectly valid no.** *"I've been out three nights this week. I'm staying home and watching television with the kids." Say it like you mean it!*
2. **No-after-saying-yes no.** *"I've made a mistake. I shouldn't have committed myself. I'm sorry. I'll have to back out." Hang up the phone and give a huge sigh of relief!*
3. **Five Star no.** *"I'll have to pass it up." There's no comeback for this.*
4. **Not-right-now no.** *"I've done it in the past and I'll do it in the future, but I can't do it now." You can offer them a target time to try you again.*
5. **Polite no.** *"I'm sorry, but my schedule doesn't permit me to take on anymore obligations this _____." (fill in the blank with: afternoon, week, month, year, decade ...]*
6. **No-way no.** *"No." This one is for a teenage son who wants you to call your friends for a ride so he can have the car. Look directly into his eyes, smile, enunciate clearly. Just say "No."*
7. **Diplomatic no.** *"It was kind of you to think of me. I'm flattered you asked. I'm sorry I won't be able to do it." If you're not sorry, then don't say so!*
8. **Cowardly no.** *"My _____ doesn't want me to do that." [fill in the blank with: husband, wife, mother, child, boss, therapist, pastor, etc.]*
9. **Absolute no.** *"I cannot do this. I don't have the desire, the time, the interest, the money or the energy. No. Absolutely not. Never." Save this for only special occasions.*
10. **Negotiated no.** {Refuse with an alternative to substitute.}
 - "No, I will not do that, but I will do this instead: _____." [fill in your plan]
 - "No, I will not do that, but you could ask _____ instead." [fill in another's name]
 - "No, I will not do that then, but I'd be willing _____." [fill in when you would]