



9 Ways to Reasonably Say 'No' to Requests

1. **"Thank you for your consideration, but I'm currently committed to _____ . Because of that, I need to decline."**
 - *Always have a commitment in mind to trump undesirable requests.*
2. **"No for now, but I'll let you know if something changes."**
 - *Giving people a clear no and leaving them with a sense of hope makes them less likely to be offended. You're not lying to them because if circumstances change you might want to accept their request.*
3. **"Just so I understand, you want me to _____ (rephrase the request) _____?"**
 - *This is a great response if you consider the request to be ridiculous. By rephrasing the request you force the person to see their request from a different perspective and notice how unreasonable it sounds.*
4. **"Sorry I'm tied up right now, but have you tried _____?"**
 - *Providing a resource or service that can complete the job 80% as well as you can let them know you care about their problem.*
5. **"I don't have time to doing all that, but I can ____ (a lesser commitment) ____?"**
 - *Break down the request into something smaller and show that you are still willing to help them. However, be careful of smaller commitments turning into larger commitments.*
6. **"If I take this on I'll need to give up _____, and that's a trade-off I'm not willing to make."**
 - *People will understand your unwillingness to give up: time with my family, time to exercise and time to learning a new skill (lessons/practice session). Use this response when asked to make long-term commitments (i.e. projects and assignments).*
7. **"Due to my high workload, I need to say no at time."**
 - *This response works well as an email auto-responder and voicemail greeting: "Due to a high workload, I am only responding to messages between 4pm-5pm. If it's an emergency please call my cell at 333-333-3333."*
8. **"Sorry, but I don't _____."**
 - *If you use "I can't" or "I shouldn't" you'll give people an opportunity to push back. "I don't" is a hard and fast personal rule that most people will respect. If they ask why you can say, "sorry I just don't". This response is great for turning down undesirable social events: "Sorry I don't go out on Monday's" or "Sorry I don't do carnivals."*
9. Long pause. Think. Then respond: **"Unfortunately I need to say no."**
 - *This response makes the other person believe that you seriously considered their request. Your delayed leaves them feeling less rejected and less likely to push back.*