

REFUSING REQUESTS

Saying “No” Myths	vs	The Reality
1. “If I refuse, I’m rejecting my friend.”		1. You would be rejecting the request, <i>not</i> your friend.
2. “If I refuse, the person will never ask me again.”		2. It is possible you won’t be asked again, but to prevent this from happening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say “Ask me again in the future.” • Explain reason for refusing and give conditions for acceptance.
3. “If I really like this person, I should agree to the requests.”		3. Friendship is not equal to limitless giving.
4. “It’s less painful to say “yes” than to face how a person will feel if I say ‘no.’”		4. Five minutes of discomfort for saying “no” is better than a weekend of resentment for saying “yes.”

Guidelines for Refusing Requests

1. **Say the word “no.”** Saying “no” is specific and does not allow room for argument. Remember, you don’t need to justify your behavior.
2. **Be direct.** If you choose to justify your behavior, use reasons (something that is actually keeping you from fulfilling the request) as opposed to excuses (a lie that is designed to sound like a reason).
3. **Use “I won’t” statements.** Won’t, (a personal decision) as opposed to “can’t” (physically unable to do something), does not give room for argument. It stops people from saying, “Yes you can.”
4. **Use “I feel” statements.** Let the person know how you are feeling. (I’m worried that if I say ‘no,’ you won’t ask me again.)
5. **Use emphatic assertion.** Let the person know that you know how they feel. (“I see that you are in a bind, but....”)
6. **Avoid the excessive use of “I’m sorry.”** If overused “I’m sorry” will make you look unassertive. Also, the phrase will lose its meaning, and no one will know if you are truly sorry or not.
7. **Ask for more information/clarification.** What does this request involve? For example, if someone asks to borrow your car? Ask why—a doctor’s appointment? a shopping trip to the mall? a trip to Dallas?
8. **Ask for time to decide.** (“I’ll let you know by 5:00 p.m.”)
9. **Grant part of the request.** “ You may borrow my sweater but not my shoes.”
10. **Compromise.** “I won’t loan you my car to go to 6th Street, but I’m going tomorrow night, and I’ll be glad to have you come along.”
11. **Once you have said “no,” take responsibility for your decision.**