



## 21 Ways to Give Good No

I've found it incredibly helpful to have go-to ways to just say no. Here are some other tactics that work for me:

1. **Vague but effective:** "Thank you for asking, but that isn't going to work out for me."
2. **It's not personal:** "Thank you for asking, but I'm not doing *any* interviews while I'm writing my book."
3. **Ask me later:** "I want to do that, but I'm not available until April. Will you ask me again then?"
4. **Let me hook you up:** "I can't do it, but I'll bet Shelly can. I'll ask her for you."
5. **Keep trying:** "None of those dates work for me, but I would love to see you. Send me some more dates."
6. **Try me last minute:** "I can't put anything else on my calendar this month, but I'd love to do that with you sometime. Will you call me right before you go again?"
7. **Gratitude:** "Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and support! I'm sorry I'm not able to help you at this time."
8. **Give Dad a chance:** "You know, I feel like moms are always getting to do the holiday parties at school. Let's ask Dad if he wants to help this year."
9. **I'll still help:** "I can't speak at your event, but I will help you promote it on my blog."

I also asked my friends Renee Trudeau and Katrina Alcorn—two people who've honed their ability to say no well—for their favorite go-to ways to say no.

10. **Just No:** "Thanks, I'll have to pass on that." (Say it, then shut up.)
11. **Gracious:** "I really appreciate you asking me, but my time is already committed."
12. **I'm Sorry:** "I wish I could, but it's just not going to work right now."

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13. **It's Someone Else's Decision:** "I promised my coach (therapist, husband, etc.) I wouldn't take on any more projects right now. I'm working on creating more balance in my life."
14. **My Family is the Reason:** "Thanks so much for the invite, that's the day of my son's soccer game, and I never miss those."
15. **I Know Someone Else:** "I just don't have time right now. Let me recommend someone who may be able to help you."
16. **I'm Already Booked:** "I appreciate you thinking of me, but I'm afraid I'm already booked that day."
17. **Setting Boundaries:** "Let me tell you what I can do..." Then limit the commitment to what will be comfortable for you.
18. **Not No, But Not Yes:** "Let me think about it, and I'll get back to you." (Renee's list is from her book *The Mother's Guide to Self-Renewal*.)

And here are the additional ways that Katrina most often says no:

19. **Say nothing:** Not all requests require an answer. It feels rude to ignore a request, but sometimes it's the best way for everyone to save face.
20. **Let it all hang out:** Recently my daughter got injured in gym class. It was a week of visits to the ER, the concussion clinic, specialists, etc. I decided to just tell people what was going on, which sort of shut down the requests for a bit.
21. **I'm "maxed out":** We need a "safety word" for saying no—an easy way to tell people that we can't/won't do the thing they are requesting, but that it's not personal. One convenient thing about authoring a book called *Maxed Out* is that now I can say "I'm maxed out" and people who are familiar with the book know I'm asking them to respect that I'm taking care of myself, and that I also respect *their* need to take care of themselves.

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