



Saying no or saying yes, *but!*

1. **PAUSE** – take a breath. This will enable you to avoid just reacting to the request. By all means ask for time to *consider* the request viz a viz what else is happening where that would be useful to provide you with more space to think things through.
2. Another technique to provide thinking space is **Asking**. You can ask - when, where - what – who - how) questions to confirm your understanding of what is being asked where applicable. Don't forget to keep your tone neutral.
Remember to avoid jumping to negative self-talk about what they will think – this is all in your head. See [Changing Inner Critic to Inner Cool](#) for an exercise to help you do this.
3. **Keep your responses short** and try not to give reasons until asked. The reasons then become a justification and can backfire. Also, if you start to list lots of reasons as why you can't then it does not sound confident. Clearly if you are asked for one, especially from your boss, then choose the most important one that would be recognised by your boss as important too.
4. Have some phrases that work for you that you can say confidently and hold the line if you are ever challenged – see table below for examples in three categories to get you started.

Well-being phrases
I want to continue to be the best for the client/the team and if you recall we did agree that this finish time is important to my well-being/XYZ. Can we think about the best way to do this without changing this?
I have another commitment for that time.
What a nice invitation. I can't say yes or not to you yet. Can I get back to you in a couple hours/days?
Your version(s)



Workload phrases

I can do that if you can help me/advise how to manage that the request from XYZ on my desk?

Thank you for the opportunity, I really appreciate it. I have to pass though this time – maybe next time when I am not so busy/have a hearing to go to.

I can do that this afternoon but not this morning.

Your version(s)

Inappropriate instructions or behaviour

I am not comfortable with that.

That's a red/amber light for that remark/behaviour.

I can't believe you've said that – it is so last century!

Your version(s)

Saying 'yes, but...'

Sometimes saying 'yes' is simply unavoidable, for example in the stamp duty holiday, conveyancers were working flat out to meet client demands (although I would still suggest– breaks are needed.)

