

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 *conside*r 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 <u>Changing Inner Critic to Inner Cool</u> 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.)



I recommend setting conditions or parameters when you agree to the request. Here are some tips to use when accepting, which can assist with setting boundaries at the time or in future:

- As you are telling them yes, you add that you'll come back with a timetable that will work for both of you.
- Put a condition or time limit on your 'yes' for example: '*If it will only take* an hour then I'll be able to help, but I can't give you more than that today.' Or 'Not right now, but I can do that for you later.'
- Tell a colleague you can agree to their request this time, but ask how the two of you might plan better for next time. If it is your manager, you may want to come up with suggestions for future smarter working once the pressure is off.

Your versions:			

For more comprehensive help with setting boundaries, self-confidence, professional well-being, and other business skills, why not speak to me about workshops or coaching plans which may work for you? Feel free to contact me for a no-obligation chat about your requirements on 07921540039.

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Ann Page, a Top 100 lawyer of the year (2003) has had a successful in-house 28year career, working mainly in the financial sector. In 2003, she switched from being a business lawyer in industry to a non-practising solicitor who teaches and coaches on business subjects. Since then, Ann has trained over 7000 lawyers on business skills including leadership, management and interpersonal skills. If you want to see Ann in action, <u>click here.</u>

Ann has always been active in various professional committees and currently she is Treasurer of the Yorkshire Sole Practitioner's Group, a member of the Professional Speaking Association, Professional Speaking Academy and Leeds Law Society.