

## **THE ART OF SAYING “NO”**

A relative calls and invites himself over, even though you have other things planned. A co-worker asks you to do a project that everyone in your department finds boring and time-consuming. At your neighborhood block club, neighbors “elect” you to take over a project that may require two evenings a week—time you don’t already have.

It’s been said that the world is divided into two types—those who delegate and those delegated to. If you find yourself taking on more projects than you’d like at the expense of time you enjoy with your family or yourself, you probably need to learn the art of saying ‘no.’ Here are some suggestions the next time you’re about to say “yes” when you really mean “no.”

### **PUT YOUR OWN NEEDS FIRST**

Depending on the situation, this may be difficult. But if you don’t look out for yourself, who will? For projects that you don’t *have* to do but which someone *wants* you to do, hold your ground and put your own needs first.

### **REMEMBER, IT’S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD**

Depending on the situation, what’s the worst that could possibly happen if you say ‘no’? In the examples above, the relative who invited himself over and your neighborhoods in the block club may be upset because you said no, but that’s something *they* have to deal with, not you. You are not responsible for the actions of others.

### **ASK YOURSELF, ‘HOW WILL THIS BENEFIT ME?’**

In deciding whether to take on a new project or not, consider how the project might improve your chance for a job promotion or enrich your life personally. For the examples above, the project may be something that no one in your department wants to work on, but it may also present a new challenge for you and a chance at a job change or promotion.

### **IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE OR COMPROMISE?**

It isn’t always a matter of “yes” or “no.” Offer your relative a better time to visit. Offer to take part of the project, if your co-workers agree to take the rest. Maybe you can take on part of your block club’s project if someone else takes the project every other week.

### **OF COURSE, THERE’S ALWAYS “NO”**

Saying “no” is easy for some people, harder for others. For those who find it hard, practicing it a few times will make it easier for you to put your needs first and foremost.