

The Power of “No”

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by work and life. One of the easiest stress busters is learning the simple word, “no.” It's not always easy! But saying “no” is an important part of setting boundaries and preserving time for the people and events that fulfill you. You likely get regular requests: volunteer at your child's school, coach a team, make and donate a craft, attend a meeting, cook for the potluck. The first step is to decide whether the request is something you *want* to do. If it is not something you want to do, decide whether you can say “No.” If you need help finding the words, try the following ideas.

Adapted from Christine Carter's “21 Ways to ‘Give Good No,’” from the Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life website.

1. Keep it simple: “Thank you, but I can't make it.”
2. It's not personal: “Thank you for asking, but I'm not hosting parties at my house until our puppy is bigger.”
3. Ask me later: “I want to help, but this time of year is too busy. Will you ask me next month?”
4. Let me hook you up: “I can't do it, but I'll bet Shelly can. Let me ask her for you.”
5. Keep trying: “None of those dates work for me, but I'd 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 at this time.”
8. Give someone else a chance: “You know, I feel like moms are always getting to do the holiday party at school. Let's ask Dad if he wants to help this year.”