# My rights

A list of basic rights that apply to you and to everyone else.

These apply to you, and to everyone you deal with. Tick the ones you already live by. Circle the ones you find hard to believe.

- [ ] I have the right to be treated with respect.
- [ ] I have the right to say no without feeling guilty.
- [ ] I have the right to have feelings and to express them.
- [ ] I have the right to have needs, and for them to matter as much as other people's.
- [ ] I have the right to ask for what I want, knowing the answer may be no.
- [ ] I have the right to change my mind.
- [ ] I have the right to make mistakes.
- [ ] I have the right to say "I do not know" or "I do not understand".
- [ ] I have the right to take time to think before I answer.
- [ ] I have the right to my own opinions and values.
- [ ] I have the right not to be responsible for other adults' feelings or problems.
- [ ] I have the right to privacy and time to myself.
- [ ] I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.
- [ ] I have the right to end a conversation in which I am being disrespected.
- [ ] I have the right to choose not to assert myself.

**The rights I find hardest to believe apply to me**

**Where did I learn that they did not?**

**How would I act this week if I fully believed one of them?**

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# Saying no

How to say no briefly and clearly, with words you can use.

Each time you say yes, you give up something else: time, rest, your own priorities. Saying no is not selfish. It protects the things you have already said yes to.

## How to do it

1. **Keep it short.** "No, I cannot do that." Long explanations invite debate.
2. **Be clear.** "I will have to pass" is clearer than "I am not sure, maybe".
3. **Be kind, not sorry.** One "I am afraid not" is enough. You do not need to apologise for having limits.
4. **Buy time if you need it.** "Let me check and come back to you."
5. **Repeat if pushed.** Same words, same tone. You do not need a better reason.

## Words you can use

> *"Thanks for asking. I cannot this time."*
>
> *"That does not work for me."*
>
> *"I am not able to take that on at the moment."*
>
> *"I cannot do Saturday. I could do an hour on Sunday."*
>
> *"I understand it is important to you. The answer is still no."*

## What gets in the way

- [ ] Fear they will be upset or think less of me
- [ ] Guilt
- [ ] Feeling responsible for their problem
- [ ] Wanting to be seen as helpful
- [ ] Not wanting to miss out
- [ ] Believing my needs matter less

## Practice, from easier to harder

| A request I could say no to | How hard (0 to 10) | What I will say |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

*The discomfort after saying no is usually brief. Resentment after saying yes can last much longer.*

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