



SAYING “NO!”

...When You Really Mean It

Sooner or later you will be faced with making a decision that is difficult and may be unpopular. Look at these situations as a chance to do what’s right for you. Never feel the pressure to say yes when your heart tells you no. Saying no and meaning it might even make the difference in keeping you safe.



● WHEN TO SAY “NO”

Only you can decide what’s best for you or when you are uncomfortable with something. Give yourself time to think things through and trust your instincts.

- > **Stop the conversation as soon as you become uncomfortable.**
- > **The earlier you make your refusal known**, the less likely the other person will try to talk you into something you don’t want to do.

● HOW TO SAY “NO”

Don’t open the door for the other person to keep asking and don’t let him think he can change your mind.

- > **Make your refusal clear and direct.**
- > **Use a firm tone.**
- > **Make it nonnegotiable.**

● BODY LANGUAGE COUNTS

A smile or giggle said with the word “no” creates a confusing message and can lead to trouble. Everyone will know you are serious when you show confidence in your body language.

- > **Keep eye contact.**
- > **Stand your ground.**
- > **Walk away from the situation with your head held high.**

● DON’T SAY NO WHEN YOU REALLY MEAN YES

Only say no when you really mean it. Don’t even say maybe when you mean “*if you ask me again or in a different way, I’ll say yes.*” If you aren’t sure, or just need time to think how to handle something, say “*I’ll have to think about it.*”

- > **If you mean yes then say yes, and take steps to assure your safety.**
- > **Saying no and then giving in sends the message that you can be talked into anything.** When you really mean no, you won’t be believed. This can be dangerous.

● HAVE COURAGE TO STAND UP TO YOUR FRIENDS

You are not going to always agree with your friends but you should not have to defend your feelings.

- > **Just because something is ok** with your friends it might not be ok with you.
- > **Chances are your friends** are feeling just as uncertain about the situation as you are and someone will back you up.
- > **Surround yourself** with people who support the choices you make.



Try Using One of the Strategies below when You Need Help Saying “No”

1. BLAME YOUR PARENTS.

- *“No way I’m drinking. My mom smells my breath when I get home and would ground me for life if she caught me.”*

2. SET UP A CODE WORD

with your parents to alert them that you need help.

- *“I’m at the movies and I forgot my key. I’ll be home around 11:00 so please don’t lock the door.”*
 - > They’ll hear the word “key” here (or any other word you agree on) and catch your hint that they either have to DEMAND you come home immediately or arrange to pick you up.

3. REPEAT YOURSELF UNTIL THEY GET THE MESSAGE.

- *“Want some weed?”*
 - > *“No thanks.”*
- *“Come on, it’s no big deal.”*
 - > *“I’m all set.”*
- *“Why not, one drag won’t kill you.”*
 - > *“No really, I don’t want any.”*

4. COME UP WITH SOMETHING ELSE TO DO

so you can keep your friends and still do the right thing. Don’t apologize for your choice. Don’t insult or judge your friends either. Just say no clearly and then tell them what you’d rather do.

- *“I’m not doing drugs, but I’ll shoot hoops with you later.”*
- *“There’s no way I’m skipping school, but where should I meet you at 4:00?”*

Sometimes it is tough doing the right thing when your friends are doing something else. But you’ll feel better about yourself when you follow your own sense of what is right. Your good friends will always stick by you, and they’ll respect you too.

Thank YOU

This publication has been made possible by a grant
from the Bob Woodruff Foundation.



A PUBLIC EDUCATION MOVEMENT
OF THE BOB WOODRUFF FOUNDATION

SOURCES:

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(www.healthychildren.org)

This work was developed by The Craig-Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia,
in collaboration with The Child, Adolescent, and Family Behavioral Health Office, U.S. Army Medical Command,
and The Military Child Education Coalition®.



MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION

909 Mountain Lion Circle | Harker Heights, Texas 76548

254.953.1923

www.MilitaryChild.org

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