

Saying “Yes” *Strategically*

Know Yourself

How do you want or need to allocate your time? What are your priorities and values?

Evaluate the Request

- Does the activity in question align with my values and priorities?
- Does it require my unique skills, experience, or knowledge?
- Will saying “yes” require that I give something else up?

Put Yourself First

Putting yourself first is the key to *strategically* saying “yes”

Say “No” Without Saying “No”

Delay

Give yourself some time to respond

Rely on Relationships

Explain that your time is already committed to others

Defer

Pass on the request, but leave the door open for future

Recruit

Allow the person asking to designate the task’s relative importance

Delegate

Agree to participate *to a degree* but only with shared burden

Offer an Alternative

Propose what you *want* to do instead of exactly what is asked

Refer

Offer something or someone else in your stead

Ditch/Exit Gracefully

Free yourself from the commitment when it’s no longer feasible

What to Say Instead:

- “My plate is full right now, but feel free to follow up with me at a later date.”
- “I am honored that you asked me to be involved, but I have other commitments and can’t participate to the degree proposed. I’d be happy to consider it if others could work on it with me.”
- “I need to respect those to whom I’m already committed, so I can’t take on anything else right now.”
- “I’m not the most qualified person to do/answer this, but here are some resources related to the topic that you might find helpful.”