
Nope

No, nein, nyet, not a chance, no thank you, let me check my diary, let's see, I'll have to ask my partner, love that idea – let's talk through the practicalities.....

Sally Vaughan & Jim Timpson



Think of it as an assertiveness problem



Assertiveness is.....

1. Personal and situation specific
2. “Assertive self-expression is direct, firm, positive – and when necessary persistent – action intended to promote equality in person-to-person relationships. Assertiveness enables us to act in our own best interests, to stand up for our own best interests, to stand up for ourselves without undue anxiety, to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others, and to express our feelings (e.g. affection, love, friendship, disappointment, annoyance, anger, regret, sorrow) honestly and comfortably.”
Alberti & Emmons: Your Perfect Right (2014)

PS: It takes practice

https://www.southeastern.edu/admin/osaa/assets/assertivness_inventory.pdf

Pros & cons of Assertiveness



by Unknown Author is licensed under

Pros and cons of each type of behaviour

Non-assertive Behaviour	Assertive Behaviour	Aggressive Behaviour
SENDER	SENDER	SENDER
Self-denying	Self-enhancing	Self-enhancing at the expense of others
Inhibited	Expressive	Expressive
Hurt, anxious	Feels good about self	Controlling
Allows others to choose	Chooses for self	Choose for others
Does not achieve desired goal	<u>May</u> achieve desired goal	Achieves desired goal by hurting others
RECEIVER	RECEIVER	RECEIVER
Guilty or angry	Self-enhancing	Self-denying
Deprecates sender	Expressive	Hurt, defensive, humiliated
Achieves desired goal at sender's expense	May achieve desired goal	Does not achieve desired goal

Pros and cons of each type of behaviour

Non-assertive Behaviour	Assertive Behaviour	Aggressive Behaviour
SENDER	SENDER	SENDER
Self-denying	Self-enhancing	Self-enhancing at the expense of others
Inhibited	Expressive	Expressive
Hurt, anxious	Feels good about self	Controlling
Allows others to choose	Chooses for self	Chooses for others
Does not achieve desired goal	<u>May</u> achieve desired goal	Achieves desired goal at cost to others
RECEIVER	RECEIVER	RECEIVER
Guilty or angry	Self-enhancing	Self-denying
Deprecates sender	Expressive	Hurt, defensive, humiliated
Achieves desired goal at sender's expense	May achieve desired goal	Does not achieve desired goal

Key Points

Assertiveness involves the risk that the other party might not comply with your request

We choose passivity or aggression because humans don't like vulnerability and uncertainty

Vulnerability requires a form of bravery



“Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it’s having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Vulnerability is not weakness; it’s our greatest measure of courage.”

Brene Brown



Steve Peters refers to self limiting assumptions as gremlins which we can coach ourselves to replace with better “autopilots”

- Unhelpful “Gremlins”



- I'm less capable than other people
 - The world is a hostile place
 - I must be perfect

- Constructive



- I'm a good person who is able to adapt and learn in the face of challenges
- The world isn't fair but it isn't hostile. There may be sources of help and inspiration out there
 - I must do my best

Removing a Gremlin: Someone who says “yes” every time they’re asked to do something

To find the gremlins that cause you to say “yes” ask:

- What do you believe saying “no” to someone will imply about you?
- What are the consequences of saying “no” to someone?

If the answer is something like “If I say “no” then this implies that I am selfish and the consequences are that I will be seen as lazy” then these two gremlins are prompting you to make poor decisions

What truths could you use to tackle these gremlins?

1. Saying no is the appropriate response for an adult who is respecting her exhaustibility or boundaries
2. Saying no is a powerful thing to do by a balanced person
3. People who are realistic will accept being turned down and understand that you have the right to say no
4. People respect those who say no

The art of saying no

Damon Zahariades

Clarity and Honesty

- Be clear and honest in your response
- Avoid vague or ambiguous language
- Clearly express your inability or unwillingness to comply with the request



Respect and Empathy

- Show respect and empathy towards the person making the request
- Acknowledge their needs or desires and communicate your decision in a considerate manner



Firmness

- Maintain a firm and assertive tone while saying no
- It's important to stand by your decision without wavering, but without being aggressive or confrontational



Offer Alternatives

- Whenever possible, provide alternatives or solutions that might help the person in some way, even if you cannot fulfil the initial request
- This shows your willingness to assist in a different capacity



Practice and Preparation

- The more you practice saying no, the better you become at it
- Prepare yourself for potential requests in advance, especially if you anticipate situations where you might need to decline.



The Positive No

Caroline Webb

- **Start with warmth:** first acknowledge and show appreciation for the person's request
 - **Your yes:** instead of starting with 'I'm sorry....' begin by enthusiastically highlighting whatever your positive priority is right now and why it is interesting, important or meaningful to you. Consider picking out a reason that will also resonate with the person you're talking to
 - **Your no:** explain that this means, with regret, that you can't do the thing they've asked you to do
 - **End with warmth:** perhaps there's a suggestion or offer you can make without detracting from your priorities such as an introduction to someone else. At the very least, offer warm wishes for success in their project/request. It's an important closing sentence that often gets dropped when we're focused on our own discomfort at saying no
-

Finally; treating it like a conflict experiment focused on what you do and don't have time to do. There's often no "right" answer but you can achieve a lot by having insight into what you're doing and why

The email response

The situation

- On Wednesday at 4:30 pm you spot an e-mail from your manager. In the e-mail title you can see she's asking you to deliver a report on an aspect of your department's work by 10am this Friday. It will take two hours to produce and you're in meetings all day Thursday. What would five responses look like to this e-mail matching the five most common conflict styles? Then pick the one you see as the best option and explain why
 - Avoid
 - Accommodate
 - Compromise – meet in the middle
 - Compete – state your boundary and stick to it
 - Collaborate – find out a bit more and look for a win-win
-

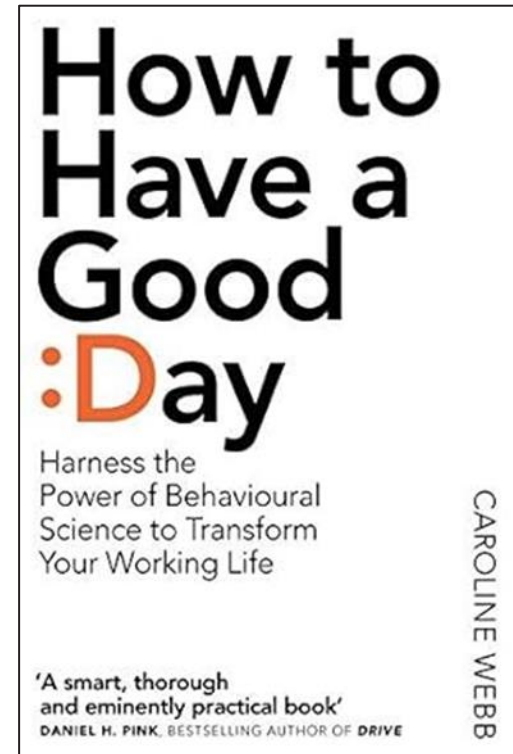
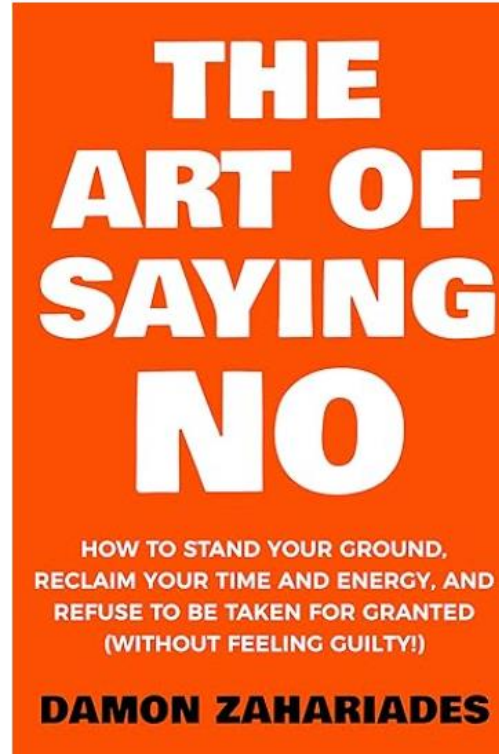
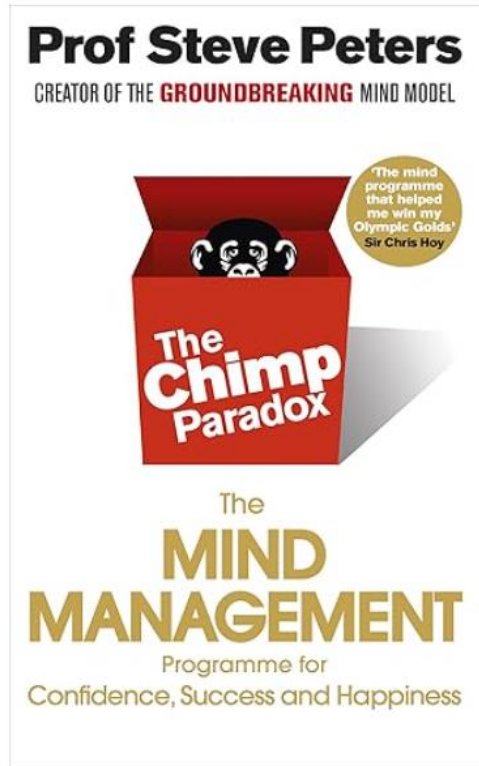
Possible answers

TKI Mode	Possible Response
Avoid	Don't actually open the e-mail. When she asks, say you were in meetings from the points she sent it
Accommodate	Start the report immediately. Get in early on Friday and finish it then
Compromise	Tell her you can get it to her by 12:00 p.m. Friday
Compete	Tell her you're in meetings all day Thursday and can't hit that deadline unless she gets you out of some of the meetings
Collaborate	Tell her you'll struggle to hit the deadline with a high quality report; ask for a bit of context so you can understand whether she needs it to be quick <u>and</u> good. Try to get her on the phone

Quick summary

- Be clear about whether your problem relates to “no” or “yes”
 - Choose assertiveness
 - Replace gremlins with autopilots
 - Extend your range of “no”
 - Extend your range of conflict responses
-

Further reading



Thank you

