

EPISODE 140: SAY WHAT YOU MEAN AND GET WHAT YOU WANT

1. WHY WE'RE AFRAID TO SAY "NO"

- We like to help, be dependable, be the "go-to person." These might be values that were emphasized by our parents
- We fear looking uncooperative, selfish, or lazy.
- We associate "No" with negativity.
- We fear rejection, reprisal, or even being fired.
- We're sensitive to guilt and shame.

2. BE ASSERTIVE, NOT AGGRESSIVE

- Aggressiveness: dominance, power, my way or the highway. Focuses on me getting what I want.
- Assertiveness: cordial, diplomatic, but honest. Recognizes your own needs and respects the needs of others.
- Being assertive is about setting boundaries.

A 3-step process:

1. Recognize your own needs and limits.
2. Recognize your right to *have* needs and limits.
3. Learn to state them clearly, without fear, guilt, or shame.

3. LEARN THE RIGHT WAY TO SAY "NO"

- Don't flatly refuse. Avoid the appearance of stubbornness or dogmatism.
- Don't offer an excuse. Any excuse invites a counter.
- Postpone in order to buy time: "Let me check my calendar."
- Ask for priority: "I can't do both. Which one is more important to you?"
"I'd have to set _____ aside in order to do that. Is that what you want?"
- Develop "No" formulas that work in different situations.
- Practice saying "No." Start with the dog, the kids, and work your way up.

4. REMEMBER, STYLE IS EVERYTHING

- Be clear but be gracious. Remember: "Brevity is the cousin of clarity."
- Control your emotions.
- Lead with a positive, then say no. "I would love to help, but I won't have time."
"That sounds like a great idea, but I can't fit it into my schedule."
- Use "I" statements, not "you" statements: "You expect me to do everything" vs. "I can't fit that in."
- Don't apologize: "I'm so sorry, but I can't." You have the right to set boundaries.

5. BRACE YOURSELF FOR RESISTANCE

- When you begin to set boundaries, not everyone will be happy: “I thought I could count on you” or “I thought you were a team player.”
- Be willing to feel uncomfortable at first.
- Prepare to lose relationships. But maybe those weren’t real relationships anyway.

Are there other communication-related topics you’d like to hear the Communication Guys address? Let us know on our [Facebook page](#).