

### **Assertiveness Tips:**

1. Decide if you want to say yes or no. You may need time to think it over – let the person know when you'll be ready. Know what you want.
2. Ask for clarification if you don't understand what is requested of you.
3. Be as brief as possible with a legitimate reason for your refusal. Avoid elaborate justifications as these may be used to argue you out of your "no."
4. Use the word "no." "No" has more power and is less ambiguous than, "Well, I just don't think so...."
5. Make sure your gestures mirror your verbal messages. Shake your head when saying "no." Often people unknowingly nod their heads and smile when they are attempting to refuse.
6. "I won't" or "I've decided not to" are better than "I can't" or "I shouldn't." This emphasizes that you have made a choice.
7. You may have to decline several times before the person "hears" you. It is not necessary to come up with a new explanation each time, just repeat your "no" and your original reason for declining.
8. If the person persists after you have repeated "no" several times, use silence (easier on the phone), or change the topic of conversation. You have the right to end the conversation.
9. You may want to acknowledge any feelings another has about your refusal. "I know this will be a disappointment to you, but I won't be able to...." Don't say "I'm sorry." In most situations saying "I'm sorry" tends to compromise your basic right to say "no."
10. Avoid feeling guilty. It's not up to you to solve others' problems.
11. If you do not want to agree to the person's original request, but still desire to help them out, offer a compromise: "I will not be able to baby-sit the whole day, but I can sit for two hours." - You can say "no" to a request you originally said "yes" to!

### **MORE TIPS:**

TIP 1: BREATHE!

TIP 2: THINK BEFORE YOU REACT.

TIP 3: TALK TO YOURSELF

TIP 4: MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

TIP 5: STAY AWARE OF YOUR WHOLE BODY

*For more information visit Athina-Eleni in the SF/CS office or call (617) 850-1289.*