

The art of saying 'no'

brusque spell slag intimidated slagging flaking refraining

We are planning to go paintballing next Saturday. Are you, in principle, up for it?

If your immediate response is always 'yeah, yeah, yeah, sure, take a moment. Say: "Can I get back to you on that one?"; "Let me have a think.' Just buy yourself time. Most people don't mind. By the time you have decided it's a "no", the message will have already got through that you're not keen, and it won't feel so 1)_____. You might worry that if you turn down a group activity that they're all going to 2)_____ you off when you're not there: definitely, if they think you're lying, or you're known for 3)_____ out at the last minute, they will be 4)_____ you off. But if you're straightforward, there's not much to say except: "X is always being clear about his/her needs and preferences, in a timely manner."

Your doctor: I'm about to perform a medical examination of an intimate nature; do you mind if five student-doctors come and watch?

Many people feel 5)_____ by the medical profession, and others feel they have a civic duty to be guinea pigs, since how else are students supposed to learn? Yet having an audience in any kind of medical examination is not the same as 6)_____ from honking a learner driver, and there are any number of reasons why you might not want that. Just think: there are other patients, many of whom won't mind at all. It's your body and your choice, after all!