

# How to Say No and Maintain the Relationship

## Step 1: Their situation

- Summarise their request in full
- Show you understand their needs
- Prove you were listening
- Empathise
- Buy yourself thinking time

## Step 2: Your situation

- Explain why not
- Give a full set of reasons
- Balance reasons with need
- Say no, clearly, if necessary

## Step 3: Options

- Discuss alternative ways
- Suggest ideas
- Ask / coach them to find options
- Negotiate a compromise

Avoid using the words: **BUT, HOWEVER, SORRY** or **UNFORTUNATELY**.