

REFUSAL SKILLS

for

Healthy Living



INTRODUCTION

Life is filled with challenges and choices. If at times you know that “No!” is the correct choice to a challenge, but you don’t have the courage to say it, then this book is for you. It will give you several clever and powerful ways to refuse getting into trouble, without looking like a nerd. The benefits to you include feeling better about yourself and having more friends.

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■ Plan to say 'no'!

Some kids whose parents are alcoholic insist that they'll never drink! Yet, when they find themselves confronted with a drinking situation, they drink! Why? They really intended not to drink... but they had no plans or skills to carry that out. If you want to be a musician when you're older, you should take lessons on an instrument and start practicing now, right? Same thing with not drinking or taking drugs, or with saying "no" to illegal activities. You have to have a plan: refusal skills. Good intentions are not enough!

But I'm worried about people liking me, I'm afraid to say 'no'!

Kids who have the courage to say what they think and to stand up for themselves tend to be the best liked. Usually kids who can't say "no" have parents who can't say "no" to them. Does that make you like your parents? It makes you feel that they don't love you, it makes you angry...they'd get you off the hook if they'd tell you "no" because then you'd have a good excuse.

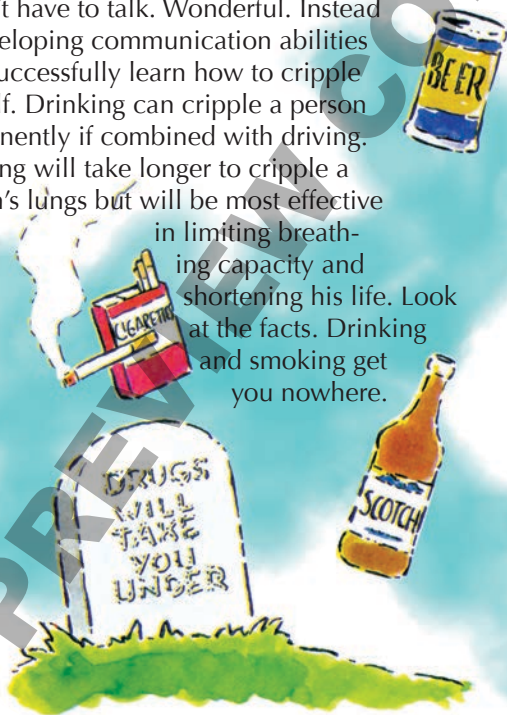
If you have parents who are afraid to tell you "no," do you respect them or do you just push them for more and more? Do you feel good about yourself? Do you like them? No, and no, right?



The facts about drinking and smoking.

Don't give in to peer pressure. Alcohol and tobacco aren't cool. Drinking replaces anxiety with dependence upon a crutch: alcohol. Smoking gives a person something to do with his hands and puts something in his mouth so he doesn't have to talk. Wonderful. Instead of developing communication abilities he'll successfully learn how to cripple himself. Drinking can cripple a person permanently if combined with driving. Smoking will take longer to cripple a person's lungs but will be most effective

in limiting breathing capacity and shortening his life. Look at the facts. Drinking and smoking get you nowhere.



I'm tired of the warnings! What can I do to take care of myself?

Finally...what a great question! Taking care of yourself means working to feel self-confident and capable. It means acting as if you were sure of yourself, even when you are not. Interestingly, your relationship with your parents is the best place to begin. When they ask you to do a task, do it.

Do it promptly.
Do it correctly.
Do it completely.



You will feel so good about yourself. Take the same approach to your schoolwork, no matter how boring, stupid or ridiculous it seems. Don't waste two hours avoiding thirty minutes of work.

Just do it!

Then you may spend the rest of your time playing, talking on the phone, or watching TV. When you treat your parents, teachers, housework and homework with respect, you will be honoring yourself too. We give everything all the meaning it has for us, and if you tell yourself that being cooperative and industrious is foolish, it will be. If however you say, "I will feel great about that," you will. Kids who are involved in extracurricular activities that they enjoy and into which they pour effort, generally feel proud of themselves. Find something that appeals to you, and



Go for it!

Be it rock, stamp, or coin collecting, juggling, acrobatics, or singing lessons. Find something that you love. You don't have to be good at it. You just need to invest energy into it.

What are some ways to say “no”?

Hold on. Here we go!

- “No!” (With a firm voice, hand on hips, and eye contact.)
- “No.” (With a bored tone to your voice and the “eye roll” you normally save for your parents to show you are totally impatient with them.)



- “No thank you.” (In the soft, firm but casual way that you might say “no thank you” to a second helping.)
- “I’m not interested.”
- “I like being clear-headed.”
- “I don’t care to.”

Some kids just can’t come out and say the direct ways stated above. They need a way in which they think they’ll still appear cool. These might do:

- “It gives me acne.”
- “I can’t afford the calories.”
- “I am allergic.”
- “I can’t stand the hangover. It’s just not worth it.”

But what if they laugh at me, make fun of me, talk about me, ignore me?

They sure might. Would kind, loving and caring friends do that? NO! What if they were the only kids you had to hang out with, what would you do?

You would get over the pain of ridicule in a short time. The users will tire of making fun of you if you don't react to them by whining, crying, or trying to top them. Listen to what they taunt you with and say, "That's good, I'd rate it a '7.' Why don't you see if you can give me a '10' insult!" Or "I've heard all that before, come on, this is boring!" It's scary to let go of even "bad" friends if they are all you have. It's scarier to think what will happen to you if you go along with them.

Keep working to improve your character, grades, and honesty, and others will want to be your friends. The greatest high comes from good friendships that



How can I protect myself against temptation?

Practice Respect:



- For yourself by doing what you should do...at home, school, and when you are socializing.



- For your body by proper eating, exercise, and using healthy judgement about any substance you put into it.

- For your soul by refusing to attack another's personality either face to face or behind his or her back.

Practice Stamina:

- Push yourself to work a little harder. Finish that assignment before it's due!
- Exercise five minutes more than you planned.

Practice Self-control:

- Chew each mouthful of food 10 times.
- Let the phone ring three times before you pick it up.



Be a good person. Be true to yourself.

Questions

1. You are hanging out with the guys, and they suggest taking a parent's car out for a drive...you are all 13 years old. Write what you would say to your friends.
2. Your friend is spending the night with you and says, "Let's see if your parents have any vodka in the liquor cabinet, they won't notice if any is gone because we can add water to it." What could you say? Write it down:
3. Everyone is smoking. Someone offers you a cigarette.You...
 - a. Cough and say you are trying to quit because of your asthma.
 - b. Say, "I don't smoke, thank you."
 - c. Take the cigarette, light it, but don't inhale.
 - d. Smoke the cigarette because you want to fit in.
4. You are spending the night at a friend's house. He suggests that you both slip out his bedroom window and cruise the neighborhood for a while. You...
 - a. Jump at the chance for adventure and go first.
 - b. Tell him you won't.
 - c. Tell him you are afraid of the bad element on the streets that time of night.
 - d. Tell him you feel sick and call your parents to come pick you up.
5. A classmate invites you and a couple of other kids over after school. When you get there you discover there is no adult supervision You...
 - a. Say, "I have to call my dad and find out what time I have to be home" but tell you Dad to come pick you up and to give you an excuse why you have to leave.
 - b. Tell your host it's against rules for you to stay, call your mom, and wait outside.
 - c. Stay and have a totally anxious time.
 - d. Stay and do whatever they suggest.

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