

The Ready Reply Toolkit

Words you can find when you're put on the spot

You don't need the perfect response. You need one that sounds like you and is easy to find under pressure.

A. Your six refusal personas pick two that sound like you

The Educator

Some information about why you're not drinking.

- "I've decided to stop drinking, let me tell you about it..."
- "These are the benefits I've noticed when I don't drink..."
- "Did you know, the low/no alcohol market has boomed in recent years?"

MORE PEOPLE ARE CHOOSING THIS THAN YOU'D THINK

The Little White Lie

An easy excuse. The chances are, no one will challenge it.

- "I'm driving."
- "I'm on medication which means I can't drink."
- "I've got a personal training session later on."

YOU CAN HOLD A SOFT DRINK AND SAY NOTHING AT ALL

The Diplomat

Being reasonable makes it hard for anyone else to be unreasonable.

- "It's okay for us to make different choices."
- "I can still celebrate without alcohol."
- "Let's agree to disagree."

AVOIDS CONFLICT WITHOUT CAVING IN

The Joker

Humour as a defence - if it genuinely sounds like you.

- "I need to save my brain cells, I promised to donate them to science."
- "I turn into a gremlin when I drink."
- "I can't, I'm performing brain surgery in the morning."

IF IT FEELS RIGHT, DO IT

The Table Turner

Take the heat off yourself and redirect the conversation.

- "Hold that thought, I want to hear about Alex's day - what happened?"
- "I'll grab myself a drink in a second, but first, where did you get your jacket from?"

CURIOSITY IS A USEFUL DISTRACTION

The Direct Approach

You don't owe anyone an explanation.

- "No, thank you."
- "I don't want one, thanks."

YOU ARE ALLOWED TO REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE SITUATION

There is no "best" refusal persona. Pick the one that suits the person, the room and you. Two replies you can remember are more useful than six you can't.

B. Reply → Repeat → Remove

Reply

Your first answer. Short, warm, said early.

"No thanks, I'm good with this."

My Reply

.....
A back-up, in a different persona
.....

Repeat

If they ask again, repeat the boundary rather than adding reasons. A second ask doesn't need a longer answer.

"Still no - but thanks."

If they ask again, I'll say

.....
The same thing, said shorter
.....

Remove

If it keeps going, change the situation rather than continue the debate: change the subject, move seats, get the drink you actually want, text someone, or leave.

"I've said no. I'm going to leave it there."

If it keeps going, I'll

.....
My exit line
.....

C. My Ready Reply

The pressure I'm most likely to hear

.....
What I want to say, in my own words
.....

My second line if they ask again

.....
My Remove plan
.....

"No thanks" is a complete answer.

A reason is offered, never owed.

Awkwardness passes - usually before the next round does.

Their reaction is theirs. Your decision is yours.

Confidence follows the reps, not the other way round.