



Things to Never Say When Negotiating

And what to say instead for much better outcomes.

Don't Say This	Instead Say	Here's Why
"I think this will be fair for everyone."	"The goal is to meet on terms that feel good for everyone."	Labeling something as <i>fair</i> tells the other person how they <i>should</i> feel, often raising suspicion or resistance. Framing the conversation around shared outcomes keeps trust intact and encourages collaboration.
"I don't feel comfortable with..."	"Here's the scope I can responsibly commit to; if adjustments are needed, we can explore alternative options."	By showing you have an objective, non-emotional basis for limits, you don't invite scope creep or pressure. It communicates credibility and boundaries.
"This is the best option for you."	"Here are the options. Let me know which one best meets your needs."	Saying something is "best for them" removes their agency. Giving options builds trust and keeps the negotiation balanced.
"Everyone else has been fine with this."	"Here's the standard structure we use. Let me know if you'd like to see any adjustments."	Claiming that "everyone else" accepted the implies their concerns aren't justified. Referencing your standard practice keeps it for discussion.
"I'm sure we can figure it out later."	"Let's establish expectations now so we don't have misunderstandings."	"Figuring it out later" can turn into misaligned expectations and conflict. Clarifying upfront shows leadership and protects the relationship.