BECKY TAYLOR FAMILY MEDIATION

FREE GUIDE · UNREASONABLE DEMANDS

Responding to Your Ex's Unreasonable Demands

How to identify, respond to, and set boundaries when demands feel unfair.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Recognizing unreasonable vs legitimate requests
- Scripts for saying no calmly
- When to compromise vs stand firm
- How mediators handle power imbalances
- When to get legal advice

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What Makes a Demand Unreasonable?

Not every request you disagree with is unreasonable. Sometimes what feels unfair is actually legitimate. Understanding the difference helps you respond appropriately.

> "An unreasonable demand is one that ignores the law, fairness, or your children's best interests — or is designed to control or punish you."

Unreasonable Demands Include

- Requests that violate court orders or legal agreements
- Demands for money or assets you are not obligated to provide
- Insisting on arrangements that harm your children
- Using children as leverage ("If you do not agree, you will not see the kids")
- Demanding immediate answers to complex decisions
- Threats, ultimatums, or emotionally manipulative language

Legitimate Requests May Feel Unreasonable But Are Not

- Asking to review the parenting plan as children grow
- Requesting financial disclosure during settlement discussions
- Proposing changes to contact due to genuine work or health issues
- Seeking mediation or legal advice before agreeing to major decisions

How to Respond Calmly

1

Pause Before Responding

Do not reply immediately, especially if the demand is sent late at night or in an inflammatory tone. Take 24 hours to calm down and think clearly.

2

Identify What is Being Asked

Strip away the emotion and identify the actual request. Is it about money? Time with the children? A change to an agreement?

3

Assess Whether It is Reasonable

Ask yourself: Is this lawful? Is it fair? Is it in the children's best interests? Does it honor our agreement?

4

Decide Your Response

If reasonable: agree or negotiate in good faith. If unreasonable: say no calmly and state why. If unsure: seek advice from your solicitor or mediator.

Scripts for saying no

Declining with a reason

"I understand you feel this is important, but I am not able to agree to this because [reason]. I am happy to discuss alternative solutions."

Pointing to an existing agreement

"This goes against our existing agreement. If you want to change it, we should discuss this in mediation or with our solicitors."

Buying time

"I need time to consider this properly. I will get back to you by [date]."

When to Compromise vs Stand Firm

When to Compromise

- The request is minor and does not affect core principles
- There is room for both of you to give a little
- Flexibility now might earn goodwill for future negotiations
- The children will benefit from the compromise

When to Stand Firm

- The demand violates a court order or legal agreement
- It would harm your children's wellbeing or stability
- It affects your safety, rights, or financial security
- It sets a precedent you cannot sustain long-term

"Know your bottom line. Compromising on small things builds goodwill. Standing firm on core principles protects you and your children."

When to Get Legal Advice

If your ex-partner is making repeated unreasonable demands, threatening court action, or using mediation to manipulate you, it is time to get legal advice.

Your solicitor can advise whether the demands are enforceable, help you understand your rights, and take steps to protect you if necessary.

Need help managing unreasonable demands?

Mediation can help address power imbalances and create a safe space to negotiate fairly. Contact us for support.

BOOK A FREE 30-MINUTE CALL

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