

WORDS MATTER

8 Phrases That Quietly Push People Away

Each sounds polite. Each phrase shifts the action or confidence onto the other person. Here is what to say instead:

	WHAT YOU SAY	WHY IT LANDS WRONG	SAY THIS INSTEAD
1	"Have you had a chance to look at the proposal?"	Adds noise without value — centers your process, not their goal.	"Since we last spoke, I came across something you might find useful..."
2	"Let me know if you need anything else."	Polite, but hands the next step to them. You stop leading.	"I've been thinking about what you said — would it help if I shared a few ideas?"
3	"We'd love to be considered for this."	Sounds passive — like a vendor hoping to be picked.	"We've helped others in similar situations — happy to share what worked."
4	"If the price is too high, we can work something out."	Signals doubt in your own value and invites haggling.	"We have a few approaches depending on what matters most — want to explore them together?"
5	"Are you the final decision-maker?"	Feels transactional; can make your contact feel sidelined.	"Who else should we include so this has the impact you're after?"
6	"Let me walk you through our capabilities."	Focuses on you, not them — you miss what actually matters.	"Mind if I ask a few questions to tailor this to what matters most to you?"
7	"Can I send you a proposal?"	Moves too fast — asks for commitment before trust.	"If it makes sense, we could sketch a few options together. Want to explore that?"
8	"No pressure — just following up one last time."	Undermines your presence; suggests you're disengaging.	"Whether now's the right time or not, I'll send something next week that might help."

The pattern: Lead with their Goals, Keep Ownership of the Next Step, and Trade Pressure for Genuine Usefulness and Ideas.