



SCRIPT SHEETS

# How to Respond to Comments About Leave: *Non-Birthing Parent Edition*

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It is common for non-birthing partners to face "casual" skepticism or microaggressions that suggest their leave is optional or a "vacation." In this short guide you'll find 3 common workplace scenarios and suggested scripts / guides designed to help you stand your ground while remaining professional.

- Scenario A: The Commitment Test
- Scenario B: The "Just a Quick Question" Assumption
- Scenario C: The Vacation Misconception



# How to Respond to Comments/Questions About Leave: Non-Birthing Parent Edition

CONFIDENT ANSWERS FOR COMMON WORKPLACE INQUIRIES

## Scenario A: The "Commitment Test"

**The Question:** *"Are you really taking the full [X weeks/months] off?"*

**Your Answer Could Look Like:** "Yeah, absolutely. I'm really grateful to be at a company that actually supports us taking this time. I'd want the exact same for you or anyone else on the team if the situation were reversed. Plus, the coverage plan I've set up is a great opportunity for the team to take on some more ownership while I'm out. By the time I come back, we'll have our routine down and I'll be ready to hit the ground running."

## **The Cheat Sheet (How to Build Your Own Response)**

If scripts aren't your jam, just hit these three beats:

- **The "Zero Hesitation" Yes:** Start with an immediate, unapologetic "yes." Hesitation makes it look like your leave is up for negotiation.
- **The Culture Mirror:** Frame your leave as a point of pride for the company culture. Remind them that supporting life events (parental leave, family emergencies, etc.) goes both ways.
- **The "Growth Opportunity" Spin:** Position your leave as a positive for your team. It's not a burden on them; it's a chance for them to step up and handle higher-level tasks while you ensure a smooth handover.



# Comments/Questions to Non-Birthing Parents Around Parental Leave

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## Scenario B: The "Just a Quick Question" Assumption

The Question: *"Can we still Slack you if something urgent comes up?"*

**Your Answer Could Look Like:** "I'm actually going to be fully offline so I can focus on getting things settled with my family. I'm really grateful that our company culture supports stepping away completely for life events like this, and I'd want the exact same for you. I've empowered [Name] to be the point person for [Project], and they have my full trust to make the call. If there is a true, company-level emergency, [Manager's Name] knows how to reach me."

## The Cheat Sheet (How to Build Your Own Response)

If scripts aren't your jam, just hit these three beats:

- **The Firm "Off" Switch:** Be clear that "away" means away. What gives you the most peace of mind? Before you even deliver this script, you need to decide what your boundaries actually are. There is no right or wrong answer here—only what works for your mental health. Do you want to be completely offline? Are you okay with a text about specific clients or scenarios? Know what your boundaries are, then communicate them with confidence.
- **The Empowerment Move:** Frame your absence as proof of your leadership. You have trained your team and you trust them to handle it.




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## Scenario C: The "Vacation" Misconception

**The Question:** *"Enjoy your 'vacation'! Hope you get some rest."*

**Your Answer Could Look Like:** "Thanks for the well wishes! It definitely won't be a 'vacation'- at least it won't feel that way during those daily 3AM diaper changes! It's a huge transition and new challenge I'm ready to take on."

 The Cheat Sheet (How to Build Your Own Response)

If scripts aren't your jam, just hit these three beats:

- **The Polite Correction:** Smile and acknowledge that while it is time off from this job, it is definitely not a vacation. You are swapping one type of work for another.
- **The Future Focus:** Keep it light and pivot the conversation back to the business by mentioning your return.
- **Read the Room:** When people call parental leave a "vacation," it usually falls into one of two categories. You get to decide how much energy you want to put into your response:
  - **The Well-Meaning Colleague:** This person usually doesn't have kids and genuinely thinks any time away from the office is a break. A gentle, joking correction like works perfectly here.
  - **The Passive-Aggressive Peer:** This person is making a dig at your commitment or feeling bitter about covering for you. This is where you use the script above to hold a firm, professional boundary.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

# Get in touch with team Josie:



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