

POLITENESS PRINCIPLE 5 -The Disagree Reluctantly Principle

reluctant (adj): not willing to do something and therefore slow to do it

If somebody makes a suggestion that I disagree with, I can use less direct language.

I don't really feel like trying it. I'm not so keen on spicy food.

When somebody says something that you disagree with, it's polite to show that you are not happy or comfortable with disagreeing with them.

There are several ways to do this:

1. Show you don't want to disagree

I don't want to disagree but I think we should...

This softens the disagreement and we often provide a reason, explanation or justification to support our disagreement.

2. Show reluctance

I don't want to complain but I was told that this was one of the best restaurants in town.

I don't want to be difficult but I really think the train is a better option.

I hope you don't mind my saying so, but I've been told the train is a better option.

I'm sorry, but I don't really want this

I'm afraid that my stomach is a bit sensitive so Vietnamese food might be too spicy.

I'd like to agree with you but many people think the train is cheaper and quicker.

I'm not sure that's the best idea

Perhaps, it would be better to take the train as it's cheaper.

It's your choice but Vietnamese food might be too spicy for some people.

I may be wrong but I think the train is a bit faster than the bus.

Notice how we use phrases that:

- **don't impose**
- **give options**

Showing your disagreement in a reluctant and indirect way can make the conversation quite long but it will sound more polite because your conversation partner has the freedom to agree or disagree with you.

SUMMARY

Be sensitive when disagreeing and correcting people.

Try to soften your disagreement.

Give the other person the option to disagree with you.