

IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO

5 Things To Say No To
So You Can Take Back
Control of Your Life

Introduction

No. It's a word that only has one syllable and two letters, yet it can be one of the most difficult words to say. Since we were little, we are taught that saying no is a negative thing that hurts people and causes us to miss out on new opportunities. With this in mind, it's no wonder that our society feels uncomfortable telling people no.

Saying no is not a bad thing though, and learning when to say it will allow you to take back control of your life. To learn how to say no, read on.

Reclaiming Your Right To Say No

Though it may sound odd, you have every right to say no whenever you want. You have absolutely no obligation to do things that make you feel stressed or unsafe. For this reason, it is important to reclaim your right to say no so that you can take back control over your life.

Whenever you reclaim your right to say no, you should expect to experience a number of great benefits. Here are some things that might happen when you learn to say no:

- Decrease stress
- Decrease burnout
- Less resentment
- Enjoy your life more
- Enjoy your relationships more
- Increase energy
- Increase productivity

Since saying no can lead to any of these benefits, it is imperative to reclaim your right. Get rid of the notion that saying no is harmful or hurtful to yourself and others. Instead, rewrite the narrative so that saying no is a valid response in any situation that you feel stressed or disrespected.

Why Can't I Say No?

If we have a right to say no and it leads to a number of great benefits, then why is it so difficult to say no? The answer is very simple. As humans, we often put other people's needs above our own. We do this because we want to reassure the people around us and make them feel comfortable and appreciated.

Obviously, the desire to make someone feel appreciated and safe is a good desire to have. The issue is when making someone feel appreciated and safe makes you feel unappreciated and in harm's way. So, it is important to learn how to discern between the two scenarios.

How To Decide To Say No

The best way to discern between these scenarios is learning when and how to say no. Obviously, there are instances when you may not feel like doing something but you absolutely need to. For example, you may not feel like doing laundry, but you need to do your laundry so you can have clean clothes and be healthy and presentable. With that being said, there are many instances when you ought to say no.

How To Decide To Say No

So, you have found yourself in a situation where you are unsure if you should say yes or no. Here are some guidelines to help you think about whether or not to say no to a request:

1. Don't respond immediately

If you are unsure if you have the time, energy, or resources to fulfill a request, do not respond right away. The worst thing you can do is say yes immediately, but then realize that you're incapable of fulfilling the task. Instead of responding immediately, ask if you can get back to them by the end of the day. Most scenarios will not be time-sensitive. So, you have time to reflect on whether or not you truly have the time and energy to take on this new task.

2. Think about your motivations

While you are considering whether or not to take on another project, think about your motivations. Would you say yes to the project purely out of obligation? Or do you truly want to take on the task? If you are only saying yes out of a sense of obligation, then you should probably say no.

3. Assess your schedule

If you want to take on the task, you then need to assess your schedule and truly take a hard look at whether or not you have enough time to commit to the project. When you're looking at your schedule, look at other work projects, family projects, and self-care time. You do not want to feel overworked or stretched thin by taking on another project.

If you found that your schedule is open for another project and you are excited about this task, then say yes. There is no reason why you should not take on another event or project. If your schedule is overbooked though, you should say no to the project even if it is one that excites you.

How To Say No

Assume that you have found yourself in a scenario in which you have to tell someone no. To many people, this can be extremely confusing and anxiety-inducing, but it does not have to be. Instead, you have the right to say no without guilt or anxiety.

Whenever you are telling someone no, make sure that you are kind and respectful. You do not want to come across like you are angry at the person or that you do not care about the situation or project. It is imperative that you are respectful and kind throughout the entire conversation.

At the same time, you must be assertive. You have nothing to feel guilty for. So, you do not need to be hesitant, resistant, or apologize for saying no. Stand firm in your response to show that you cannot be coaxed into taking on the project.

Additionally, you can choose to explain your answer or not. If you are close with the person, you may want to say why you're saying no, but you don't have to. You do not owe the person an explanation if you do not feel like giving it. It is completely up to you whether or not you explain your response. If the other person is not taking no for an answer, do not budge. You are not in the wrong and you should not feel guilty for saying no. Simply restate that you are incapable of taking on the project and that your response must be respected.

Here's a breakdown of how to say no:

Stay positive

Stay respectful

Stay assertive

Stand your ground

Example: I appreciate your thought to consider me in this project, but I must decline. I am currently too busy to take on anything else (optional).

5 Things To Say No To

If you are feeling overworked, stretched thin, and out of control, you should definitely consider saying no to different aspects of your life. Here are some ideas of things to say no to whenever you're stretched thin and worn out:

1. That Extra Project Your Boss Sprung On You At 4:45 pm on a Friday

We all have had a boss spring on us a last-minute project that we felt obligated to complete. These projects typically cause a lot of anxiety and stress and greatly disrupt the flow of our lives.

Though work is important, and you always want to be as productive as possible, it is completely acceptable to say no to projects and assignments that you have no way of completing successfully. Sometimes, it is better for the company and yourself for you to say no to an extra work project.

The reason for this is that taking on too many projects at work can cause you to become worn down, tired, and burnt out. This results in lower quality work and less productivity. By saying no to a project, you can focus all your energy on your other projects so that they are as effective as possible.

Like most people, saying no to your boss can be a little scary, but it can sometimes be absolutely necessary. If you need to say no to your boss, remember to stay positive, respectful, and assertive. Additionally, approach the situation as though it were a negotiation.

Explain to your boss that you are simply overworked and are not able to produce quality results. In other words, show your boss that it is in both your best interest and the best interest of the company for you to not take on any more projects for the time being.

2. Working After Hours

Additionally, be sure to say no to working after hours when needed. Though technology is great in many ways, it has made the work to life ratio much more imbalanced. The reason for this is that employers and clients can reach you any time of the day or night via your smartphone or computer.

It is important to say no to working after hours for your own well being. You should not be working constantly after you have left the office. The best way to do this is to tell your employer, employees, or clients that you will not be available to answer phone calls or emails between certain hours of the day. If someone contacts you, simply do not respond or restate that you will get back to them during your work hours. Except for the cases of extreme emergencies, stick to your office hours as closely as possible.

3. Volunteering For Your Child's School and Activities

If you are a parent, you know how many stressors and responsibilities come with having a child. There are some responsibilities that you simply cannot avoid as a parent, but there are some responsibilities that you can forgo every now and then whenever you're feeling worn down.

For example, say no to different volunteering opportunities in your child's life. You do not need to bake cookies for your child's bake sale. Your job as the parent is to create a happy and safe home. Your home cannot be happy if you are stretched thin from doing things like baking cookies or going to PTA meetings on top of your other responsibilities.

4. Going Out With Your Friends

Going out with friends can be fun and relaxing, but sometimes you might just need to stay in and watch TV. Whenever you find yourself feeling like this, it is perfectly okay to say no to going out on a Saturday night with your friends. Chances are, they will understand how you're feeling and invite you out the next time. There is nothing wrong with saying no to your friends when you need alone time to decompress and reflect on the week.

5. Making Dinner For Your Family Every Night

Having a family can be very stressful. Whenever you are feeling overworked and tired, you can say no to making dinner for a night. Of course, you will need to get food for your family, but you do not need to make elaborate meals that can take up to three hours to complete.

When saying no to making dinner for your family, you can either ask your spouse to take over for a night or you can buy takeout. Chances are, your spouse will not care to cook for a night, and your children certainly won't care if the option is takeout.

For consistent results, you can say no to cooking one day every week. For example, set aside Wednesday nights for takeout. This might not be the best option if you're on a tight budget, but it will give you a weekly opportunity to take a break from cooking and doing a lot of dishes.

Recap

It is easy to feel out of control in your life. One of the best ways to combat this is to learn how to say no. You can consider saying no to extra work projects, working after hours, volunteering in your child's life, going out with friends, or making dinner for your family for a night. Even saying no to one of these items will greatly decrease your stress and make you feel more relaxed and appreciated.