

Are you rubbish at saying 'no' ?

Then read on...



Does this seem familiar?

Will do you do me a big favour please?

Will you help me with..... ?

Can we meet on ?

Will you look after ?

Can I put you down to do ?

etc

Why me?

The chances are it's not just you they ask. We all people for things sometimes don't we? People will always ask us to do something or for our input. It's really not a bad thing. Let's look at these examples from a subjective point of view.

- If someone wants your help → they value your skills
- If someone asks you to care for their child or pet → they trust you
- If someone wants to meet up → they value your friendship or company

There are only a number of ways you can respond to a request. Yes. No, Maybe. Later. However, there are MANY way of saying all those answers.

If you are guilty of saying yes to far too many things, let's look at why you might be doing it and how you can limit what you agree to say yes to.

Why do you keep saying YES? What are the positives?

By saying yes, you are choosing to give your time, money or perhaps expertise to someone.

So do you want to? If you do, then fine - you chose to because it has some kind of positive **pay-back**. Yes, that's right, seems harsh but there needs to be a pay-back. Did you want to just make someone's life a bit easier by agreeing to do something? Then the payback could be satisfaction.

Here's an example. You stop by the roadside and change a wheel because the driver looked vulnerable and upset and asked you to do it whilst in distress. By agreeing and doing it you felt you're paying-it-forward. The payback is that feeling of achievement and being a do-gooder for the day. This is totally understandable and admirable. But its still given you a payback.

Helping out family or friends may well give you a great feeling of 'helping the team'. That's fantastic. Long may we continue to help our family and friends. But - there's always a but. Have you assessed whether its worth it? Are you prepared to lose the time or money etc to do a favour for someone? Yes? Go for it. Luckily most of us want that pay-back of doing a good deed so we do one now and then. The key is **NOW and THEN**.

There are always positives to saying yes. In the right situation. But who exactly is receiving the positivity? If you start to find you are saying yes too often, you are NOT receiving anything back that is positive. You are being taken advantage of receiving 'pain' (not physical pain but something has become unpleasant).

You probably say yes because you're a decent person who likes to be helpful. However, that is not a reason to actually say yes.

When and why saying YES is not a good thing

If you're a '**people pleaser**', you will undoubtedly, at some point, attract the manipulators and those who couldn't give a damn about YOUR position. Some people will take, take, take. Familiar? So who are you trying to please and why?

You will end up with a huge part of time spent in obligation, duty and favours and it will BURN YOU OUT. It's exhausting.

Eventually you will resent the people placing demand on you.

Who are these people? These manipulators? These nuisances pestering you? Well, often, it's the closest to us. It could be people we love as well as the usual pests that are always after something or a boss that is trying to take advantage.

Why are you doing it?

Do you want the person to like you?
Are you keeping the peace?
You don't want to seem selfish?
You want to be seen as a good person?
You feel guilty about saying no - so you agree instead
You don't want to be rejected or thought badly of

How it affects your body

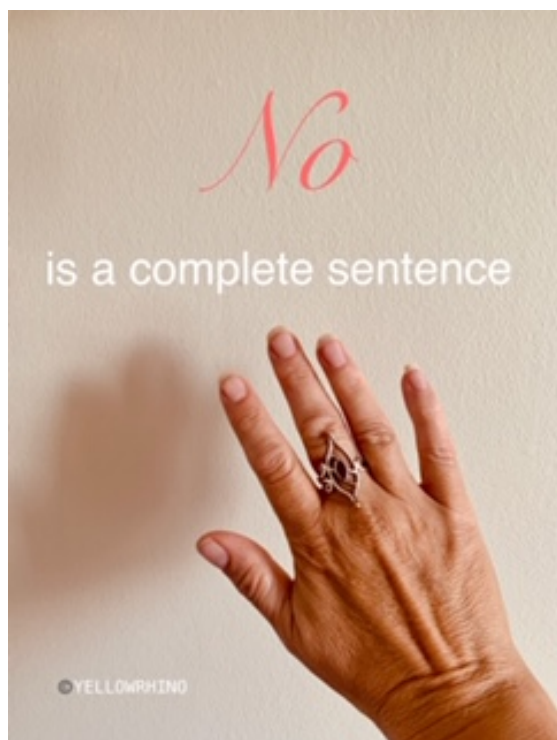
Sometimes you might say yes to something and feel nothing for a while. It just becomes something you will do.

However, because we are mostly agreeing to something we instantly regret, we find the following can happen:

- instant regret
- tension throughout your body
- anger towards yourself for agreeing so quickly
- a spike of adrenaline
- a bitterness towards the person asking you to say yes

Why would we choose to feel like this? No one really wants to feel like that.

There we go - **YOU HAVE A CHOICE**



Learning to say NO

If you're the type of person to say YES to everything then saying NO is going to take time and you will need to work at it.

One little word is so hard to say sometimes.

Making yourself less available for favours can make you feel awkward, disliked abandoned even. So it needs work and internal justification.

Let's see if we can make it easier to get into the habit of doing.

Firstly - imagine getting up one day and knowing you don't have to do ANYTHING today for ANYONE. That YOU make the decisions and decide what to do.

Of course, if you're off to work it may not be that easy - but there are plenty of situations in the work place to practise it nevertheless.

The key? It all starts with placing value on YOU.

Nevermind anyone else. It is NOT selfish to put yourself first. After all, if you're exhausted and overwhelmed due to doing things for other people, you'll be in no fit state to help those you want to. So why do that to yourself?

In order to become adept at saying no you will need to internalise good enough reasoning for saying it.

You will need to firstly change some thinking around your reasons for saying no. You will need to accept the 'whys' of why you keeping agreeing to things. If you brushed past the earlier information here you are not ready. If you read it and thought 'actually that's me' then you acknowledge you need to change something. No one is saying it will be easy but if you can understand the process you are half way there.

** Know your worth **

By devaluing yourself you are doing yourself a massive disservice and, quite frankly, issuing yourself. Put yourself first is NOT selfish and unless you know your value, others will not value you. They will still ask for favours but they won't really value you. Only you can accept that you are worth putting first, because only you will put yourself first. Now read that again.

** Know that you cannot please everyone **

So what? You already know some people have different opinions to you. You know that if you state a political belief some will agree and some won't. So what? It really doesn't matter. Trying to make everyone happy is totally impossible to do and very stressful. You may fear that people will disrespect you or be disappointed if you say no. On the whole, no one will think less of you. Occasionally we will find that someone doesn't like it or agree with you. Well that's their issue to get over.

** value your time **

Instead of adding to your commitments, maybe spend some time doing nothing. You don't need to be doing something for somebody because you had nothing planned. You do not have to justify saying no to spending your time in a way you don't want to. Remember how precious your time is and consider if it's good use of your time to say yes right now (or if you want to). When you say you wish you had time for something - is that because you are spending time doing things for people you don't need to do? Then prioritise.

** Prioritise. Know you cannot do everything **

If you attempt to do everything that's asked of you then you will become exhausted and the only disappointment you will see from those asking you to do something is that their task isn't completed. They will not prioritise you.

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**** Anticipate the favour ****

Rather than wait for someone to ask, you can make it easier for yourself by dropping a hint if you feel you are about to be asked to do something. (eg: *"I've got a lot on next week, so I won't be taking on any more."*). Hopefully that stops you even needing to say no at all.

**** Put a boundary on being 'nice' ****

By setting your boundaries so that you know how much you are prepared to take on you can have an idea when to out the brakes on. You can still be super polite without being too nice. If people think you are too nice, they will most certainly try to take advantage. So build that invisible wall. Even if you feel you can only make an excuse (*"I'd like to but I have promised myself some time out this weekend"* etc). Be clear on how much is enough and don't compromise.

Finally ...

- It's better to say no at the first opportunity rather than cancel plans as that just seems unreliable.
- People will learn to respect that if you say yes it's a honour for them not a privilege
- You will gain more respect by holding firm boundaries
- Your body will thank you for less stress and more precious time doing things you choose to do.
- If anyone does not accept 'no' they weren't worth saying yes to.
- Even if it's a close family member, any guilt felt from saying no should be on them for asking. You would do it if it meant you'd enjoy it and have the right time for it. So not doing it won't cause you harm.
- You can always agree to 'think about it'.

Best of luck!