

Three Strategies that make Saying "NO" Easier!



Let's face it, for women one of the most difficult words to say is "NO".

Many of the things people ask of you are things you want to say yes to; good causes, time with friends, time with family, opportunities. **But without a clear idea of when and how to say "no,"** your plate fills up and overflows - overwhelm takes over and **soon your ability to be effective and further what matters most to you, is diluted** and becomes lost in a sea of 'over-doing'.

This guide will show you how to create a simple personal framework that you can refer to whenever you're faced with a new request, or to use in your quest to lighten your load!

My suggestion is to read through this, let it play around in your mind, and then, when you have a little time to yourself, come back, get a piece of paper and create your personal guide for when and how to say "no".

This is your mini plan. Use it for everything, every request big and small, major and minor. Practice on the little ones so that you can confidently identify your position when the big things come up

"Women are on the verge of exhaustion...and yet women keep saying yes to work, to family, to most everything."

- Peggy Drexler, Ph.D.

Strategy 1: REFLECT - Why Do You Say Yes?

Until I answered this question for myself, my “yes” fed something that was missing in my life. My yes's led to busy habits and over time without even realizing it, I created a belief that saying “yes” and being busy made me a better person.

Here are a few reasons I came up with when I was doing this exercise.

I would say yes because:

- I didn't want to miss out (FOMO)
- I wanted to fit in and be accepted.
- I wanted to feel appreciated.
- I felt obligated.

And I would say yes:

- Because ‘helping’ is what you’re supposed to do.
- Because being busy meant I was successful.
- Because I didn’t want to disappoint the person asking.
- Because being asked made me feel important.
- Because I was afraid if I said no, they wouldn’t like me anymore.

What are some of the reasons you say yes? ? We all have different triggers, and identifying yours is a key step in learning how and when to graciously and firmly say 'no.'

Here’s a quote from Vanessa Bohns, Ph.D., Professor of organizational behavior at Cornell University, that illuminates why the "no" is difficult to use: ***“We have an instinctive need for connection to other people – it’s essential to our survival. We worry that saying no will break these bonds.”***

It’s not easy to say no - but it is possible and learning how to say "no" is the first step to saying "yes" to what matters to you.

Now it’s your turn.

Grab a notebook – write this headline down:

These are my reasons why I say ‘yes’...

Strategy 2: PAUSE - Before Responding.

To strengthen your “no” muscles, the next time you are asked to do something, hit your internal pause button and respond with:

“Thank you so much for asking, but I need to check my schedule (or talk this over with my partner) and I’ll get back to you tomorrow.”

This gives you time to do just that – check your schedule and ask yourself these questions:

- If I say yes, will this feed my soul or drain my energy?
- How will this enhance my life?
- Is saying yes fulfilling an unmet need?
- Would a yes, further my mission, or pull me away from what is most important
- If I say yes, will I still have time to make myself a priority?

Now it's your turn.



Clip this and place it in your wallet, on your bathroom mirror, on your nightstand, on your desk – ***somewhere that will serve as a daily reminder.***

“Thank you so much for asking, but I need to check my schedule (or talk this over with my partner) and I’ll get back to you tomorrow.”

- ~ If I say yes, will this feed my soul or drain my energy?
 - ~ How will this enhance my life?
 - ~ Is saying yes fulfilling an unmet need (review your list from step 1)?
 - ~ If I say yes, will I still have time to make myself a priority?
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Strategy 3: RESPECT - *Identify Boundaries that Feel Right.*

This is where your long-range game plan begins, learning as you go, checking in with yourself. Personal boundaries are a way of communicating to others that you respect yourself.

If people don't know where your boundaries are, people will unwittingly take advantage of you. You become the 'yes' girl, the one who gets things done, the one who will "take care of it," and the one to call when everyone else says "no."

Use your energy levels and frustration points to identify where to implement boundaries.

Check in with yourself. Do you cringe when certain people call knowing this means 'work' for you? Are you putting everyone else's needs before your own? Are you expecting someone else to fill your needs automatically? Do you feel guilty when you say 'no'?

Note: To soften the transition for others, you can be gentle with this. Try saying something like "thank you so much for thinking of me for this, but I'm not able to take anything else on right now." Some people will respect your answer and the truth is, some people won't, but that's okay because you made the decision that felt right to you.

As you become better able to communicate with others, relationships improve and you have more control over your own life and your time.

Knowing why you say "yes" helps tremendously with standing your ground and making your well-being a non-negotiable priority!

Now it's your turn.

My suggestion is to go back through this guide and answer the questions to create your own framework for saying "no".



I truly walked my talk—right into a new chapter as an abstract artist! While I'm no longer coaching, I'm happy to recommend a few amazing coaches I know personally. Feel free to visit www.suzycarroll.com to learn more!

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