



How to Say "No" Without Guilt

Say "Yes" to Prioritising You

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Does This Sound Familiar?

You know that sinking feeling when you agree to something you really don't want to do. Suddenly, you're exhausted, overwhelmed, and resentful—but somehow, saying "No" feels even worse.

If that sounds familiar, you might be stuck in the cycle of people-pleasing, putting everyone else's happiness ahead of your own well-being. This guide will help you set boundaries without guilt, so you can finally start putting yourself first

Why Is Saying "No" So Hard?

Saying "Yes" when you mean "No" isn't always about being helpful—it's often an automatic reaction to avoid:

- Disappointing others
- Conflict or rejection
- Feeling guilty for putting yourself first

But here's the thing—these fears pull you off track. They drain your energy and push you to say "Yes" out of obligation, rather than authenticity.

How To Say "No" Without Guilt.

When someone makes a request, pause before responding. They've had time to think about their options—you deserve that same gift of time to gain clarity. Simply ask for a moment to consider their request and assure them you'll get back to them. Taking this moment allows you to be authentic and honour your boundaries. Instead of automatically saying "yes," give yourself space to thoughtfully consider their request.

Friendly Tip:

Saying "No" is easier when you approach it with clarity and confidence. People who are flexible and approachable in conversations, negotiations, and organisation often set boundaries with ease.

But watch out—if someone is rushing you or pushing for an instant answer, that's a red flag! Respectful interactions give you space to make decisions without pressure. Take your time, trust your gut, and say "No" when it feels right. Your boundaries matter!

When Someone Makes A Request...

Pause and reflect, ask yourself:

How does my body respond — do I feel excitement or heaviness?

If I say "yes" when I'd rather say "no," I feel ____.

When I say "Yes," I want others to see me as... (reliable, hardworking, helpful, etc.)

When I say "Yes" to someone else, I am saying "No" to ____ in my own life.

What currently stops me from saying "No"?

My top priorities right now are ____.

Does their request fit with my time, energy, and priorities?

If the request feels heavy, tense, or stressful, it may mean:

You don't have enough information—ask questions before deciding.

If it doesn't feel right for you, respect your boundaries and decline.

Empowering, and respectful way to say "No":

Setting boundaries is a crucial part of maintaining healthy relationships. When declining an offer, the way you structure your response can make all the difference in how it's received.

The common mistake? Leading with appreciation before the refusal—for example, saying "I'd love to, but I can't." The word "but" tends to erase the appreciation, leaving the focus on the rejection.

A more effective approach is to state your "no" clearly first, followed by kindness and appreciation. This allows your boundaries to be respected while maintaining warmth in the conversation.

Practical Ways Of Saying “No”

Examples of Firm but Compassionate “No”:

"I won't be able to, but I truly appreciate the invite!"

"That's not going to work for me, and I'm grateful you thought of me."

"I have to say no this time, but I'm wishing you all the best!"

"I'm not available, but I value our connection and hope it's great!"

Remember, Boundaries create space for the things that truly matter—without guilt or hesitation.

Remember You HAVE the Right to Say "No"

You always have the right to say “No” when:

- It's someone else's issue.
- You feel taken for granted.
- You have priorities ahead of their request.
- It takes away from your values.

You must say "No" when:

- You're stressed or overwhelmed.
- You're tired or sick.
- You don't have time for your own self-care.

It's Okay if Others Feel Uncomfortable

Their discomfort is not your responsibility. If they're disappointed, they have the choice to ask someone else. Saying “No” isn't selfish—it simply means you're honouring your limits. At the end of the day, people want you to show up as your best self, not as someone who's drained or resentful.

Every time you say “No” to something misaligned with your needs, you're actually saying “Yes” to yourself, your future, and your well-being. This is how you build relationships rooted in mutual respect, connection, and understanding.

Saying “No” isn't selfish—it's self-respect in action. And the more you practice, the easier it gets.

Next Steps:



The Struggle to Say "No" Is Not About the Task.

It's deeper than that. It highlights past pains surfacing, calling for attention and healing.

Coaching can help you work through:

- ✓ Disappointing others
- ✓ Fear of conflict or rejection
- ✓ Feeling guilty for putting yourself first

You don't need willpower to say "No"—you need self-trust. When you begin honouring your boundaries, you radiate confidence. Misaligned opportunities stop showing up, and instead, you attract what aligns with your values.

Head held high. Energy restored. You are prioritising YOU.

Feel free to explore the extra essential resources:

[CLAIRE CHANCELLOR WEBSITE](https://clairechancellor.com.au)

Thank you!

clairechancellor.com.au

