

The ability to say no is absolutely liberating. But developing the skill can be difficult for most of us because it requires undoing years of practice to behave differently. Some of us learned that to say no counteracts a lifetime of messages from parents, teachers, bosses, coworkers, family members.

It's worth it however because once you possess the ability to say no with confidence and grace and do so with regularity, you'll notice changes in how others perceive you. They'll have more respect for you, they'll place a greater value on your time, and they'll come to see you as a leader rather than a follower.

Are you an automatic people pleaser? Do you quickly say yes? And is it in opposition to a little voice in your own head? Telling you no, that's not what I want to do. I've got things that are priority that now I have to put on hold. Worse yet, does your voice to say yes, persist and overrule that inner voice about your own needs. Does it cause you to feel resentful when you realize what it's cost to you, and then you've got two jobs rather than the one that belonged to you, and the other guy has pretty much got off scot free thanks to your energy being devoted elsewhere? Are you appreciated? Are you rewarded? Do the people you say yes to compensate you by reciprocating? Have you done this for so long that you've ingrained the habit that you've lost track of your right to put your own mask on 1st? So, you're the one experiencing the deficits. Resentment, fatigue. Crazy schedules. Stress, anxiety. No time for yourself and no energy to enjoy it. Even if you do. Have a little time.

Here's the bad news. You have no one to hold responsible but yourself. It's your voice putting you in any predicament.

Let's find a way to transition out of the trap you've set for yourself.

In the following 15 statements. Listen to them and apply a value from one to five.

Write down one if the statement is completely false as it applies to you. Write down five if the statement describes you to a T.

If a statement is somewhat accurate. Assign values 2, 3 or 4. To measure the extent to which you believe it is valid. Once you've assigned these values to each of the following 15 statements, I want you to tally your score. Your score will reveal how likely you are to abandon your own needs and priorities to accommodate other people.

Here's a 15-question quiz from the art of saying no by Damon Zahariades.

1. I never speak my mind even when I have strong feelings about something.
2. I always feel the need to smile and be overly nice to people even when I'm feeling grumpy.
3. The possibility of conflict terrifies me
4. I immediately feel selfish when I do something for myself
5. I regularly allow friends, coworkers, family members, and sometimes even strangers to violate my personal boundaries.
6. I always tried to be the person others want me to be
7. I regularly sacrificed my emotional happiness to make sure other people are happy
8. I'm fearful of others negative emotions toward me
9. I desperately want to be liked by others.
10. I avoid taking initiative
11. rejection frightens me
12. I overanalyze every decision, concerned with how my decisions will cause others to react
13. Emotionally, when I received positive feedback and crumble into despair. When I received negative feedback
14. I am convinced everybody is good. Even when an individual is abusive and emotionally manipulative toward me
15. saying no fills me with an immediate sense of dread.

If you scored 15 to 30 points. You have little difficulty saying, no, you make judicious decisions regarding how to use your time and other resources and remain resolute when others disparage those decisions. Meeting your obligations, addressing your responsibilities, and caring for your own happiness have a higher priority than pleasing people.

If you scored 31 to 45 points, you sometimes feel conflicted when pursuing your personal and or professional goals, knowing you could be helping others realize theirs. Saying no isn't a major problem for you and you often decline requests. Out of necessity. Nevertheless, you say yes, more often than you'd like

If you scored 46 to 60 points, you're driven to please people, even if you're not consciously aware of it. You've you're highly averse to conflict, and you go to great lengths to avoid it. When confronted with another's anger, irritation, distress, or displeasure, you immediately drop what you're doing to rescue that person. Rescuing him or her usually entails surrendering to the individual's requests

If you scored 61 to 75 points. Everything you do from the moment you wake up is geared toward making other people happy. You rarely consider your own happiness and are willing to set aside your own goals and responsibilities to accommodate others. You maintain, no personal boundaries, allowing people to intrude upon you. The idea of saying no is unimaginable, since doing so might negatively affect others. You are, In effect, chronic people pleaser.