

Make peace: learning the power of saying no

Expectations are high during the holiday season.

Parties for work and fun, get-togethers with friends, kids' pageants, family obligations and events all conspire to take our time. Plus there are all the related activities—gift buying, cookie making, concert going, meal preparing and more! It's a wonder anyone makes it through the holiday season intact. For those who tend to become tired and depleted, holiday cheer can quickly become holiday fear.

The secret to saving yourself and your holiday sanity? Learn to say no.

Make yourself a priority

We all have groups we belong to—friends, family, work colleagues, workout buddies and so on. These may all be important to you in different ways. You make time for them, you may make sacrifices for them and you probably have put them first from time to time. While you do this willingly, each time you put someone or something first, you're bumping yourself down the list. The more you repeat these behaviors, the lower you drop on your list of priorities.

Stop the cycle by giving yourself permission to put yourself first.

When someone makes a request of you, ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I have the time to give?
2. Do I have the capacity—mentally, emotionally, financially?
3. Will this add value or meaning and give me joy?

If you answer "No" to any of these questions, it's time to **say "Yes" to you.**

Answers on demand

It sounds simple to say no, but it's not always that easy. Rely on these responses until you get the hang of saying no. Practice reciting them until they roll off your tongue.

1. **I don't have the bandwidth right now.**
   Busy times call for boundaries.
2. **I won't be able to give it the attention it deserves.**
   Stressing the importance of the ask will make the asker feel better.
3. **I have too much on my plate right now.**
   Everyone understands how awful it feels to be overextended.
4. **Let me check my calendar and get back to you.**
   It buys you time to bolster your confidence to say no.
5. **I appreciate the invite/you thinking of me, but I need to pass.**
   Starting with gratitude makes everyone feel good.
6. **I can't take on anything new.**
   It's as simple as saying no, but in other words.
7. **I'm feeling maxed out and need downtime.**
   Honesty works. No one can fault how you feel.
8. **I'm prioritizing my health right now.**
   Works best when saying no to dessert, unhealthy foods or alcohol-based drinks you don't want.

Saying no is an act of self-care.[1] You shouldn't ever feel bad about making yourself a priority. You're the only one who can do that.

And remember that **"No"** is a complete sentence. You matter, your needs matter and your energy matters.

Learn how Teladoc Health can help support you on your wellness journey. To sign up or learn more, go to TeladocHealth.com/smile/STATEOFIOWA.

https://www.teladochealth.com/library/article/make-yourself-a-priority-learn-to-say-no
[1]https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mind-matters-from-menninger/202111/the-power-of-saying-no

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