



# Communication

How do I say NO  
to what I don't  
want and  
YES to what I do?



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## Hello there!

Thank you very much for sharing your email.

Communication can be tricky sometimes, so I'm sharing material from my Mastering Boundaries course.

Saying No can be one of the hardest things to say, especially when it is a friend or family member. For example, saying no to a teenager to staying out late or saying no to a friend that they can't come over because you are too tired. Sometimes, it's about standing up for yourself; at work, asking your boss not to call you in the evening after 6pm.

I suggest you read through the material and then complete the exercises.

I hope you learn some things about yourself through this information and can use some of them in your life.

Warmly,

*Allison*



# Different ways to communicate

## Why is it a struggle to say No?

**Guilt** - we feel guilty because we think it's

- unacceptable to say no or
- maybe seen as rude or mean or
- we feel like we've done something wrong.

**Other struggles:**

- fear of the consequences
- feel the pressure; don't have a choice
- don't want to seem lazy
- worried there will be regret
- like to be helpful and please others
- like to be liked

Put yourself in the other person's shoes when you're choosing how to communicate.

**Consequences such as:**

- missing out on something or
- disappointing people so

saying yes is much easier!

## TOP TIPS:

- Put yourself in the other person's shoes when you need to say something. Then, consider how they may react.
- Use warm-up language for clarity and honesty: 'Look, I've realised I need to put more boundaries in my life, so this time, I need to say ....'
- A great way to open up a conversation about any issue - 'Do you remember the other day when you said.....I felt hurt.....'
- A question is helpful when you feel strongly about what someone said. This will give you time to clarify what was said and decide how to respond.

# My Experience of Saying No

Choose an occasion you said yes when you wanted to say no



What were the consequences of saying Yes when you wanted to say No?



What do you think would have happened if you'd said No?



Do you know that for sure or are you assuming?



Right now, what do you need to say No to?



# How to say NO!

No

No thanks

Not this time, but if you go to the ballet again, could you ask me next time?

I appreciate you asking, but not this time.

No, but I will call you later to set up another time.

I'm drained and have had a big week. I would have loved to attend your party but must look after myself tonight.

I find it hard to say No, but I must this time.

## The impact when we keep saying yes creates:

- ongoing anxiety
- anxiety that you are doing something extra for someone and don't have the time;
- overwhelm
- feel overbooked
- the inability to be present
- faking enjoying yourself when you aren't
- relationships, friends or intimate, lasting much longer than they should because you don't want to hurt them

Overall a lack of enjoyment because you are likely not doing what you enjoy.

## "No. Is A Complete Sentence."

- Anne Lamont

# WHAT do I say and HOW do I say it?

We can say what we mean to say. We can gently but assertively speak our minds. We do not need to be judgemental, tactless, blaming or cruel when we speak our truths."

- Melody Beattie



## When you're tired

Oh, that would be fantastic, but I'm exhausted now. I would love to do that with you next time.

I don't want to go out at 8.00pm as I'm too tired.



## At Work

I won't answer my phone for the rest of the day when I leave work.

I'm not sure. I'll need to look over my schedule.

I'm available between 1pm and 5pm that day.

What is the level of urgency for this piece of work?

That deadline is tight; it's unlikely I will complete it, but I will keep you informed as I go and see if the deadline can be achieved.

I'd like to discuss my salary. I've done market research, which tells me my role is worth x. I earn 5,000 less than that. You've told me my performance is excellent and I also undertake these other duties. I believe I am worth the increase.



## Managing your Time

I can't talk in the evening between 5pm and 7 pm as that's our dinner time, but happy to speak between 7pm and 9 pm.

Thanks for calling, but I'm focused on work right now, so I don't have time for a cuppa; how about next week?



## Family

Please switch on the dishwasher when it's complete.

A friend noticed her mother was yelling at her children to gain their attention, but this was pushing them away. So, she suggested a different way of communicating. She said: I know you want this job done, Mum, but people don't respond well if you yell at them, and I suggest that it would be better to say, "I'm feeling frustrated, and I need your help."



## Friends

This sounds important what you want to talk about, how about you vent for 15 minutes and then we can talk about something else?

Unfortunately, I can't help you move this weekend.

I've realised I need to put more boundaries in my life, so this time I need to say no....

I'm drained I won't be able to make that party.

You know last week you left me waiting 20 minutes for you in the pub. It was awful. I was alone, and people were looking at me. Next time could you call or text beforehand if you're going to be late?

Hey, girlfriend, last night you were late again for our meet-up and didn't text me. So next time you're late, and you don't let me know I'm going to leave after 10 minutes.



## Hairdresser

Oh that hurts could you just lighten your touch?



### Partner

No, I couldn't say I like that plant for the garden. I'm not sure what I want; I will think about it and talk to you in a couple of days.

I would like to have a financial buffer. So I would like to save some money in a separate account.

I love to dance, and I know you're not keen, but I wanted to try out the new dance studio on Thursday night. Can we also think of something that we both like to do together?

I need to look after my body, and I find Yoga is fantastic for this, so would you be able to drop the kids at school for two days of the week?



### Restaurants

- Excuse me can I check, was this what I ordered or did I order the lamb?
- My food is cold could you do something about that please?

“You get what you tolerate.”  
-Henry Cloud

# Saying No

Tick the ones you like in each area, and write others below that you think of.

## Using a straight No

- No, no thanks
- Thanks for thinking of me
- Not for me but all the best for your fundraising
- Thank you for the invitation, but I'm unable to make it this time
- I can't make it but have fun



## No, and a bit more

- No, I can't stay late tonight; that doesn't work for me; I've made promises to other people
- That movie doesn't interest me
- So sorry I can't attend, but I will be cheering you on
- Tuesday at 6pm? Ah, no I can't do that, but I appreciate you including me



## A No for now

- No, not this time
- I just don't have time this week
- I wish I could, but I can't make that date but would love to another time
- I'm just really busy. I can't take that on this week but check with me next week
- I don't have any money right now to spend on nice things, so sorry I can't go to the spa with you
- Such a lovely dinner invite, but my week is full, and I need some time at home



### The No, but what about this

I don't water ski, but I love the beach, so how about we...

Coffee at 10 is tricky, but I can do the afternoon at 2pm?



### Giving yourself time No

I need to think about that

Let me think about that

I'm not sure if that works will get back to you tomorrow



### A No when someone asks you a favour

Sorry, I'm swamped right now

I can't help you this time

Just can't right now

Oh no! That's the same day as my orthodontist appointment!



### When you ask someone for a favour

Add no pressure to an invite

Begin with, 'I understand if you can't help me with this....'



# Top Tools to say NO!

## #1 Use the AND

In saying no to something, we get worried that we might not be liked, feel like we're closing the door on an opportunity or fear missing out - FOMO.

Try looking at this differently. How about making peace with your no?

By saying No to something, you are saying Yes to something else, yourself!

So it's not a No with a full stop; it's a No to going to the party AND a Yes to an evening alone with your loved one or yourself, putting yourself first and what you need.

## #2

### Use the I

Using the I ensures that you aren't blaming the other person. While saying 'you' can be interpreted as finger-pointing and aggressive. When you speak from your perspective, they can choose to accept or not, but you're stating clearly what is essential to you.

For instance, "I feel intruded upon when you come over without an invitation" or "I'd appreciate it if you would call before you pop over."

## #3 Take the Time

If in the moment, someone is inviting you to something, and you need time to decide, or you know you want to say no but yes is on your lips, a useful response is something simple like this -

"I'll have to think about that let me get back to you."

## #4 Self First

As a giver, I've had to learn this over and over again to put myself first. When I do, I can give wholeheartedly. Here are some tricks I've learned:

- When I have enough time to do what I enjoy, then I have the emotional space to go out to a party or have lunch with a friend. I know that when I'm feeling overwhelmed, I have to pull back and focus on what I need and reduce people time. By doing less, I can be more present and giving.
- Identifying what I enjoy. Is it movies, and if so, what sort of movies? Is it the symphony, is it dancing, is it watching rugby? Once I knew what I enjoyed, I could more easily discern what I wanted to do if asked to attend an event or occasion.

# Top Tools to say NO cont'd

#5

## Spending too much time trying to be "nice"

In trying to say no, we can spend much time trying to work out how to say something so that we don't disappoint or offend others.

Or if we are offended, justify not speaking up by saying to ourselves "Ah well, she didn't mean it", or "I'm just overreacting."

Does being "nice" mean having to say Yes?

The qualities that assist us in contributing to the world, like empathy, compassion, love, drive to achieve, solving problems, helping, and caring for others, can also get us in trouble.

These charming aspects of our personality often have us saying yes to far too much.

Somehow, we always come last on the list and drain the tank, so there's nothing left for ourselves. So then we get more resentful!  
This is where making yourself the priority is key.

#6

## Choose how

When you set a boundary, choose how you will do this. There are several options depending on the circumstances:

- Silence
- Humour
- Moving away from the person
- Writing a letter
- Confrontation
- Honest conversation by phone or face-to-face

Assess the situation to select your appropriate response.

Where you are, who you are with, and perhaps the age of the people involved (teens are much less aware than adults).

Sometimes, silence is the better way to go if saying nothing avoids a colossal confrontation. Sometimes, writing a letter is the only way to communicate your thoughts.

Sometimes, physically moving away from the person in the room is the best option.

Choose a way that comes from a place of compassion, a place of strength in you but not overpowering and pushy.

# TOP Tools to say NO! (cont'd)

#7

## Compassion creates better boundaries

Brené Brown found that one of the most surprising results of her research is that the most compassionate people have the most boundaries.

"Boundaries make generosity possible," says Brene.

Is that so, I hear you say?

She means that if we put boundaries in place, we can focus on what we want rather than wasting time on what people aren't doing and getting upset about it. We have much more space for compassion, giving to others, or managing the daily grind that sometimes life is.

Brene asked her husband, "What if people are doing the best they can?" He answered, "I'll never know if people are doing the best they can or not, but when I assume people are, it makes life better."

Interesting perspective!

At the very least, if we can make clear our limits, make clear to someone what we expect and how we like to be treated, coming from a place that someone knows no better, then we can create the space to enjoy life wholeheartedly.

### What about when you ask someone for a favour?

We have to accept others saying no to us.

Ask by all means, but know it could be a no!

You could add a 'no pressure' to an invite or begin with, "I understand if you can't help me with this."

When you get turned down for a pay rise or someone not attending your party or going shopping with you, make sure you accept with grace.

### The Golden Rule

'do unto others as we would have them do unto us.'

This simple saying brings together what has been discussed here.

Treat others in the way you would want to be treated.

Consider how you would like it conveyed when setting or communicating a boundary. This isn't always easy to follow. But if we can honour others, then we also honour ourselves.