



ANGEL'S FRIENDLY COACHING

Saying No



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Saying No

It's not mean, or disrespectful to think about yourself first. It's OK to say no if you'd rather stay home and cuddle up rather than going out with friends. It's OK to say no if you're tired. It's OK to say no without a detailed excuse.

It's OK to say no if you don't feel moved by an opportunity—no matter how exciting it might sound to someone else. Happiness is a choice, but it's made up of lots of smaller choices we need to make based on what we actually want.

It's OK to say no if you'd rather relax than go out—no matter how many other people think you should be social. Only we know when we need to recharge and take care of ourselves, so it's up to us to recognize and honor that.

It's OK to say no if you'd need to sacrifice your needs to help someone else—even if a part of you feels a little guilty about it. People are always going to have requests. Sometimes we'll be able to help; sometimes we won't. We're still good people regardless.

It's OK to say no because you don't have time—even if you don't know right in this moment when you'll be more available. We're allowed to say no without hinting toward a future yes.

It's OK to say no without a detailed excuse—even if you feel like you should offer one. "This doesn't feel right for me right now" is a perfectly valid reason.

Lastly, it's OK to say no even if you've already said yes, if you realize you weren't being true to yourself. It's far better to make the right decision late than follow through with the wrong one because you think you should.

One of the most powerful things I've done in my life lately was to say "no" to a potentially lucrative client who was not aligned with my values nor appreciative of the value that I have to offer. Standing strong on the principles that I believe in was a real personal victory for me in my journey toward my vision. It was also a relief (a good sign) to detach from this "difficult personality."

WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO SAY NO?

We are people pleasers. I want them to be happy. I want to be the one to make them happy. We are afraid of confrontation. If I say no there is going to be conflict. We feel guilty. If I don't agree to do this thing for this person I love I'm a terrible person. There could be ramifications. My boss asked me to do this extra work for them when I have a full plate already and John over there has nothing but time. I can't say no because it will look like I'm not part of the team or doing my job well. Fear of rejection. If I don't do this for them, they just may not like me anymore. Feeling of responsibility. If I don't do this, who will. The examples above are very minimal when it comes to why it can be difficult for us to say no. There are so many reasons, everyone has a story, and it's all individual. But, it's pretty universal when it comes to how important it is to learn to say no.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE NEVER SAY NO?

When we are continually saying yes and prioritizing other people's needs over our own, something shifts inside of us and the following can happen: We can easily become enablers. If we start taking over the responsibilities of someone dependent on us, who really needs to take care of them, we're not doing anyone any favors. We can lose focus. Saying yes all of the time gets overwhelming and that can lead to us becoming unfocused. When we're unfocused, balance goes right out the window. We must decide what takes priority. We can get taken for granted. Sometimes the people in our life are used to us cleaning up their messes, or doing everything for them. It may not be a spiteful thing, but if we are always there to take charge of their baggage, they start to expect it. We become unavailable to say YES to important things. If we're always doing things for others, we may miss out on something really good for ourselves. Our feelings can become invalid. We take everyone else's thoughts, feelings, and views above our own.

HOW DO WE START TO SAY NO?

This is the hard part. If we have been saying yes to everyone for a really long time, it's not going to be easy to just start saying no right away. The best way to do this is to become more assertive. I know what you're thinking, "I've heard this before." I'm completely serious about this. Being assertive has absolutely nothing to do with being aggressive; some people get the two confused. When you are assertive, you are getting your feelings and points across to the other person (or people) in a clear and concise manner, without attacking them.

Here are a few tips to get you going on becoming more assertive:

- **Be sincere**
- **Establish clear boundaries**
- **Be receptive**
- **Be willing and open to compromise**

Listen Use "I" statements instead of "You" statements Assertiveness falls between passive and aggressive. It's all about establishing boundaries, which is very difficult, but so healthy. If you want to live a healthier and happier life, learn to say no if it doesn't suit you. Of course you're going to help the people you love. Of course you're going to do your hardest at work. Of course you're going to make people happy. That is not what I'm talking about, well not completely. What I'm saying is that when you're never saying no, and always overextending yourself for everyone else, eventually it will come back to you in a negative way. Saying no isn't a bad thing. Taking care of yourself, and saying YES to you is healthy and good and full of promise. Let go of the feelings of guilt. That takes us right back to my last blog, Me Time Is Not Selfish Time, maybe if you say no a little more often, you can find some extra time for YOU. Like anything new the more you do it, the easier it will become, and it is always a choice that you have to make for yourself.