



7 Ways to Save Room for a Bigger YES

"You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage--pleasantly, smilingly, nonapologetically--to say 'no' to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger 'yes' burning inside. The enemy of the 'best' is often the 'good.'"

Stephen Covey

One of the hardest lessons I've had to learn on my self-care journey is how to say no.

I was recently approached by a group of friends and asked to be in charge of a fundraiser at the church my husband and I recently started going to.

This request triggered all kinds of things:

- Not wanting to say no when our church badly needs some additional money
- My desire to please everyone
- Worry that my newly acquired group of friends would be angry and stop including me in their fun

And I knew I could make it successful if I wanted to. But...I DIDN'T want to. So, I graciously, but politely said I couldn't take on any additional projects right now. And guess what? The world did not stop spinning, nor did I lose any friends!

Here are some tips you can use to say "NO" and keep space for the greater, bigger "YESSES" in your life:

- Keep your response simple. If you want to say no, be firm, direct and don't overexplain. Learn the language of "No." Use phrases such as "Thanks for asking me, but I'm afraid it's not convenient right now" or "Thanks for thinking of me, but I can't help this evening."
- Buy yourself some time if you need to. Interrupt the 'yes' cycle, using phrases like "I'll get back to you," then consider your options. Having time to think a through a request without pressure will give you the ability to say no with greater confidence.

- Consider a compromise. Only do this if you WANT to agree with the request, but have limited time or ability to do so. Don't compromise if you really want or need to say no.
- Separate refusal from rejection. Remember you're turning down a request, not a person. People usually will understand that it is your right to say no, just as it is their right to ask the favor. If the person interprets your "no" as rejection, that's their stuff, not yours.
- Don't feel guilty for saying no to your children. It is important for them to hear no from time to time so that they develop a sense of self-control. It's hard to negotiate adult life without this important skill. Let them know who is in charge by setting boundaries.
- Live by Cheryl Richardson's mantra "If it's not an absolute yes, it's a no."
- Practice.....like any other skill, it gets easier the more you do it.

Challenge yourself this week. If you normally say yes to *everything*, pick one or two things to say no to. Notice how you feel and what comes up. You're likely to find there's minimal impact on the person you say no to...but the feeling of success YOU'LL have will be huge!