

NO IS NOT A FOUR-LETTER WORD

Guard

YOUR YES

THE GUIDEBOOK

BEGIN THE JOURNEY
TO SAYING NO, SETTING BOUNDARIES,
AND STAYING SANE

RENÉ BROOKS

Get ready for a journey

I don't know about you, but I really enjoy when the people who are doing life beside me are happy. This includes friends, coworkers, partners, and all the people I care for.

Yet, over time I noticed something. The more I said yes, the more times the people in my life asked me for things, things I didn't always have time or space for. Because I said yes so often, I was overwhelmed. My life and my energy were being consumed by things I didn't care about. I was burdened by obligations that were not mine in the first place. Then I was unhappy. I had to figure out how to say no, set boundaries, and still feel good.

Learning to guard your yes is a journey. During that journey, you'll unpack the things you don't need and load some new tools for the trip. You'll grow clear about what you do and don't want. Get ready for the ride.

René Brooks

author | blogger | coach



What is guarding your yes?

Guarding your yes is simple in principle, difficult in practice. Basically, your yes is under attack, and you've got to protect it. Saying yes to well-meaning people, pushy people, and, not surprisingly, you yourself can drown you in obligations. All of this can lead to overwhelm, over-scheduling, and general misery. The problem is, most of us don't know the first thing about saying no.

GUARDING YOUR YES IS NOT:

- Being mean - Many of us say yes in an effort not to be unkind. Being direct IS being kind.
- Selfishness - You are allowed to say no when you truly don't want something. That's not selfishness.
- Irresponsibility - We don't have to involve ourselves in every task or trouble someone has to prove ourselves responsible. Managing one's time IS responsible.



Stop saying yes to everything!

Your Favorite Yes

SOMETIMES WE SAY YES EVEN IF WE DON'T WANT TO. DO YOU SEE ANY OF YOUR FAVORITE REASONS? CIRCLE THE ONES THAT GIVE YOU THE MOST TROUBLE.

PEOPLE PLEASING

Saying yes to people makes us and them feel good, but it can bite us in the butt later

FEAR OF MISSING OUT

We don't want to miss the cool activity/opportunity we're being offered.

IMPULSIVITY

Sometimes we say yes before we realize we can't and feel too ashamed to take it back.

EXCITEMENT

Excitement over new things makes for a dopamine boost!

NO KNOWLEDGE OF SCHEDULE

We have no idea how busy we are. We just want to be involved, so we say yes.

GENUINE INTEREST

We are genuinely interested in what's being offered, but don't plan well for it.

What happens when you say yes too often?

Rest Stop

WHAT IS SAYING YES COSTING YOU?

Saying yes to so many things means that we end up saying no to things we care about. What have you had to say no to that you'll get back by guarding your yes in the future? Use this "rest stop" to list what you'll regain.



NO

the two-letter word we treat like a four-letter word

Four-letter words are swear words in many languages. You know, the kind of word that might make your mom wash your mouth out with soap. The kind of words we treat as vile, nasty, and vulgar.

Many of us treat saying and hearing the word no like using a four letter word. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Sometimes we fear no because we're afraid of being disliked. Sometimes we feel like we're passing up an opportunity that won't come around again. Other times, we just want badly to get involved.

Whatever the reason for your no, remember that it is not a nasty swear word, but a word that you can use to protect your time, energy and schedule from getting out of control.

How do YOU say no?

INSTRUCTIONS: Here's your chance to put it into practice. Say no to these three scenarios. Write your answers in the action steps columns. How does it feel to say no to these questions?

"I'M IN A TERRIBLE JAM, AND I NEED SOMEONE TO WALK MY DOGS"

You're busy that day, but you feel guilty because they really need help. How do you say no?

ACTION STEPS:

1:

2:

3:

"I KNOW YOU'RE BUSY, BUT COULD YOU HELP ME WITH ONE LITTLE THING?"

This person's little things always turn into big problems, and you are overwhelmed with your current schedule. Say no!

ACTION STEPS:

1:

2:

3:

"REMEMBER WHEN I HELPED YOU? I NEED A FAVOR."

They are asking you to do something you don't want to do at all, but you feel guilty. How do you say no?

ACTION STEPS:

1:

2:

3:

Rest Stop

WHO CAN'T YOU SAY NO TO?

No matter how much they dread it, everyone has one person who they never say no to. Every time they try, guilt and shame overwhelm them. Write a letter to the person you wish you could say no to, and tell them why you want to be free of your obligation to them for good.

STOP WAITING TO SET THE BOUNDARY

We often hold off on setting boundaries with people believing they will take the hint or take mercy on us. Neither of those things ever happen, so set the boundary now.

Sometimes people ask us to do things because they know we'll say yes, no matter how inconvenient it is for us. These people have issues with boundaries. We also have issues with boundaries. This does not make for a good combination.

Setting boundaries with people is just another way of guarding your yes. When you know what your boundaries are, you are able to clearly define when you should say no.

Expect some resistance when you begin setting boundaries. People who have been used to you saying yes for years really don't like it when you start saying no.

Remember, the way someone handles you saying no to them is NOT your responsibility to manage. Guilt trips, shaming, and retribution should be noted as a red flag.

The longer you wait to set your boundaries, the harder it will be.



BUILDING YOUR BOUNDARIES

NAME THREE BOUNDARIES YOU HAVE THAT ARE BEING VIOLATED

- _____
- _____
- _____

WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DO BOUNDARY ISSUES AFFECT MOST?

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

HOW WOULD IMPROVING YOUR BOUNDARIES FEEL?

Rest Stop

RELEASE THE FEAR OF BOUNDARY SETTING

Setting boundaries can feel incredibly frightening for some of us. We're afraid of a scene, of the consequences, of being hurt. In this section, share your worst worries about setting boundaries here. Release those fears for good.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR OWN SCHEDULE?



Many of us give out our yes like it is candy, mainly because we aren't aware of what we're actually SUPPOSED to be doing with that time. A big part of the overwhelm we feel can come from overbooking or packing our schedules so tight with commitments that we can barely breathe.

A big part of guarding your yes will be learning what your schedule is. This will help you determine what you can and can't do.

This also assumes that you know your limitations. Sometimes we overcommit because we just don't know how much time something takes or how much energy we need to complete it. If that's you, consider reading my "Tackling Your Time Perception Challenges" workbook. It can help with these types of time problems.

Creating a Pause

If we don't create a pause before we say yes, we can cause ourselves serious scheduling issues.

Try these suggestions to give yourself some space

"LET ME TAKE A LOOK AT MY SCHEDULE"

You'll know your schedule and will be able to evaluate if you can spend the time on this project.

Reduces chances of overbooking.

"I LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS. LET ME MAKE SURE I CAN COMMIT"

Affirms that you like their idea

Reminds you to be aware of the length of a project instead of only looking at availability

"I NEED TO MAKE SURE THIS IS A GOOD FIT"

Using this routinely can protect you from impulsive commitments.

It's a reminder for you to consider your own desires as well as those of the person making the request.

"I'LL HAVE AN ANSWER FOR YOU BY THIS DAY"

Buys you time for consideration

Gives them a deadline so they don't feel blown off

Rest Stop

HOW WOULD IT FEEL TO HAVE CONTROL
OVER YOUR TIME AGAIN?

Being overwhelmed by your schedule because of commitments and obligations you shouldn't have gotten into can breed resentment in your life. How would it feel to have your time be yours again? Use this space to talk about taking control

"Say no scripts" to guard your yes

COMPLIMENTING THE IDEA

"Thank you for offering me such an incredible opportunity; unfortunately I can't help with it at this time. You are going to do wonderful things; I wish you the best of luck.

SO REGRETTABLY BUSY

"I really wish I had known about this activity before my schedule filled up. Please keep me in mind for the future."

IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S ME

"You know, I'm honored that you thought of me, but this just isn't an area I'm skilled in."

ALTERNATIVE OFFER

"I'm not able to do this particular thing for you, but I would love to lend a hand. Could I do THIS for you instead?"

NEXT STEPS

Tailor these suggestions to your specific scenario. Before you know it, your favorites will become second nature, and you'll be ready to use them at a moment's notice.

PEOPLE I HAVE DIFFICULTY GUARDING MY YES WITH

INSTRUCTIONS: We do our best, but with some people it is difficult to guard your yes. Who do you have difficulty guarding your yes with? Create a 'say no script' in the "ways to guard my yes" section.



NAME:

RELATIONSHIP:

WHAT DO THEY ASK ME FOR?:

WHY DO I SAY YES?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY YES?

WAYS TO GUARD MY YES:

PEOPLE I HAVE DIFFICULTY GUARDING MY YES WITH - #2

INSTRUCTIONS: We do our best, but with some people it is difficult to guard your yes. Who do you have difficulty guarding your yes with? Create a 'say no script' in the "ways to guard my yes" section.



NAME:

RELATIONSHIP:

WHAT DO THEY ASK ME FOR?:

WHY DO I SAY YES?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY YES?

WAYS TO GUARD MY YES:

Rest Stop

DIGGING IN YOUR HEELS AND
STANDING FIRM

People will push your boundaries and put you in tight spots if you're not cautious. In order to protect that boundary you have to get stubborn. Dig your heels in; stand firm. How would it feel to have a boundary you don't budge on?

SITUATIONS I HAVE DIFFICULTY GUARDING MY YES IN

INSTRUCTIONS: Stressful situations can put pressure on us. What situations do you have difficulty guarding your yes in? Talk about here, and come up with a method to reduce the pressure in the "ways to guard my yes" section.



SITUATION:

IS IT LOCATION SPECIFIC?:

WHY DO I SAY YES:

CAN I AVOID THIS SITUATION:

WAYS TO GUARD MY YES:

SITUATIONS I HAVE DIFFICULTY GUARDING MY YES IN #2

INSTRUCTIONS: Stressful situations can put pressure on us. What situations do you have difficulty guarding your yes in? Talk about it here, and come up with a method to reduce the pressure in the "ways to guard my yes" section.



SITUATION:

IS IT LOCATION SPECIFIC?:

WHY DO I SAY YES:

CAN I AVOID THIS SITUATION:

WAYS TO GUARD MY YES:

Affirmations for guarding your yes

#1

I am conscious of my needs and obligations and monitor my commitments carefully.

#2

I am valuable; therefore, I protect my time and energy.

#3

I set strong boundaries and enforce them well.

#4

I am gentle with myself and respect my right to say no.



You made it!

There are many things in life that are simple, but not easy. Guarding your yes is absolutely one of those things. If you've made it this far, you've taken a step towards taking back your yes for good. This is a step in the right direction, even though some of the reactions you'll get may make you wonder if you've completely gone off the mark.

Remember, as you go on this journey that you are able to endure. You know what awaits you on the other side of saying yes too many times: overwhelm, disappointment, and frustration. Aren't you tired of feeling that way?

What does the future hold for you? I have no crystal ball, but I see a future in which you feel more in command of your life. A life that belongs to you versus being a mashup of obligations and favors that mean nothing to you. Remember, when you guard your yes, you leave yourself space to say yes to the most important person: you.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO GUARD YOUR YES

You've arrived

WHAT WILL CHANGE FOR YOU?

Will you be better guarding your yes in the future? Where will you begin? Talk about three ways to begin guarding your yes here.

Official "Guard Your Yes" Gear



Guard Your Yes

For many of us, it is easy to get caught in the trap of saying yes and getting ourselves into trouble. We find ourselves overwhelmed, burnt out and frustrated. It is...

BGLK Store / René Brooks / \$20

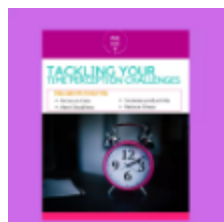


Guard Your Yes Stickers

Stickers are meant to make a statement, and with this sticker you're stating that...

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STRUGGLING WITH TIME? TRY THIS WORKBOOK



Tackling Your Time Perception Challenges Workbook

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Thank you for Reading!



Black Girl.
Lost Keys.

EDUCATING AND MOTIVATING
WOMEN WITH ADHD

DID YOU ENJOY THIS WORKBOOK?

Would you like one on
on help, tailored to
your specific needs?

Consider coaching!

Every day I help my clients to attack their biggest ADHD hurdles, while overcoming the negative self image that years of exposure to stigma and lack of understanding can bring. If that sounds great, to you, book your consult today: <http://bit.ly/consultwithrene>

