

HOW TO BREAK FREE FROM PEOPLE PLEASING

A step-by-step guide
to stop the people pleasing cycle
and start respecting yourself

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Hello and Welcome!

Do you find yourself saying yes to every request, even when you're overwhelmed or don't want to do something? This habit of people-pleasing may be more problematic than you realize.

As long as I could remember, I always wanted to make others happy. I would go out of my way to accommodate others, even if it meant neglecting my own needs and desires. I would say "yes" to everything, avoid conflict, and feel guilty for saying "no." It wasn't until I realized the negative impact of people-pleasing on my life and relationships that I knew I had to break the cycle.

Growing up, I was taught to prioritize the happiness and approval of others over my own needs. Cultural and societal influences also reinforced the idea that being selfless and accommodating was a positive trait. However, this behavior led to a lack of boundaries and a sense of resentment towards those I was trying to please.

THE PROBLEM WITH PEOPLE PLEASING

While people-pleasing can have positive effects, such as building stronger relationships and gaining recognition, it can also have negative effects. For instance, it can lead to burnout, anxiety, and a lack of self-worth. In my personal and professional life, people-pleasing resulted in overcommitment, a lack of direction, and a loss of authenticity.

To break the cycle of people-pleasing, I had to identify my triggers, set boundaries, practice self-care, and seek support. I had to learn to say "no" in a kind and respectful way, prioritize my own needs, and communicate my boundaries clearly. It wasn't easy, but the more I practiced, the more confident and assertive I became.

If you find yourself struggling with people-pleasing, remember that it's okay to prioritize your own well-being. Take the time to identify your triggers, set boundaries, and practice self-care. Seek support from loved ones or a therapist who can provide validation, guidance, and accountability. Remember, taking care of yourself is not selfish, it's self-care, and it's necessary for a healthy and fulfilling life.



YES. / NO

PEOPLE-PLEASER CHECKLIST

As you read each question, simply mark "yes" if you agree or "No" if you disagree with the following statements. The more that you agree, the more problematic people-pleasing is for you.

01	Do you pretend to agree with others, rather than expressing your true point of view?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
02	Do you over-explain yourself and constantly apologize, even when it's not necessary?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
03	Do you constantly feel overwhelmed or taken advantage of by others?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
04	Do you find it uncomfortable to accept credit or compliments?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
05	Do you feel uncomfortable with the thought of someone being upset with you?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
06	Do you always say yes to others and overcommit to things?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
07	Do you go to great lengths to avoid conflict or confrontation with others?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
08	Do you feel the need to please others and be liked by everyone?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

8 STEP PROCESS

01

STEP ONE

Identify People-Pleasing Behaviors

The first step to stop people-pleasing is to recognize your own behaviors. Do you say yes to everything? Avoid conflict? Feel guilty for saying no? Identify your tendencies to better understand how to change them.

02

STEP TWO

Set Boundaries

Setting boundaries is essential for prioritizing your own needs and expectations. It's okay to say "no" and establish limits on what you're willing to do. Communicate your boundaries clearly and respectfully, and stick to them.

03

STEP THREE

Create Decline Scripts

To decline invitations or commitments in a polite and respectful manner, write scripts for common situations where you need to say no.

04

STEP FOUR

Determine Values

Identify your core values (ie: family, spirituality, health, wealth, honesty, etc.) and priorities to guide your decision-making. This will make it easier to say no to requests that don't align with your values.

8 STEP PROCESS

05

STEP FIVE

Practice Saying No

Remember No is not a bad word. Practice saying no in a confident and assertive manner. Use your scripts and focus on your values and priorities to help you feel more comfortable.

06

STEP SIX

Take a Break

Stop volunteering for more responsibilities or activities until you have a handle on your true availability and priorities. This will give you time to focus on self-care and setting boundaries.

07

STEP SEVEN

Evaluate and Celebrate

Evaluate how you feel after saying no and celebrate your wins towards healthier boundaries. Recognize that it's okay to prioritize your own needs and expectations.

08

STEP EIGHT

Disappointing Others

Even when you set out to please everyone, it is impossible. You are more important than any obligation or commitment. If you need to spend some time alone, do so without apologizing or feeling guilty about it. In Dr. Seuss's words: *"Those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind."*

7 DAY HABIT TRACKER

Keeping track of your people pleasing habits can help increase your awareness. Use this tracker for the next seven days to fill out the eight steps and mark them off each day you successfully complete them.

Week of: _____

Habit / Steps to Stop People Pleasing

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

(S)

(M)

(T)

(W)

(T)

(F)

(S)

☐☐

Reflection Notes

SAMPLE DECLINE SCRIPTS

Preparing ways to say no with kindness can help prevent over-committing yourself and resentment. Saying no may improve mental and physical health, including more energy, less stress, and a greater sense of fulfillment in your daily life.

<u>Situation</u>	
Invites/ Requests	
Friend	"That sounds like so much fun! I wish I could, but this week has been busy with work and other commitments. How about next weekend?"
Sister	"Thanks for the invite! I would love to, but it would be better for me to just stay home and get some rest. Have fun though!"
In-laws	"Thank you for thinking of me, but I can't make it. I have a lot going on this weekend and need to recharge. Maybe next time??"
Partner	"I am uncomfortable with what you just said/did."
Boss	"I have several other projects and will not be able to complete this new task by the end of the day, Which would you prefer I focus on?"

CREATE DECLINE

SCRIPTS

WITH: _____

	COMMON SITUATIONS	MY RESPONSE	DONE
PARTNER			<input type="radio"/>
PARENTS			<input type="radio"/>
SIBLING			<input type="radio"/>
IN-LAWS			<input type="radio"/>
CHILD			<input type="radio"/>
FRIEND			<input type="radio"/>
CO-WORKER			<input type="radio"/>

Thank you!

Learning to say no and prioritize your own needs is essential for a fulfilling life. By identifying your people-pleasing behaviors, writing scripts, determining your values, and practicing saying no, you can break the cycle of people-pleasing.

Remember consistency is key, take care of yourself, and celebrate your progress along the way.



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As a compassionate and dedicated therapist, I believe that every individual has the capacity for growth and healing. I help clients navigate the challenges of codependency and develop healthier relationships with themselves and others.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment,
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