How-To Say No at Work

Do you find yourself not accomplishing everything you set out to do each day in the work place? Does the adage "not enough hours in the day" ring true on a regular basis? Do you constantly put the needs of others before your own? If your answer is yes to any of these questions you are likely what is commonly referred to as a "people pleaser." Helping others is a core value and certainly an admirable one but if you're not careful, it's one that can be dangerous for your productivity, state of mind and physical health. If you frequently find yourself stressed and burned out at the end of the day, learning to tactfully say NO is a skill worth developing.

Make Yourself a Priority

You probably make it a habit to help others and go the extra mile. But when was the last time you made it a priority to take care of your own needs before someone else's? In order to be at your best, you have to be in the right spot to do so. Prioritizing things like exercise, getting enough sleep and taking a day off all go a long way in helping you recharge and stay fresh.

Set Healthy Boundaries

By nature, the word "no" carries a negative connotation that most people are afraid to express. However, it has many positive benefits that not only will find you in a healthy frame of mind but being more productive as well. The first step to saying no is setting healthy boundaries and sticking to them. This simply means clearly stating your priorities and limits and communicating them to those around you. If you make this behavior a regular practice, it lets people know that you can't be taken advantage of and they will respect you for it.

Check Your Schedule

You're probably inundated with requests to take on more work or help with items outside the scope of what you normally do. While it's easy to immediately say yes to helping out with something, it's perfectly acceptable to let someone know you need to look at your schedule and will respond accordingly. If you have the time to fit something extra in great, but if you're already committed then letting people know is reasonable as well.

What's in it For You?

While asking the question of what potential gain you might receive in return for helping someone out might seem selfish, it's important to consider. There are plenty of people out there that are all too ready to accept help but unwilling to return the favor in the future. Before you commit to taking on work for someone else, ask yourself the question of the likelihood of that favor being reciprocated.

Ask Someone You Trust if You're Unsure

We are all asked to help out from time to time. If you find yourself on the fence of saying yes or no however, take the time to seek the opinion of someone you can confide in. By verbalizing your concerns, you not only gain a valuable outside opinion, but allow yourself to consider all the options more clearly. Even if you don't take the advice, you'll at least have more information to help you make the decision that is best for you.

Delegate

The demands of the modern workplace can be overwhelming. Trying to accomplish every task on your own can lead to burnout in the office and negatively effect your health and relationships outside of work as well. If you work on a team or within a specific department, realize that your colleagues are there to help. By delegating tasks or projects to the people around you, you not only save yourself time, but demonstrate to others that they are valuable and can be trusted. This spells good news for everyone involved.

Provide Context

One of the most critical components of saying no is providing context. If you simply tell someone no you risk coming off as aloof or not caring. But if you make it a point to honestly explain to the person requesting your help that your plate is already full and that you are willing to say yes in the future, you come across as respectful and honest.

Say Yes to the Person and No to the Task

Empathy is a sign of high emotional intelligence. If someone asks for your help and you simply don't have the time or resources to do so, tell them that you understand the situation they are in but that you simply can't this time around. Saying no in this manner makes it clear that you value the person in question and are willing to help in the future.

Saying no is counterintuitive for most people. However, learning to do so in a tactful manner when it makes sense goes a long way toward increasing your own productivity and well-being. If you take the steps necessary to make yourself a priority, set professional boundaries and evaluate all your options before you say yes or no, you'll be in a position to make the best decision for yourself and those around you.

How-To Stop Negative Thoughts at Work

Stress can cause us to get distracted with negative thoughts, which impacts our work and personal lives. It's important to find a way to overcome your negative thoughts to maintain healthy relationships, productivity, and attitudes.

Learn how to stop your negative thoughts at work with the following tips:

The First Step: Recognize Your Negative Thinking

The first step is to recognize your negative thinking. If you cannot recognize negative thoughts, you will not be able to fix the problem.

It could be as simple as someone not wiping down the table in the break room, getting called into another meeting when you have piles of work, or a customer complaint. Discover your triggers.

Changing Your Negative Thinking

Positive Self-Talk

Now that you recognize your stressors, use positive self-talk when the thought goes through your head.

Positive self-talk is not deception. Internal messages can evolve stressful situations into opportunities.

To achieve positive self-talk, write down a few messages that you can tell yourself, such as:

- Stop

- Get out of my head

Or something more colorful!

Get Around Positivity

Your environment will affect your mindset. Surround yourself with positive people. If your friends are dragging you down then decrease time spent with them. If you work in a negative work environment then you may consider changing jobs. As a Specialty Recruiter, I can help employees in the pharmaceutical and medical device industry find jobs that provide a supportive and healthy work environment.

Focus on the End Result

Accomplishing a goal can be frustrating. Keep the end result in mind to overcome hurdles that slow the process.

Why are you going through this process?

How will it help your company?

Drop the Expectations

If we have high expectations, we will often be disappointed when our plan falters. Be flexible with your plan. For example, you may have to work with a co-worker unexpectedly. Recognize that they bring different knowledge that could benefit the project.

Create a Heathy Morning Routine

Your morning routine can affect the rest of your day. Start your day with healthy choices to prevent negative thoughts. The following are a few practices that you could fit into your morning to achieve a more positive day.

- Stop hitting the snooze button
- Yoga or meditation
- Healthy breakfast
- Drink a glass of lemon water

How-To Say "No" at Work

Time is a precious commodity. You use it or lose it. Most of us do not have all the time to participate in the activities that we enjoy. Often, we are short on time because of saying "yes" when we should say "no".

As a business professional, saying "yes" can become habitual. You may be taking advantage of every opportunity to improve your career. However, always saying "yes" can end up making us miss deadlines and decreasing our quality of work.

Before you say "yes" to your next project, gain a perspective on your daily tasks and the amount of time that it takes to complete a project. Then learn to say "no".

STEP ONE: Learn Your Priorities

Everyone has daily tasks. What are yours? Write them down and figure out how much time they take to complete every day. After you figure out what you HAVE to do, you can figure out what else you CAN do.

STEP TWO: Check Your Calendar

We often respond to requests with a quick "yes". Stop!
Check your calendar before you agree to your projects. This will give you the opportunity to evaluate whether the project is realistic in your schedule.

STEP THREE: Trust Your Gut

Your intuition can be the best indicator of whether you should accept a new project. If deliberating the task makes you feel stressed then re-consider accepting the new responsibility.

Fear of telling a person "no" leads many professionals to undertake new projects. This type of person is commonly referred to as a people pleaser. Eventually, being a people pleaser leads to exhaustion and burn-out.
Learn to tell people "no" before you become overwhelmed.

Tricks to Tell Client, Boss, or Co-Worker "No"

1. Be Honest. It's worse to give them false hope of you helping.
2. Suggest an Alternative Service Provider
3. Ask For a Raincheck, or tell them when you CAN help them.
4. Clearly State Your "No" Without Being Defensive. Simply tell them you can't take on their project with your current workload.

Sometimes, the best things to do in life is minimize. Saying "no" minimizes your clutter of projects.