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create space for yourself

Whether you feel guilty about saying "no", detest confrontation, or otherwise feel like it's your job to take on #allthethings, being stuck in a cycle of saying "yes" to things you don't want to do is more common than you might realize. Because it stresses us out, it's hard to find the right words when the time comes. As a Resilience Coach for Strong Women, I see it all the time. This list will give you some ideas and help normalize "no" so that you don't freeze and repeat the pattern next time. These are just examples - do come up with your own wording so it feels authentic to you.

32 WAYS TO SAY "NO"

- Thank you for asking, but that's not going to work for me.
- Thanks for thinking of me, but that's not really my thing.
- I would love to help you out, but I have another commitment.
- I appreciate you thinking of me and I'm honoured by the request. Unfortunately, I don't have the time to give this my best right now.
- I would love to help you out, but given my schedule, it doesn't seem feasible/ doable for me right now.
- I'm not qualified to _____, but you may want to ask _____.
- It wouldn't be right for me to take this on now.
- I'm currently working on _____ and _____, so I won't be able to _____.
- Thanks for asking! As a rule I don't do _____.
- I'm going to pass for now. Thank you!
- Although I don't do _____ I'd be happy to do _____.
- My family is my top priority right now, and I'm fiercely protecting our quality time, so it's a no for me.
- I want to do that, but I'm not available this month. Will you ask me again next month?
- I'm working on creating more balance in my life. I've decided to...

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- Here's what I can do. (Limit your commitment.)
- Let me think about it. I'll get back to you by Friday.
- I'm maxed out right now. I need to say no. Thanks for your understanding!
- I'd love to, but I have a rule about not staying out late on weeknights / not lending money to friends / etc.
- I've had to make some tough decisions to pare down my responsibilities lately. I'm not in a place where I can take anything else on right now.
- I hate to disappoint you, but I'm not really into this. Is there someone else who can help?
- Thanks for thinking of me. I'm currently working on ABC. What would you like me to prioritize?
- I'm feeling one-on-one hangouts more than parties these days. Can we go for lunch together?
- You know I love you, but I really don't like networking events. Is there someone else who can go with you?
- I am so disappointed that I can't take on your project right now. I would be doing you a disservice if I did. I do hope you'll think of me next time something like this comes around.
- The timing is not good. Can we circle back to this later in the month?
- I honestly just don't feel good about lending people my car. It just doesn't work for me.
- I'm not really comfortable with that responsibility.
- You know what? I think you're underestimating yourself. I believe you're up to the task. Why don't you give it a shot?
- Can I be honest with you? I just don't really want to.
- That could work, but I must admit, it's not my first choice. Is there another way?
- Wow! What a great cause. Thanks for asking, but I'm not in a position to donate / attend right now.
- I've got to be honest. I don't enjoy that kind of thing, so it's really not a great fit for me.

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Something you can start doing right away that will make a HUGE difference is to buy yourself some time. Most of the time, people don't need an answer right away. When you take a step back, you have the chance to answer when you're less stressed out. It changes everything!