

## Boundaries and the Art of the Polite Decline

### Boundary-setting for resilience and healthier relationships

Have you ever felt like someone's taken advantage of you? Felt obligated to take on more than you should, especially during busy times like holidays or near deadlines? Said "yes" to something you don't have time (or don't want) to do, then blown your lid when things got too stressful?

If you answered yes to any of these, it might be time to reexamine your boundaries.

Boundaries can help us better manage how, when, where, (and on whom and what) we spend our time and energy. Rather than being restrictive, the right boundaries can be expansive, helping us to derive much more meaning, productivity, and fulfillment from those things and people we do spend time on. But, for many of us, the notion of politely declining is an unsettling one.

### Boundaries

Boundaries are limits we set for ourselves to facilitate reasonable, safe, and healthy ways of interacting with others.

Although setting proper boundaries can feel stressful at first, over time and with practice, it can boost our resilience and promote well-being. It's not wrong to want to do things for others; but when we want to please too much, and at our own expense, good intentions can leave us feeling resentful and exhausted.

**Decide what you need.** Imagine a compass that can point to either Yes or No. If you agree to a request, and your needle points to Yes, how does that make you feel? Anxious? If your needle points to No, how then? At ease? Take a moment to reflect before answering.

## 人際界線，與禮貌拒絕的藝術

設定界線，建立心理韌性和更健康的人際關係

您是否曾經感覺別人在佔您便宜？總覺得必須扛下更多非分內的事，尤其在假期或到期日逼近這類忙碌的時刻？即使沒時間（或不想）做，還是會說「好」，然後在壓力過大時忍不住爆炸？

如果以上皆是，也許是時候該重新檢視一下您的人際界線。

良好的人際界線可以幫助我們如何、何時、何處、（以及對誰和什麼事）更好地運用時間和精力。正確的界線並不會侷限我們，反而為我們開拓空間，幫助我們從耗時費神的人際往來中，獲得更多意義、更有成果和成就感。然而，對大部分人來說，禮貌地拒絕這種觀念，仍是不習慣和不容易做到的。

### 健康的人際界線

人際界限是我們為自己設定的底線，來幫助我們們可以與他人進行合理、安全和健康的互動方式

剛開始設定恰當的人際界限时，會覺得壓力很大，但隨著時間的推移和實踐，它可以增強我們的韌性，促進幸福感。想為別人做事並沒有錯，但是當我們太想討好別人，而且以犧牲自己的利益為代價時，善良的動機會使我們陷入憤懣怨恨和疲憊不堪的境地。

如果設定和尊重自我界限，對你來說很陌生，那麼在最初嘗試時，你可能感到有點不自在。以下列出一些技巧，可以幫助你練習如何以及何時說“不”。

**先決定自己的需要。**像眼前有只羅盤，它可以指向“是”或“否”。如果你同意他人請求，指針就指向“是”，讓你感覺如何？焦慮不安？如果指針指向“否”，你的感覺又如何？輕鬆自在？回答之前花點時間反思。



**Set your calendar.** When filling out your calendar, map out time for personal things like chores, leisure activities, and dinners with family. Having plans can make it easier to say no without guilt when conflicting requests come in.

**Don't be Afraid to Say "No".** Saying no is commonly and incorrectly associated with being selfish or callous. A "yes" will bring a smile from the person doing the asking, and a "no" will probably have the opposite effect. So, we might find ourselves saying yes when we shouldn't just to make someone else happy or to avoid conflict in the moment.

**Discomfort passes, but resentment can last forever.** When someone asks you for something you can't or don't want to do, take a deep breath and remember that the discomfort of a no will pass in a moment. But, the resentment of saying yes can affect your health and well-being long into the future.

**Use your inner yes/no compass.** Before responding to a request, imagine a compass in your head that can point to either Yes or No. If you agree to this request, and your needle points to Yes, how does it make you feel? Anxious? If your needle points to No, how then? At ease? Take a moment to breathe mindfully, pause, and reflect before answering.

**Be aware of harshness bias.** According to psychologists, we believe people judge us more negatively than they do in reality. This applies to boundaries too. People tend to respect us more rather than less when we set healthy limits.

**Rehearse your no mantra.** Research shows that if we consciously prepare ourselves to give a specific answer to new requests, we're more likely to honor and maintain healthy boundaries. Try practicing a polite no phrase in your head and out loud so that it's ready when you need it. Something like: "I wish I could help with that, but I can't in good conscience take on any more tasks this week."

Like many healthy habits, setting boundaries takes effort at first but should get easier with practice. Invest time to build your boundary skills now and you might be surprised at how much time and effort you will gain in return.

**設置你的日程表。**安排您的行程表時，事先規劃個人事務的時間，包括打理雜事，個人的休閒活動，和家人共進晚餐的時間等。生活有了計畫，那麼，當突發要求與你的日程有衝突時，你會相對容易地、沒有愧疚地說：“不”！

**別害怕說“不”。**說“不”，通常被錯誤地與自私或冷酷連在一起。說出一個“是”，會讓請求者露出微笑，而一旦吐出“不”，後果往往就相反。所以，我們可能意識到自己在不該回答“是”的時說“是”，僅僅是為了取悅別人或避免當場的衝突。

**記住，不舒服是暫時的，但委屈的怨氣卻可以持久不散。**當有人要你做一些你無法或根本不想做的事時，請先深呼吸一下，同時牢記這點——拒絕帶來的不適感只是一瞬間。相反，違背內心地說“是”所帶來的怨懣，會長期影響你的健康，快樂和幸福。

**運用內心的是/非羅盤。**在回覆對方的要求前，想像腦子裡有一個指向「是或非」的羅盤。如果您同意對方要求，指針指向「是」，心裡的感受如何？會不會焦慮不安？如果指針指向「非」，又有什麼感覺？是不是鬆了口氣？花幾分鐘深呼吸，停一下，思考後再回答。

**留意「嚴苛誤謬」。**心理學家認為，我們內心認為別人對我們的評價，通常比實際情況來的嚴苛。我們看待人際界線也是如此。當我們設下健康的界線，人們反而會給我們更多尊重。

**預習如何說不。**研究顯示如果我們有意識地，預先想好如何回覆新的要求，我們比較容易守住並維持健康的界線。試試看在腦海裡練習禮貌的拒絕用語，並且大聲說出來，當您需要時便能脫口而出。比方這麼說：「我很想幫忙，但天地良心，我這個星期實在沒辦法再接更多工作了。」

像許多健康習慣一樣，在設定人際界限的最初階段，你會覺得費勁，但實踐越多越容易。現在，投入時間來培養你的人際界限的技能吧，你可能會驚喜地發現，因此你可以省下的時間和精力實在太多了。