

Say NO Without Feeling Guilty

Do you find yourself taking on more responsibilities than you feel you can handle, or simply more than you feel comfortable with? Do you feel as though others take advantage of your inability to deny helping them with their problem? Do you even look for ways to take on problems that really belong to someone else?

In our society there is never a lack of friends, family, civic groups, churches and charities seeking our help. Many of these are worthwhile civic activities and very noble causes. However, when you find yourself stretched beyond your desire or ability to help, in the long run, you actually perform less service than you would if you took a more measured approach.

Your time, energy, physical and mental devotion are limited resources. Each of us needs opportunities to renew ourselves between obligations. When you continually deny yourself for the sake of serving even the greatest cause, you become tired, burned out and resentful. No one can give their best when feeling drained or, even, taken advantage of.

Whether it is babysitting grandchildren, volunteering for a charity or singing in the church choir, we all have to decide how much we can take on and still have the time we think is necessary to meet our other duties to our spouse, family, or ourselves. You have probably heard the saying, "If your burden is more than you can bear, God probably didn't give it to you." Even in service to God, He expects you to have time for regeneration. It's easy to get into the habit of taking on more and more because those who ask really seem to need your help. They may even depend on you and you might convince yourself that if you don't do it, no one else will.

Other reasons for excessive obligations might be your own feelings of self-worth? Are you trying to make up for internal doubts about how worthy you are, make others think more highly of you, or even love you more? Are you trying to earn the love of God? Are you trying to make up for some wrong you have done in the past through your tireless service to others? All of these reasons are inadequate to enable you to sustain an on-going devotion to any cause.

To find true satisfaction and contentment in your service to others, finding a balance in your life is essential. Before accepting a responsibility, ask yourself how much of a priority this particular service opportunity is in your life. Does it fit into your skills, your interests, or what you feel God leading you to do at this time? Will it conflict with other responsibilities you already have?

Saying no is not always a selfish response. Sometimes it may be just the response to help ensure that you are doing a good job at your few chosen activities, rather than a poor job at a multitude of them.

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