LEARNING TO SAY "NO"

An important aspect of being assertive is the ability to say "No." This means you are able to respect your own rights and limit what others demand from you when it interferes with your needs and wants.

Saying "No" is particularly difficult for those who have developed strong patterns of behavior to please others, or fear negative consequences. As with developing assertive statements, saying "No" takes practice and support from others. The following suggestions may be useful:

1. **Take Time:** Give yourself time to get the details and think about someone's request, so you can clarify what you want to say. You might say, "Let me think about it and I'll call you later."

2. **Don't Over-apologize:** This can give others the message that you are not sure and that your needs are not as important as theirs. They may even "push" harder.

3. **Practice Saying "No":** Try saying it out loud, to yourself in the mirror and even roleplay with a friend. The more you "try it on," and learn to be brief and specific about what you are declining, the easier it will be. With some people, you may have to be repeatedly firm and consistent.

4. **Listen Reflectively:** When you are concerned about someone's feelings, you can listen to them, feedback what you heard them say and say no, with a brief reason. You might also be able to direct them elsewhere. Like good customer service representatives, this communicates that you listened and understood them.

5. **Manage Guilt:** Watch out that you don't try to make-up for saying "No" by doing other things for the person

Who do you have to learn to say "No" to and how will you do it? :

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2. _____

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3. _____

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* Remember, BEING ASSERTIVE DOES NOT ALWAYS GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT, BUT YOU WILL COME OUT OF THE INTERACTION FEELING BETTER ABOUT YOURSELF.