

## The Mature No

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Wanda said, “Too often I feel helpless and powerless. When people ask me for a favour I say “yes” when I don’t want to. Sometimes I end up resenting my friends. My teen kids walk all over me. I say, “no” and then they nag, wear me down and I give in. Sometimes I end up feeling frustrated and say things I feel ashamed of. I even said, ‘Shut up!’ to my daughter the other day. How do I start to take control of my life?”

Wanda is not alone. Many women struggle to say “no” when they want to say “yes.” We were sold a bill of goods that it wasn’t nice to say “no.” The result of such behaviour is ending up resenting those to we said “yes” and either making ourselves sick or blowing up at others.

Oprah Winfrey talks about *The Disease to Please*. When we are children we often learn the habit of pleasing grown ups so we receive needed attention and love. We work to *make them* feel happy so they will say or do something to *make us* happy. We work to *make them* feel appreciative so they will say or do something to *make us* feel appreciated. We work to *make them* feel proud so they will say or do something to *make us* feel proud.

It is also a lot of others *making us*. This is called external locus of control, meaning that our care and satisfaction is dependant on people and circumstances outside of us. As children it is true that we have little control and power. We are dependant on our caregivers. But at some point we benefit by declaring our adulthood, making decisions that reflect our matured values and sticking to them.

In some ways one of the jobs of becoming an adult is to act as our own caregiver, to be our own loving and guiding parent. Begin to have an internal dialogue that is lovingly supportive and yet, self controlling. “I value my time. I will decide if and when I will give it away.” Acknowledge when you feel proud of yourself. Of course it’s wonderful to receive care, appreciation and encouragement from others. The problem is when we need it especially from children we make ourselves unnecessarily vulnerable and create an inappropriate relationship with them. Children need to receive from us guidance, support, encouragement and love. It becomes a problem if we need from them. Choose to absolutely live your own truth and nurture your own self-respect.

Learn to say “yes” and “no” to reflect who you are. You will earn your own respect and that of others. In the end true friends want you to give out of overflow and your children want a parent who lives in her truth, demonstrates personal power and knows a personal sense of worth. That way everyone benefits.

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