SAY NO WITHOUT GUILT

journal & prompt guide

FOR THE WOMAN WHO'S DONE SHRINKING



THE UNLIMITED WOMAN

Hello, *you.*

If you downloaded this guide, I already know something about you. **You are the one people call when they need something.** You are the one who stays late, who helps out and who keeps the peace. And somewhere along the way, you started saying yes while everything inside you was screaming no.

Maybe you have tried to say NO before. Your heart started racing, your voice got small and you ended up saying yes anyway. Or you did say NO, and then spent the whole evening feeling guilty about it.

> *That is completely normal. Saying NO is a skill, and nobody ever taught you how to do it.*

So this is not a list you read once before you suddenly become fearless. **This is a guide you practise with, one small NO at a time.** You will find exercises for before and after, a ladder to climb step by step and a 7-day practice to get you started.

You do not have to change overnight. You only have to start.

With love

A LITTLE ABOUT ME

I was the *good girl* too

For most of my life I was the good girl. The one who adapted, who kept quiet to avoid conflict and who always put everyone else first.

I felt like the black sheep in my family and I never felt good enough, not for them and not in my relationships. So I tried harder. I said yes more. I made myself smaller.

> *It never brought me what I hoped for. It only cost me myself.*

The day I said my first real NO, my hands were shaking. And the world did not end. Some people did not like it, and that was okay. **Because for the first time in a long time, I liked myself.**

I created The Unlimited Woman for every woman who is ready to stop shrinking. This guide is the first step I wish someone had given me.

Think of no as a *muscle*

The first time you use it, it feels weak and a little wobbly. Every time you use it again, it gets stronger. **So treat everything in this guide as practice, never as a test you can fail.**

1

Start small

Your first NO should be easy. Say NO to an extra receipt, a newsletter or a sample in the shop. Leave the hardest conversation of your life for later.

2

Keep your expectations low

Your voice might shake. You might still explain too much. That is fine. You showed up, and that counts.

3

Short is strong

The more you explain, the more room you give someone to argue. One clear sentence is enough.

4

Practise often

Every day gives you little moments to practise. Use them, and grab a pen for the exercises.

No.

And that's a complete sentence.

THE UNLIMITED WOMAN

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Your path to a *confident no*

Work through the chapters in order. They build on each other, from understanding why you want this to saying your first NO out loud. **Take your time. There is no rush.**

01	Why do I want this?	15 MIN
02	Imagine your life with a no	15 MIN
03	Why is saying NO so hard for me?	10 MIN
04	Where does it come from?	15 MIN
05	Practise with the small stuff	5 MIN
06	Before you say NO	5 MIN
✦	Affirmations for the woman who says no	DAILY
07	The No Ladder	5 MIN
08	The 30 ways to say NO	THE LIST
09	Push back and worst cases	20 MIN
10	After you said no	AFTERCARE
11	Your 7-day Saying NO Practice	START TODAY
✦	My promise to myself	SIGN IT

01

SIT DOWN WITH YOURSELF

Why do I *want this?*

Before anything else, sit down with yourself for a moment. Grab a pen, make a cup of tea and be honest. **Every yes you did not mean has cost you something.** Let's look at what.

What does always saying yes *cost me* right now?

MY ENERGY

MY TIME

MY HEALTH AND MY SLEEP

MY RELATIONSHIPS

MY SELF-RESPECT

MY OWN DREAMS AND PLANS

If nothing changes, how will my life look a year from now?

WHY DO I WANT THIS?

My reasons to *finally say NO*

Why do I want to learn to say NO? Write down everything that comes up.

Who do I want to say NO to first, and why?

What am I tired of? Finish the sentence as many times as you like.

> *I am tired of ...*

My *deepest reason*

The one reason that makes your heart beat faster. This is the one you come back to when it gets hard.

02

DREAM A LITTLE

Imagine your life *with a no*

Close your eyes and take three slow breaths. Now imagine it is one year from now. Saying NO has become normal for you. You do it calmly, without a long story and without overthinking it for hours afterwards.

You wake up rested, because you no longer say yes to everything. Your agenda has room for the things you love. People know where they stand with you, and the ones who matter respect you more for it. You no longer shrink to keep everyone happy. **You take up the space you deserve.**

Stay with that picture for a moment. Notice how your body feels. Notice your shoulders, your breath and your heart.

This woman is not a stranger. She is you, with permission to be herself.

02

WRITE IT DOWN

What *changes* for me?

A normal day in my life, when I can say NO with ease, looks like this:

WHAT CHANGES IN MY RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT CHANGES AT WORK

WHAT CHANGES IN MY FAMILY

WHAT CHANGES IN HOW I SEE MYSELF

What will I finally have time and energy for?

How does that feel? Describe it as if it is already true.

Three words for the woman I am becoming:

STEP INTO YOUR TRUTH

03 Why is saying NO so *hard* for me?

Before you learn how to say NO, it helps to understand why it feels so hard. **Be honest with yourself here.** Nobody else has to read this.

What do I feel when I want to say NO?

Tick everything that feels familiar.

- ☐ I am afraid they will be angry or disappointed.
- ☐ I am afraid they will like me less or leave.
- ☐ I feel responsible for how others feel.
- ☐ I feel guilty, as if I am being selfish.
- ☐ I want to avoid conflict at all costs.
- ☐ I learned that my needs come last.
- ☐ I want to be seen as kind and helpful.
- ☐ I simply do not know what to say.

With whom is it the *hardest?*

WHO	WHY IT IS HARD WITH THIS PERSON	WHAT I FEAR WILL HAPPEN

The moment I said yes most recently while I meant no:

04 LOOK DEEPER

Where does it *come from?*

Your difficulty with saying NO did not appear out of nowhere. Somewhere you learned that a no was not safe or not welcome. **When you know where it comes from, it loses some of its power.**

First, *breathe*

These questions can bring up old feelings. Before you start, breathe in through your nose for four counts, hold for four and breathe out through your mouth for six. Do this three times. Take a break whenever you need one.

What did I learn as a child about saying NO?

What happened when I did say NO back then?

What did I see the women around me do? Did they say NO?

Whose voice do I hear when I feel guilty after a no?

What would I like to tell that younger version of me now?

05

MAKE IT LIGHTER

Practise with the *small stuff*

You do not start with the hardest conversation. You start with tiny, almost silly moments. **They train your no muscle without much at stake.** Some ideas to try:

- [ ] At a party, say NO when everyone expects you to get the drinks.
- [ ] Let someone else do the dishes for once.
- [ ] Leave a message unanswered until you are ready.
- [ ] Decline the second cup of coffee you do not really want.
- [ ] Go home when you are done, even if the evening goes on.
- [ ] Say NO to the extra receipt, the bag or the newsletter.
- [ ] Choose the film or the restaurant yourself this time.

> *Notice what happens. Usually far less than you feared. That is exactly what your body needs to learn.*

My own small and slightly crazy practice no's:

What would make saying NO easier for me with the person I find hardest?

06

EXERCISES

Before you *say NO*

These three small exercises help you get ready. Do them whenever you feel a yes coming that you do not mean.

1. The body check

Before you answer, take one slow breath and notice your body. Does your chest feel tight? Does your stomach drop? Your body often knows the answer before your head does. **A heavy feeling is usually a no.**

Where in my body do I feel it when I want to say NO?

---

2. Buy yourself time

You never have to answer straight away. Practise this one sentence until it feels natural:

> *"Let me get back to you on that."*

3. Write your permission slip

Fill this in and read it out loud before a moment you find difficult. It may feel silly at first. Do it anyway.

I, _____, am allowed to say NO.
My time, my energy and my peace matter.
I give myself permission to choose me.

SPEAK IT INTO BEING

Affirmations for the woman who *says no*

Read them out loud every morning, or pick the one that touches you most and make it the background on your phone. Your mind believes what it hears you say, again and again.

I am allowed to choose myself.

My time, my energy and my peace matter.

I say NO with love and without explaining.

My no is a complete sentence.

The right people respect my boundaries.

I release the guilt and keep my peace.

I deserve rest, respect and softness.

Every NO to them is a yes to me.

I take up space with grace.

I am becoming the woman I was always meant to be.

07

STEP BY STEP

The No *Ladder*

Climb this ladder one step at a time. **Stay on a step until it starts to feel a little easier,** then move up to the next one. There is no rush.

4 **The people closest to you**
Family and your partner. The hardest step, so take your time.

3 **Friends and work**
The extra task, the plans you are too tired for, the favour you would rather skip.

2 **The lighter people**
Acquaintances, neighbours and people you see now and then.

1 **Everyday no**
Strangers and small moments. The extra receipt, the seller on the phone.

Which step am I on right now?

Three small NO's I can practise on this step this week:

08

THE LIST

30 ways to *say NO*

A list alone does not change much. That is why every group of sentences in this chapter comes with a short explanation and real situations from everyday life. **You learn why a sentence works, when to use it and how to make it feel natural.**

The groups go from easy to hard, just like the No Ladder. Start with the everyday no's and only move on when they start to feel normal. Say the sentences out loud a few times at home, so the words are ready when you need them.

A note from *me*

I know how hard this is. I have struggled with it myself, and to be honest, I still do now and then. On top of that, I can be quite blunt when I finally say NO. These sentences have helped me so much, because they are a kind and clear way to say NO without making people angry.

They are not rude, they are not cold and they do not need a long explanation. They simply tell the truth in a respectful way.

And if someone still gets angry?

Then ask yourself what that tells you. Someone who really cares about you can handle a polite no. If a kind, respectful no makes someone furious, it often means they were mainly used to you always saying yes. That is useful information, and it is not your fault.

GROUP 1 OF 5

The *everyday* no

These are the easiest no's, because the people you say them to hardly know you. The shop assistant, the seller on the phone, the person with the clipboard on the street. **There is no relationship at stake, so this is the perfect place to practise.**

What can still make it hard: the urge to be polite and the feeling that you owe everyone an answer. You do not. A friendly "no, thank you" is polite enough. Keep smiling, keep it short and keep walking.

01 At the checkout they ask if you want the receipt, a bag or the loyalty card.
"No, thank you."

02 A salesperson calls during dinner with a great offer.
"That doesn't work for me."

03 You are invited to a webinar, a party plan or a free trial you have no interest in.
"I'll pass this time."

04 A neighbour you barely know asks if you want to join the street committee.
"Thanks for thinking of me, but no."

05 Someone on the street asks you to sign up for something.
"I'm not interested, but thank you."

06 Someone asks for something on the spot and you feel the automatic yes coming.
"Let me get back to you on that."

Which everyday no will I practise first this week?

GROUP 2 OF 5

No to your *friends*

With friends it gets more personal. You care about them and you do not want to disappoint them or miss out. **The fear is often that they will think you no longer care, or that they will stop inviting you.**

How to make it easier: start your no with something warm, so they feel the love before they hear the no. And remember that a good friendship has room for both of you. A real friend would rather hear an honest no than get a tired, half-hearted yes.

07 Your friend invites you to her birthday on the one evening you finally have nothing planned.
"I love you, and I can't make it this time."

08 After a busy week, your friends want to go out on Friday night.
"I need a quiet evening for myself tonight."

09 Your friend asks you to come along to a festival, and it is really not your thing.
"That's not really my thing, but have a great time."

10 A friend asks you to help her move, while you are already exhausted.
"I can't help with that right now."

11 She calls to vent for the third time this week and you have no energy left.
"I'd rather not now, but let's catch up another time."

12 Your whole weekend is about to fill up with plans made by other people.
"I'm keeping my weekend free this time."

Which friend do I find it hardest to say NO to, and why?

GROUP 3 OF 5

No at *work*

At work, saying NO can feel risky. You want to be seen as reliable and you might be afraid it will cost you your reputation or even your job. **Yet the colleague who says yes to everything is often the one who burns out first.**

How to make it easier: keep it calm and professional, without emotion or long excuses. Show that you take your work seriously, which is exactly why you protect your time. Offering a choice or a later moment often works better than a flat no.

13 Your manager adds a new project while you are already overloaded.
"My plate is full right now."

14 Two urgent tasks land on your desk at the same time.
"I can do this, or that. Which one matters most?"

15 A colleague tries to pass their work on to you.
"That's not something I can take on."

16 At five o'clock someone asks if you can stay a little longer, again.
"I'm leaving on time today."

17 You are asked to join yet another committee or extra meeting.
"I can't commit to that."

18 A colleague needs help today, but your own deadline is tomorrow.
"I can help next week, not this week."

Where at work do I say yes most often while I mean NO?

GROUP 4 OF 5

No to your *family*

This is often the hardest one, and that makes complete sense. Your family knows exactly which buttons to push, because they installed them. **Old roles come back the moment you walk through the door, and suddenly you are the good daughter again.**

How to make it easier: decide before the visit or the phone call what you will and will not do. Keep your no short, because long explanations invite discussion. You can love your family and still protect yourself. Both are true at the same time.

19 You are expected to host Christmas again, like every year.
"That won't work for me this year."

20 Your mother keeps asking why you are not coming to the family weekend.
"I've decided not to."

21 At dinner, the same old comments about your choices start again.
"I'm not going to discuss this."

22 A family party where you usually end up staying until the very end.
"I'll come for an hour, and then I'm going home."

23 Your no is met with a sigh, a sad face or a guilt trip.
"I understand you're disappointed. My answer is still no."

24 A family member asks for money, babysitting or a favour, once again.
"I love you, and I'm not available for that."

Which family moment do I want to handle differently next time?

GROUP 5 OF 5

No to your *partner*

With your partner, a no can feel like a risk to the relationship itself. Maybe you are afraid of an argument, of hurting them or of being left. **Yet a relationship where only one person's needs count is not a safe place for either of you.**

How to make it easier: choose a calm moment, speak from yourself and use "I" instead of "you". Your no is not an attack, it is information about what you need. A loving partner wants to know that, even when it is not what they hoped to hear.

25 Your partner wants to do something together, while you badly need some alone time.
"I need some time for myself tonight."

26 You are not in the mood for intimacy or for that evening out.
"I don't feel like it, and that's okay."

27 You always end up doing the household chores on your own.
"I'd like us to share this task."

28 A big decision is suddenly put on the table and you feel rushed.
"I need to think about it first."

29 Something is asked of you that goes against your values or your gut feeling.
"That doesn't feel right for me."

30 You have said no before, and the question keeps coming back.
"No. And that's a complete sentence."

What do I need from my partner that I have never asked for?

MAKE IT YOURS

My own *no list*

Now it is your turn. The best sentences are the ones that sound like you. **Write down the situations from your own life and the words you want to use.**

My *favourite three*

The three sentences that feel most like you. These are the ones you practise first.

MY SITUATION	WHAT I WILL SAY

Which sentence would the old me never have dared to say?

09

STAY CALM

When they *push back*

Some people will not accept your first NO. **That says more about them than about you.** You do not need to come up with new reasons. Simply repeat yourself, calmly and kindly, like a broken record.

> *"I hear you. My answer is still no."*
>
> *"I've already decided."*
>
> *"I understand. It's still a no for me."*

Then change the subject, or end the conversation. **You do not have to win the discussion. Your no is enough.**

Who in my life usually pushes back?

The sentence I will repeat when that happens:

If saying NO makes you feel unsafe with someone, please do not do this on your own. Reach out to someone you trust or to a professional who can support you.

The *worst case* scenarios

Saying NO is one thing. Dealing with what comes after is often much harder. Someone gets angry, goes quiet or makes you feel like the bad guy. **That is the moment most women take their no back.**

That is why this chapter is maybe the most important one in this guide. We look at the reactions you fear most, what is really going on and what you can do in that moment.

Remember this: **their reaction is their responsibility.** You are responsible for saying NO in a kind and clear way. You are not responsible for how someone else chooses to feel about it.

Discomfort is not danger. It is the feeling of something old breaking and something new beginning.

1 They get angry

What is happening: they are not used to hearing no from you, and anger is their way to get the old yes back.

What you can do: stay calm, keep your voice low and do not defend yourself. You may leave the conversation if it gets heated.

> *"I can hear you're upset. We can talk about it when we're both calm."*

---

2 The silent treatment

What is happening: silence is meant to make you feel guilty, so you will come running to fix it.

What you can do: let the silence be. Do not chase, apologise or explain. Keep the door open once, kindly, and then wait.

> *"I'm here whenever you want to talk."*

---

3 The guilt trip

What is happening: you hear "after everything I've done for you" or "I thought I could count on you". It hits right where it hurts.

What you can do: acknowledge the feeling without changing your answer. Gratitude and boundaries can exist together. More about guilt on the next pages.

> *"I'm grateful for what you've done. And my answer is still no."*

---

4 "You've changed" or "You're so selfish"

What is happening: you have changed, and that is the whole point. To someone who benefited from your yes, your growth feels like a loss.

What you can do: let it be true without shame.

> *"Yes, I've changed. I'm taking better care of myself."*

---

5 They talk about you behind your back

What is happening: they look for support from others, so you will feel pressure from more sides.

What you can do: you do not have to defend yourself to everyone. The people who know you will ask you directly. Stay with your own truth.

> *"I made a choice that is right for me. I'm happy to explain it to you."*

---

6 A friendship or relationship changes

What is happening: some people only stayed because you always said yes. That hurts, and you are allowed to grieve it.

What you can do: notice who stays. The relationships that survive your no are the ones that were real. Make room for people who love the real you.

---

7 It backfires at work

What is happening: your manager or a colleague reacts coldly or puts pressure on you.

What you can do: keep it factual and focused on the work. Write important agreements down in an email, so it is clear for everyone.

> *"I want to do my work well, so I need to prioritise. What should come first?"*

---

8 You cave and say yes after all

What is happening: the old pattern was stronger this time. That happens to everyone, and it is not a failure.

What you can do: be gentle with yourself and look at what made it hard. You can still change your answer afterwards.

> *"I said yes too quickly. I've thought about it, and it's a no after all."*

THE HARDEST PART

And then the *guilt* comes

You said no. You did it kindly and clearly. And still, an hour later, that heavy feeling creeps in. **Am I selfish? Was I too harsh? Should I call and make it right?**

That guilt does not mean you did something wrong. It is an old alarm that was installed long ago, when a no was not safe for you. The alarm still goes off, even now that you are allowed to choose yourself.

When someone *makes* you feel guilty

Sometimes the guilt does not come from inside, but is handed to you. A deep sigh, a hurt face, a "fine, I'll do it myself then" or a reminder of everything they have done for you.

Let's call it what it is. Someone who uses guilt to turn your no into a yes is putting their own needs above yours. That is selfish, even when they do not realise it themselves. The person who loves you wants you to be okay too, not only to be available.

Healthy guilt or old guilt?

- ☐ **Healthy guilt** tells you that you hurt someone on purpose or broke a promise. You can make that right.
- ☐ **Old guilt** shows up when you simply took care of yourself. There is nothing to make right. Let it pass.

Who in my life makes me feel guilty when I say NO, and how do they do it?

What I will tell myself next time the guilt comes:

FACE YOUR FEAR

My *worst case* plan

Fear grows in the dark. When you write it down, it often turns out smaller than it felt. **Take a few slow breaths first and then answer honestly.**

The no I am most afraid to say:

The worst thing that could happen:

What will most likely happen in reality:

If the worst happens, this is what I will do:

The sentence I will hold on to:

Who can support me afterwards?

If someone reacts with threats, intimidation or violence, your safety always comes first. Do not handle this alone. Reach out to someone you trust or to a professional who can support you.

Every NO to someone else is **a yes to you.**

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10

AFTERCARE

After you *said no*

This is the part nobody talks about. Right after a no, a wave of guilt often follows. **That wave does not mean you did something wrong. It means you did something new.**

1 **Ride the wave**

Put one hand on your chest and breathe slowly for one minute. Tell yourself: *"This feeling is uncomfortable, and it will pass."* It always does.

2 **Hold on to your no**

You might feel the urge to send a long message to explain or apologise. Wait at least one day. Most of the time, the urge disappears.

3 **Celebrate**

Every NO is a win, even if your voice was shaking. Do something kind for yourself. You just chose you.

What did I say NO to?

How did I feel before, during and after?

What did I say yes to for myself?

11

START TODAY

Your 7-day *Saying NO Practice*

One small challenge a day. Tick the box when you are done and write down how it felt.

Day 1	Say "no, thank you" to something small, like a receipt or a bag.	☐
Day 2	Notice every yes you say today. Just notice, without changing anything.	☐
Day 3	Answer one request with "Let me get back to you on that."	☐
Day 4	Say NO to one thing without explaining why.	☐
Day 5	Do one thing today only because you want to.	☐
Day 6	Say NO to a favour you would rather skip.	☐
Day 7	Write down how this week felt and celebrate how far you came.	☐

How I feel after one week of practising:

MY PROMISE TO MYSELF

From today, *I choose me*

Read your deepest reason from chapter 01 one more time. Then fill in your promise and sign it. **This is an agreement with yourself, and you keep it just as you would keep a promise to someone else.**

I, _____, promise myself that from today:

I practise saying NO to _____.

I start with this small NO: _____.

When I feel guilty, I remind myself that _____.

I celebrate every NO, even when my voice shakes.

My time, my energy and my peace matter. I matter.

_____ _____

SIGNATURE DATE

You've got this.

ONE LAST THING

You are *allowed* to choose you

You will not get this perfect, and you do not have to. Some days you will say NO with confidence and some days you will catch yourself saying yes again. **Both are part of the process.**

Every NO you say is a promise to yourself. A promise that your time, your energy and your peace matter. That you matter.

So start small, be gentle with yourself and keep practising.

> *The woman you are becoming is already proud of you.*

With love,
The Unlimited Woman

Disclaimer: This guide is for educational and inspirational purposes only, and the choices you make are always your own. It is not a substitute for professional advice, therapy or medical care. If you are going through a difficult time, you do not have to carry it alone. Please reach out to someone you trust or to a professional who can support you. And if you ever feel unsafe or in danger, call 112 (Europe) or 911 (US). You deserve to be safe.

THANK YOU

Thank you, *queen*

Thank you so much for downloading this guide. It truly means the world to me that you took this step for yourself.

I really hope it helps you say NO with more confidence and less guilt. I'd love to hear how it went for you. What helped you most? What would you love to see more of?

Send me a message and let me know. Your words help me make this guide even better, because I want to give you nothing less than the best.

With love,
The Unlimited Woman

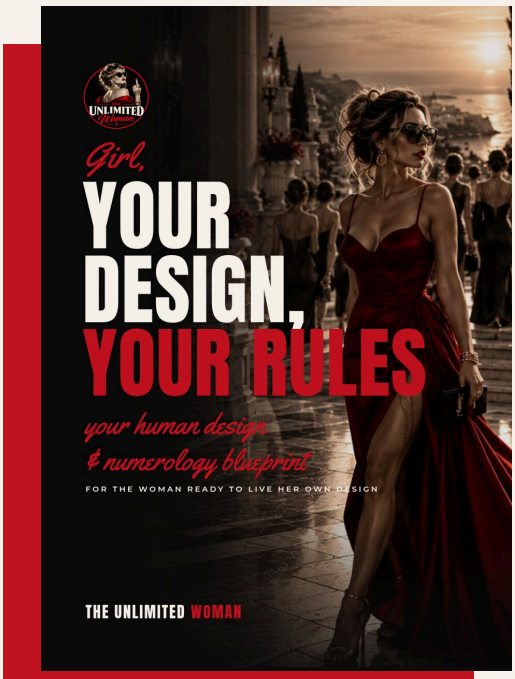
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YOUR NEXT STEP, QUEEN

Girl, your design, *your rules*



F*ck fitting in. Find out who you really are.

No more second-guessing, no more people-pleasing, no more playing small. Discover how you make decisions you never regret, where your energy leaks away and how you manifest what you want. All in an app on your phone, with days of reading and your own portal, always with you.

UNLEASH THE REBEL, CHECK YOUR DESIGN

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YOU MIGHT ALSO LOVE

Money Loves Me Back

Done waiting for money to finally flow? Discover what is blocking your manifestation, rewrite your old money story and start receiving with open hands. In 21 days you shift your money mindset, from not enough to rich girl energy. Your 40-page manifestation journal & prompt guide shows you how.

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