

Lifestyle expert, Cheryl Richardson suggests that finding yourself is not about what you add to your life, it's about what you take away. Once you have created an Absolute Yes List, i.e., the top priorities in your life, it becomes easier to identify those things that you'll need to let go.

How to create your Absolute Yes List

Absolute Yes List – *What are the things you absolutely must have in your life? What inspires you? Think about your top priorities in the areas of emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual sides of your life. Also, look at relationships, work, children, family, leisure activities, community service, and so on. List as many as possible and circle your top 10. Keep that list visible and close by so you can see it each day as a reminder.*

Although it may feel uncomfortable to think about saying no, it's important to remember that each time you say yes to someone or something else, you say no to you and your priorities. If saying no is difficult (especially to family members or new college friends), then make sure you speak to a friend or family member for support before and after you decline a request.

Your self-care is always a valid excuse to say no. Do not over-explain or defend your decision. Be graceful and honest. You might say something like: "I'm sorry, but it's just not possible for me to do that," or, "I'll have to decline but thank you anyway." As you practice saying no, it will get easier. **Start now!**

1. For one week, keep track of how many times you say yes to something that is *not* on your Absolute Yes list
2. At the end of the week, tally up the number...surprised? Awareness is the first step to realigning your decisions and priorities.
3. Make a list of five things you'd like to say no to. Start by thinking about these questions.

If you could say no to someone or something, knowing that there would be absolutely no hard feelings or negative consequences, who or what would you say no to? Is there a project you would give up? A relationship you would end? A date you might break?

At first, saying no might create some internal guilt. But the tough choices you make today will help you reach a happier place tomorrow.