

# LEARN TO 'JUST SAY NO'

DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO HELP EVERYONE ALL THE TIME, WRITES MCGREGOR



MELANIE MCGREGOR  
Column

"Just say no" - an expression that began decades ago with an anti-drug campaign. But how does it apply outside of that realm? Is it really that easy to just say no in everyday life?

Imagine that a friend has asked you to help him move, but you're not able to. Even though you want and need to say no, it can be difficult for a number of reasons.

We may be afraid of disappointing him, think that he will see us as a bad friend, or wonder if he may argue with or challenge us.

It may seem like just saying yes would be easier, but there are consequences to saying yes when we really want to say no. We may overcommit ourselves and feel overwhelmed, distracted or exhausted, or we may resent the situation or even our friend.

We only have so much time and energy to give and need to make careful choices about what we do with it, and that means saying no to things that we are unwilling or unable to take on for the sake of our own self-care.

Start with giving yourself permission to say no - it doesn't mean that you are selfish, uncaring or cold. It means that you are setting limits that are so important to our balance.

Following are some ideas of

how we can say no sensitively, confidently and without apology:

"I would like to help, but I can't." Don't feel the need to tell a detailed story about why you are saying no, whether it's true or not - you may weaken your message or get caught in a lie. It's better to keep it simple and concise.

"Unfortunately, that won't work for me." Again, no need to give more details, but we could add something simple like "I already have plans." Usually when we feel the need to overexplain, it's because we want to prevent hurt feelings for the other person, but we can do that with a pleasant and genuine response rather than a long justification.

"I'm going to say no because I'm feeling overwhelmed lately." Rather than being concerned only about the other person's feelings, talk about

yours. Honesty goes a long way in a gentle no.

"No, but I appreciate you asking. What about ..." Suggesting an alternative or another support will let you stick to your response and still show care for the asker. Just don't pass the buck by suggesting someone else solely to take the focus off you.

"I can't right now." This is a good one to say no a bit more softly if you may consider saying yes in the future. But, don't use it if your "no" is for good - you will just set yourself up to have to say no again.

Add to these some warmth, genuineness and even a smile and you've got a great start to saying "yes" to saying "no."

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CORRECTION NOTICE

In the circular beginning Friday, November 8, 2019, we incorrectly stated the Oracal® Removable Vinyl number as 632. The correct Oracal® Removable Vinyl number is 631.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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**Q:** My child seems reluctant to go to school and complains of stomach aches. After the recent tragedy where that young boy was killed in front of his mother, I am afraid that my son is being bullied. What can I do?

**A:** It sounds as if you may be right. Bullying is aggressive, intentional behaviour repeated over time that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It can be physical such as hitting, emotional like taunting and teasing or rumours in person or on-line, active such as stealing the victim's possessions or passive as in ignoring or leaving out the other individual.

Victims tend to be passive and submissive and are often cautious sensitive, quiet, withdrawn or shy. Sometimes they are anxious and insecure with low self-esteem. Bullies on the other hand, are often of dominant personality, impulsive, easily angered and have little empathy. They can be defiant and aggressive to adults including parents and teachers and often have antisocial behaviours with rule breaking. Both boys and girls can be bullies.

Shattering many myths and altering the way we work with bullies it is now recognized that bullies do not have self-esteem problems even though that is what is often said. This means that instead of trying to build the confidence of a bully, which results in reinforcing their bullying behaviour, we must teach empathy and build a comprehensive response that includes teachers, parents, school staff and all students. When other kids watch bullying, they take sides and support the bully or the victims. Then the bullying becomes more accepted and no one takes responsibility for stopping it. Not only do we need to be concerned if our child is being bullied but also, if our child is the bully.

There are now new and effective approaches to bullying. If you are concerned that your child is being bullied or is a bully lets begin to develop a comprehensive and effective approach before the problems get totally out of hand.

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Zachary Fiddes  
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**Q:** How do I recognize a survey marker or monument?

**A:** Landowners should be aware of the location and appearance of survey markers or monuments on their property. When submitting an offer of purchase, a potential landowner should insist on obtaining an up-to-date survey prepared by an Ontario Land Surveyor to be certain of the property's boundaries. A new survey also ensures that old monuments are identified and any missing monuments are set.

Survey markers or monuments can vary in material and size. Standard iron bars, pipes, cross-cuts in concrete, old cut stones, and now plastic spikes are used to mark boundaries. Iron bars are usually engraved with a number that identifies the surveyor who planted the bar. Knowing exactly where the boundaries are located is important for both safety and economic reasons as important infrastructure like buried cables, gas lines, fences, and buildings are often built close to the limits.

Survey markers are meant to provide lasting physical evidence of a boundary shared by adjacent properties. Because they are so essential, survey markers are protected by law. It is illegal to remove, deface, or disturb any official boundary marker, including monuments removed by construction activities, so it's important for all landowners to identify and protect them.