

Complimentary Recommendations

A Guide to Strengthening Self-Worth & Authentic Living

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

Understanding the Challenge

People-pleasing and self-sabotage quietly undermine well-being, self-worth, confidence, self-trust, and personal growth.

This guide offers a carefully curated collection of practical strategies and advice designed to help you strengthen self-awareness, establish healthy boundaries, and make choices that authentically support your needs, values, and goals.

2.0 MANAGING THE SELF-SABOTAGE TRAP & BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS

Protect Your Energy

Those who actively engage in people-pleasing behaviours and self-sabotage often appear driven by an "all-or-nothing" way of thinking; particularly regarding time and energy, which is readily handed to others.

A sense of unworthiness around rest stems from the mistaken belief that the right to pause must be earned.

The Maintenance Mindset

Think of self-care as oil in a car engine. Engine oil is typically changed every six months, not because the car deserves a treat, but because otherwise the engine may fail without

appropriate maintenance. The same applies when self-care is absent: there are severe consequences on physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Taking Your First Steps

A strong starting point is to schedule dedicated self-care time for **yourself** into your calendar. Begin with 10–15 minutes and increase when it feels right.

As you begin to trust yourself, you will discover who you truly are.

Practical Self-Care Suggestions

Activity	Purpose
Take a walk alone	Grounding & reflection
Drink coffee without multitasking	Mindful presence
Read for 10 minutes	Mental nourishment
Go to bed on time	Physical restoration
Eat a meal you actually enjoy	Sensory pleasure
Turn down at least one unnecessary request	Boundary practice
Journal daily	Growth measurement & self-awareness
Speak kindly to yourself	Internal compassion building
Listen to uplifting music	Emotional regulation
Luxury bubble bath, interruption-free	Deep relaxation & sensory enjoyment

“Every thought you think causes a physical reaction and an emotional response.” - Marisa Peer

Practice focus on positive self-talk and practices, this will support your self care journey as positive thoughts invoke positive reactions and responses.

Journaling Guidance:

Write down how you are feeling in that moment:

- *Record three things you are grateful for.*
- *Note what made you happy.*
- *Document a moment you ignored your needs and a moment you honoured them.*

Journaling is a great way to get to know yourself and it measures progress and growth. Practice daily.

Accept that nothing is perfect and give yourself grace and patience. YOU are special....you simply haven't realised it yet.

When Boundaries Meet Resistance

Once steps are actively taken to practice self-care and the healing process begins, those who benefited from the lack of boundaries attached to people-pleasing may view this change as "selfish." This is evidence that the boundaries are working.

Replace These Thoughts	With These Truths
"I'm selfish for saying no."	"Saying no protects my well-being."
"They'll be upset with me."	"Others can manage their own feelings."
"I should do more."	"I deserve to have limits."
"I don't want to disappoint anyone."	"Others' disappointment is not my responsibility."

*Be prepared for partners, friends, colleagues, and/or family members to resist and comment on changes. This resistance is evidence that you are taking steps to **Positively Prioritise Self (PPS)**. Feelings of anxiety and guilt may arise from this resistance—practice the tips from the 'Guilt First-Aid Kit' below to guide you through, remaining calm and focused.*

3.0 BOUNDARY & GUILT HANGOVER MANAGEMENT

Understanding the Guilt Hangover

When you finally set a boundary and say "no," you will likely experience a wave of guilt, anxiety, or the urge to over-apologise. This is called the "**Guilt Hangover**."

It is important to recognise that guilt does not mean you did something wrong. Guilt is simply the "growing pain" of breaking an old habit—the friction of doing something new. If you feel guilty, it means your boundary is necessary.

The Practical Shift

Expect the guilt to show up, and have a plan. Use the **Guilt First-Aid Kit** below to soothe your nervous system when it does. Avoid backtracking or withdrawing your boundary just to make the uncomfortable feeling of guilt go away.

Sit with the discomfort, regulate your body (using techniques from the kit below), and remind yourself that you are **worthy** of healthy boundaries.

The following affirmation is most effective when spoken out loud with intention:

"I am not being selfish; I am empowering my self-worth. Others' disappointment is not my responsibility. I am allowed to prioritise my own well-being."

"Whatever you focus on you get more of" – Marisa Peer

The more you focus on your own well-being, this way of thinking begins to form naturally.

Gently Activating the "No" Switch

"No" is a complete sentence.

Reflect on a recent time when you said "yes" when you meant "no." What did it cost you (time, energy, resentment, etc.)?

Write down **one thing** you can say "no" to this week to protect your energy. Prepare to say "no" the next time you actually mean "no."

Testing the "No" Switch

Practice saying "no" repeatedly while looking in the mirror. Look deep into your eyes and become comfortable with whatever feelings may arise. The discomfort throughout your body exists because you are creating change and breaking a pattern.

If you feel uncomfortable this is confirmation of growth. Embrace this feeling and celebrate that you are moving forward.

Change is uncomfortable. Change = Growth

Allow your mind to interpret these feelings as "excitement" because you are stepping into positive change. Take a deep breath and affirm:

"This is excitement. This is growth. I choose me."

Repeat whenever necessary. This will become easier each time you actively say "no."

"The mind learns through repetition." — Marisa Peer

4.0 GUILT FIRST-AID KIT

Five Techniques to Calm the Nervous System

Choose any two techniques when guilt begins creeping in:

Technique 1: Butterfly Hands (Tapping)

Interlink your thumbs ("butterfly hands") and place palms on your chest. Gently alternate taps (left, right, left, right) on your chest for 1–2 minutes. While doing this, inhale deeply through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth.

Effect: This interrupts the brain's alarm system and activates calming neurochemicals. Repeat when necessary.

Technique 2: Deep Belly Breathing

Take five deep belly breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose with a closed mouth, hand on belly. Tighten lips as if whistling, then slowly blow out the air as if blowing through a straw. Tighten stomach muscles while doing so. Continue for 3–5 minutes.

Effect: This slows your heart rate and regulates your body and mind.

Technique 3: Barefoot Walking Grounding

Go for a 10-minute walk, barefoot on grass if possible. Focus on the grass between your toes and against your skin, noticing sensations that travel around your body. While walking (barefoot or otherwise), take note of your breath and consciously slow and control it. Walk at an easy pace with slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Effect: This increases blood flow to the brain and offers a sense of calm.

Technique 4: Cold Water Face Splash

Repeatedly splash cold water on your face and hold your breath for 10–15 seconds. Then breathe out. Repeat 3–5 times.

Effect: This instantly calms heart rate and reduces anxiety and stress.

Technique 5: Pillow Hug/Squeeze

Wrap arms around a pillow firmly against your chest. Gently breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds, hold your breath for 5 seconds, breathe out through your mouth for 5 seconds, wait 5 seconds. Repeat for 5 minutes.

Effect: This technique signals to the brain that you are safe, switching off the body's "fight or flight" response.

5.0 PRACTICAL SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

Self-care is most effective when practices are simple and repeatable.

Strategy 1: Nervous System Reset

Can be used after a difficult conversation or when feeling overwhelmed while setting a boundary.

1. Name 3 things you can hear
2. Name 3 things you can see
3. Move 3 parts of your body (shake your arms, jump up and down, wriggle your toes)
4. Finish with a long, slow, deep exhale

Purpose: The body is distracted from anxious feelings and thoughts, allowing emotional regulation.

Strategy 2: Assertive Pause Before Responding

Before agreeing to any request, pause for 10 seconds and quietly ask yourself:

- Do I actually want to do this?
- Do I realistically have the time or energy?
- Am I saying yes to avoid guilt, conflict, or disappointment?

If still unsure, consider responding with:

- "Let me check my schedule and get back to you."
- "I need some time to think about that."
- "I can't commit right now."

Purpose: This interrupts the automatic 'yes' and gives your nervous system time to respond authentically.

Strategy 3: Boundary Journaling (Three Minutes Daily)

At the end of each day, reflect on:

1. Did I say yes when I wanted to say no?
2. What did that cost me? (time, energy, sleep, resentment, stress)
3. What would a more self-assertive boundary look like next time?

Example: I agreed to complete a task at work, even though I was exhausted. Instead I can say: 'I am unable to help on this occasion, perhaps another time.'

Purpose: Journaling in this way builds awareness without shame and turns confusing overwhelm into specific, manageable changes.

Strategy 4: Five-Minute Grounding Meditation

This meditation exercise "empties the mind," which is often in a state of hyper-vigilance, frequently scanning for the reactions of others.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your chest.

1. Take 3 slow breaths: inhale for 4, exhale for 6
2. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?" Name one emotion without judgment
3. Then ask, "What do I need right now?" (rest, reassurance, space, food, water, movement, quiet, etc.)
4. End with: "My needs matter too."

Purpose: People-pleasers are frequently hyper-focused on others emotions, and often disconnected from their own. Meditation redirects attention inward.

6.0 CLOSING NOTE

Congratulations! This is progress!

Celebrate and treat yourself for every step forward. Celebrate every step of progress.

YOU deserve it. YOU are worthy.

Taking the first small step is the biggest hurdle. Once you've moved past it, momentum becomes your friend.

You are developing skills that will serve you for a lifetime. Be patient with yourself during this journey. Growth is a multi faceted journey where every effort counts.

Here it begins: Prioritising your Peace, without apology.