

# Episode 14 | The Power of Saying No

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### The Joyful DVM PODCAST

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Veterinarian  
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Over-complicating Yes or No questions by saying No when we mean Yes, and worse Yes when we really mean No, that's what we're talking about in Episode 14.

Welcome to the Joyful DVM Podcast. I'm your host, Veterinarian, and Certified Life Coach, Cari Wise. Whether you're dealing with the challenges in Vet Med, struggling with self-confidence, or you're just trying to figure out how to create a life and a career that you actually enjoy, you'll find encouragement, education, and empowering concepts you can apply right away. Let's get started.

Hey, everybody! Welcome to Episode 14. As we get started, I want to give a listener shout out to HeadstrongHound who reminds us, "Happy Vets are better bets!". This is the review that she left for us on iTunes. "In a profession that seems to constantly remind us of high suicide rates and possible debt burdens and all the factors that contribute to a negative work environment, Joyful DVM is a breath of fresh air. If you're looking for specific ways to find balance in your professional life, if you're willing to think differently about yourself and embrace the responsibility that change requires, Joyful DVM will speak to your heart". Thank you, HeadstrongHound, for these beautiful words. And you definitely spoke to my heart as you eloquently described the entire point of Joyful DVM and this podcast. Thanks for listening.

All right, here in Episode 14, we're going to talk about the Power of No. We're asked, from very basic questions, on a daily basis, questions that have the Yes or No response as an option, but we complicate it friends. Yes and No, we can't just leave it at that. Instead, we sometimes say Yes, we sometimes say No.

When we say Yes and we mean yes, that's awesome. When we say No and we mean no, that's awesome too. But what about those times that we say No when we really want to say Yes or worse, when we say Yes when we really want to say No. Super complicated for a pretty simple Yes or No question. Right?

So let's take a look at this a little bit more closely because what's really going on will tell us a lot about ourselves and how we interact with the world. So first off, did you know that No is a complete sentence? And Yes is also a complete sentence. So when you're asked a question where Yes or No answer is appropriate, you could just say Yes or No, but many of us won't do that. Instead, we say No or Yes, and then we jump into a long explanation to secure a specific response from the person who's asked us the question in the first place. That's what it really all boils down to is we're trying to predict and elicit a particular type of response. I want to take a minute here and go through and look at a specific example in the different ways that we might answer this Yes or No question with

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these four different types of answers in mind. So we're going to look at a Yes that means yes; a No that means no; a No where we really wanted to say Yes; and a Yes where we really want to say No. And as I go through all of these, I'm going to explain a little bit of why we do the things that we do so that we can really just be on to ourselves as we move forward in answering these types of questions.

So let's just use a pretty basic scenario. Let's say somebody asks you to go hiking. So do you want to go hiking on Saturday? That's the question. Do you want to go hiking on Saturday? Yes or No question. For those of us who absolutely, "Yes, we want to go and it works in our schedules", and all of that, Yes means yes. That's how, we're like, "Yes. What time?" Simple. Everybody's happy. I'm happy because I'm going hiking. They're happy because they asked me and I wanted to hike. They wanted me to go hiking. And I said, Yes, everybody's happy. It's very easy. Yes means yes. What about No? What about No and No means no. So for ourselves, if the answer is No, we're going to have a reason, but we could just simply say No. Do you want to go hiking on Saturday? "No, thanks!" And leave it at that. So what are the reasons that we might be saying No. If we want to say no and we want to say No because we don't like hiking, then it doesn't have anything to do with the person asking us to go hiking. Right? So we really shouldn't be afraid of a response from that person, a negative response from that person, if our answer is No. We could just simply make it simple, "No, thanks!" and leave it at that.

Many of us though, feel like we need to give a little bit more of an explanation. We could simply then give the explanation that we don't like hiking. "Hiking is not my thing. No, thanks!" "Hiking is not my thing. Thanks for asking!" Something like that. Either one of those would work just fine as a No and we could leave it at that. But a lot of us wouldn't do that. We would probably decide to go hiking. We would actually answer Yes when what we wanted to say was No. In those cases where we say, "Sure! When do you want to do it? What time?" Or we just say, "Sure!" And we kind of wait and see, like what's the rest of the plan going to be. We end up committing to do something that we don't want to do. We really don't want to do it, but we've decided to do it anyway. Why are we choosing that? We're choosing that because of a people-pleasing tendency. We're choosing that in order to avoid the negative response from the person if we answer the way that we really want to answer. We've made the question way more complicated than it is, and we've given it a whole lot more meaning if we say No, then they might think something that we don't want them to think. If we say No, then maybe they're going to think we don't like them. If we say No, maybe they're going to think that we are appreciative that they asked us.

So it's all this, this kind of drama that we create on what we believe our No is going to

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create for the person asking the question that keeps us from answering in a very genuine way. It keeps us from answering No, we become people pleasers. Here's the deal, guys. People pleasers are liars. Yeah. Hear me. People pleasers are liars. If you're a people pleaser, you are a liar. Now you may feel a little offended by that. I would not be surprised if you were feeling a little bit offended, but I just want to give you some straight, honest truth here. If you're answering in a disingenuous way, over and over and over again throughout your life, you're just lying. You're lying to yourself first and foremost. You don't have your own back. You're not standing up for what you want and what you believe. And there's probably some story underneath there about why, what you want doesn't matter. Why it's not important? Why something else is more important? So when you're answering No, when you're answering Yes when you really want to say No, I want you just to really consider why is it that you're making that choice? Are you truly making that choice because you're afraid of what the other person might think of you? That's often what drives people pleasing behaviors. Now there's the other side of this as well, which is when we answer No when we really want to say Yes. So what's that all about? Sometimes it's just logistics. Let's just be real. Sometimes it's simply logistics. Do you want to go hiking on Saturday? Yes. Unfortunately on Saturday, you've already committed to go do something else. You've already committed to spend your time doing something else. And so yeah, you want to go hiking, but you've also committed to, let's say having lunch with your mom. Two things that you want to do. One is going to win. You can't be in two places at one time. So you're going to say No to going hiking because you've already committed to having lunch with your mom.

What I want us to see here is that there's a bit of a trap in this answer as well. Why? So where's the trap? So the trap that's here in this answer as well, comes in the way that we communicate the No. So we want to go hiking, right? And we also want to have lunch with mom. Hiking is going to be the No because we already committed to mom, and we don't want to change our plans with mom. It's super important for us to recognize we have two competing wants here. We want to do both, but we can't physically be in two places at the same time. So if somebody says, "Hey, you want to go hiking on Saturday at one o'clock?" and you know that you already have lunch plans with mom at one o'clock on Saturday, your answer is going to be No, but how are you going to communicate that? The best way to communicate it and the best way, meaning the best way emotionally for you and for everybody involved, is for you to say, "Man, I'd love to! I'm already committed to having lunch with mom on Saturday, at one o'clock. Can we do it another time?" If we say something like that, if that's our response, what are we communicating? We're communicating, "Yes, we want to do it". "Yes, we're very interested. Thank you for asking us." And today it's a No because we've already made a commitment to do something else. It's completely fine for us to pick one thing over the other. Hear me! You literally can

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pick one thing over the other. You're going to do it all the time anyway. But what many of us would do instead is we'd say, "Man, I'd like to, but I can't. I can't because I already have plans with my mom on Saturday". Or "It sounds really fun, but I really shouldn't because I already decided to have lunch with my mom on Saturday".

Hey, you might be thinking, "Cari, aren't they the same thing? Aren't I just communicating the same message?" To the other person, yeah, kind of. You are because you're saying, "Yeah, I want to, but I'm not going to, and this is and why", but instead of just owning it, "Yeah. Sounds like a good time. I've already committed to having lunch with mom on Saturday and I'm going to do that, but I would love to do it another time. Is there another time you're available?" So instead of just kind of taking the bull by the horns and saying, "Yeah, I want to do both. I'm going to choose lunch with mom 'cause I've already decided that. Let's pick another time". Instead of being very powerful in the choice, instead, we abdicate the responsibility of the choices something outside of it. "I can't because I already committed to having lunch with mom". "I shouldn't because I already committed having lunch with mom".

Those two phrases, the "I can't" and the "I should have", they're everything when it comes to the way that you feel in that situation. The "I can't" tag is super self-defeating: I can't do it because I'm having lunch with mom. We really start to believe that we're in a disempowered state. Very self-defeating like we don't have a choice here. Like the answer has to be No, because we already committed to do something else. What you totally miss every single time that you start out with, "I can't", is that you're actually making a choice. And there isn't anything in this world that you have to do.

"I can't" is a cop-out for saying No. It makes saying No easier. You believe it makes saying No easier because it's got an excuse attached to it. That you're framing in a way as if you don't have any control in your answer: I can't. Here's what's true. You've got two competing wants. You want to go to lunch with your mom and you want to go hiking. One of those is going to win. One of those, when it comes to one o'clock on Saturday, one of those you're going to want to do more than the other one. Do you want to have lunch with your mom more than you want to go hiking? If the answer is Yes, then just own it. Don't blame your mom and having lunch with your mom for the reason you're not going to go hiking. The only reason you would do that is because you're trying to control the response from the person who asked you to go hiking. You are thinking somewhere in there that you might hurt their feelings if you tell them No. So you can't just say, "No, I already have plans. Let's do it another time". Which would be like the simplest thing you can answer. But instead of because you're afraid of them having their feelings hurt or being offended or that they won't ask you again or whatever story you're telling yourself

around what might happen if you tell them No, you tell them No, but then you try to back it up with the reason that is really out of your control. I can't because I already told mom I would have lunch with her. What's true in that situation is you want to have lunch with mom more than you want to go hiking, and you know what, own your choice, it's totally fine, to want that. It's completely fine. And most people actually, aren't going to be offended. That whole worry about them being offended by you saying No is really all just made up in your head to say No. And if you really want to do it, offer another option. So now there's the other side of this too. What if you really want to go hiking more than you want to have lunch with mom? What if hiking sounds way better than your choice that you've already made to have lunch with your mom? You still have a choice. Nobody's making you have lunch with your mom. You simply could change the lunch date with mom. Now, many of you are like, "Holy moly. You don't know my mom. There's no way we absolutely not do this". And I want you to see that you absolutely can. Nobody can make you do anything. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. So if now the hiking is a higher priority than having lunch with mom, then you just have a conversation with mom, "Hey mom! I have an opportunity to go to hiking. Is that all right if we go ahead and move lunch to a different time?" So you could frame it that way and you could literally let mom make the choice. She either says, yes or no, and just like either answer, if you give her the choice to move, to like move lunch so you can go do something else, and her answer is No, that's the only time it's going to work for her, then what? Then you're back in a situation where you've got to still decide. Are you going to cancel lunch with mom? Or are you going to stick with it? So in that first example where I said, "Hey, mom! You know, I had a chance to go hiking. It happens to be at the exact same time that we were going to have lunch. Can we do lunch at another time?" In that situation, you're giving the decision on whether or not you're going hiking to your mom. Just be aware that you're doing that. It's completely fine to do it. Just be aware that you've kind of advocated responsibility for the decision, again, to something outside of you.

The other option, if you really just want to go hiking, instead of having lunch with mom, and you've already committed to having lunch with mom, you can just say, "Hey, okay, mom. I have an opportunity to go hiking. I would like to change our date, our lunch date. So I'm canceling. Let's pick another time and another day. What works for you?" And you just, just decide, you just own your choice. I'm going to go do this. Instead of doing that. Now, some of you would feel really guilty about that. And so you'll never even make that choice. You'll never decide to pick hiking over lunch with mom. You just got to decide which one do you want more and do you like your reasons why. It's completely fine to want to go hiking and to want to go hiking more than you want to go have lunch with mom. But to be intentionally committed to your prior decision, to have lunch with your

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mom and to do that anyway, that's not people-pleasing. This is very important that we understand the difference. That's not people-pleasing.

People-pleasing is agreeing to have lunch with mom when you never wanted to do it in the first place. Okay? That's different. That's not what's happening here. You've made a decision to have lunch with mom and now something else is a different opportunity has come up at the exact same time. It's completely fine to honor your decision to have lunch with your mom, and then to also say, "Hey! I'd love to go hiking. I've already made that commitment. Can we do it another time?", and see what you can have both. You're not gonna be able to do both at the same time. That's just not possible, but the way that you approach, how you can balance both of them is everything. If it's the "I can't": I just can't go because I've already got this commitment with my mom, then what's happened is that you have become very self-defeating, it's a cop-out. You want to do it, but you're really living in this, this world where you're believing that it's just not possible for you to go hiking.

You're completely missing that No. You still have the choice. You still absolutely could cancel lunch with mom and go hiking. You have the ability to do that. That's just not what you want to do or what you're not willing to do. Instead, you want to blanket it with the, "I can't", which is the cop-out, which makes you feel like you don't actually have control over the decision. It's very self-defeating and it's the language we need to become very super aware of. Because every time we give in to the "I can't" we're just notching ourselves down, lower and lower, on the long wrong of priorities. And until you prioritize what you want in your life, you're never going to be able to build yourself confidence or create the life that you want.

So let's just get real honest. The "I can't" phrase just needs to be an indicator: hey, what am I believing about this situation, and what's actually true. What's actually true every time that you say, "I can't", is that you actually are making a choice of one thing over the other. Let's understand why we're making that choice. Are we making an empowered choice? Because we want the one thing more than we want the other thing, or we want to keep our word to somebody else more than we want to go and do this new thing. Those are both reasons that we can really stand behind and really feel proud of. But if the reasons that we're not doing something are because we're doing something else that we don't even want to do in the first place, because we've elected to do it rather than deal with the "consequences of saying No", now we're in a bit of a pickle because now we've got people-pleasing going on and people-pleasing is keeping us from doing what we really want to do. That's why I come back and say, people pleasers are liars. We're lying to ourselves every time we agree to do something that we really, really don't want

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to do. Now let's talk a little bit about lunch with mom, from a people-pleasing perspective. What if mom says, "Hey! You want to go to lunch?", and you don't want to, but your answer's No, but you also value your relationship with your mom and you know that she would get a lot of enjoyment out of spending time with you, in that case, is saying yes, people-pleasing activity? It's an interesting question. I could argue both ways. Yes. Because you're doing something that you don't really want to do, but really I'm going to argue No, I don't think that it's a people-pleasing activity, because what you want at that moment is to give your mom the opportunity to spend time with you. She has communicated, "I love spending time with you. I would like to spend more time with you". And you like to spend time with your mom. You love your mom.

So making a decision to do something that honors somebody else that meets a need that they have actually communicated, I don't think that's people-pleasing activity at all. People-pleasing activity is when you agree to do the thing, and then you just feel crappy about it, right? It's like when somebody asks you, "Hey! Can you come by my house and check out my dog? I think that he's got like something nasty in his ears. Would you mind, would you just stop by, on your way home from work today?" And maybe this is being asked by one of your friends or your neighbors or somebody like that. And you don't want to. There's not a bone in your body that wants to do that, and you actually feel pretty annoyed that they've even asked. In a perfect world, you don't want to do that. But you say, Yes. You say, Yes, in that situation, because you're afraid they're going to be mad. Because you're afraid they're going to say something ugly about you to somebody that they know. You're afraid, maybe, they're going to post something on social media. You're worried about all the ways they may react to you're saying No, even though you really, at the end of the day, you do not want to go and do that thing, and so you say Yes. And so what happens is you say Yes, and you're pissed off the entire time and you're protecting yourself, you think. Right? You're protecting whatever they think about you. But meanwhile, you're not thinking of a single happy thing about them. And you're very frustrated and angry. You're lying to yourself, right? You're people-pleaser in that situation, "Yeah. I'll come by". You don't want to come by. So you're literally deciding to do something that you don't want to do, but you're doing that out of fear. You're doing that out of worry of what their reaction will be. You think you're responsible for their emotional fallout that could occur if you just said No. You're not responsible for their feelings.

Can we just be real honest here? You're never responsible for somebody else's feelings. Anything that somebody says or does is always driven by their own emotions. Emotion drives action. But in this situation, you're believing that if you can control their reaction. So if you can keep them happy that they're going to be less likely to do something that



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might negatively impact you. You're trying to control their actions by controlling their emotions, by controlling their thoughts. The only way you do that is by agreeing to do the thing that you don't want to do.

If you were just in a genuine place and you just said, No, then what? You have no idea how they're gonna react. You actually never had any idea how they were going to react anyway, but we kind of feel like we have more control over it if we do the thing they've asked us to do. But if you say No, then their reaction is, feels very much more uncertain, feels more potentially harmful, right? So if they get mad, they're feeling an emotion of anger, what are they going to do? Maybe they're going to lash out at you. Maybe they're going to say something nasty. Maybe they're going to talk about you to the other neighbors. Maybe like I said, they're going to go on social media and they're going to post a review about how you wouldn't just drop by and see their dog, whatever. They may do something like that and then what? And then what? What are you making that reaction, like those actions of other people mean about you? You're believing that you can prevent it by going along and doing what they want you to do, but it just kills your soul. Let's be honest. One of the things that lead to burn out is this kind of repeatedly saying Yes to the things that we really want to say No to. And we do that because we're afraid. We're afraid of the reactions. We're afraid of the fallout. If we really look at it though, what's the worst-case scenario? So and so says something nasty about you to a neighbor, and then what? And the neighbor believes them, so what?

Guys, we got to get really familiar with what we care about as individuals. What our priorities are? Who we are as people? If you really know who you are and you know what your motives are, what the other people think about you really don't matter. But unfortunately, many of us are still pretty shaky on what we believe and who we are and what we want to create for our lives. And if we don't have a solid foundation of what we want to prioritize for ourselves, then we let the world dictate what becomes a priority. Then we continue to say Yes when we really want to say No. This destroys our self-confidence.

Self-confidence is built by putting ourselves in situations that are scary. That is putting in situations that are uncertain. And the reason that we put ourselves in those situations is because those situations move us closer to what we're trying to create for ourselves, to our goals, to what we want for our lives. As we purposefully put ourselves in those situations, even when we're afraid, even when we're uncertain, and we all survive, then your confidence goes up a little bit. And then you just do that over and over and over again. So in the situation, when we're talking about somebody who asks you to come by and check out their dog's ears on your way home from work, just, "Can you just swing

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by?", and your answer is No. Your gut answer. Your instinct is No, and your mouth says Yes, what do you need there? What you need there is a boundary. This is actually a pretty clear one. This is a perfect example of where a boundary needs to come into play.

Many of us get the boundaries wrong. We're all going to be pissed off because the people asked. They've actually violated our boundaries because they even asked us. No, no, my friends! That's not how boundaries work. That's not what's happening here. If you have not communicated your expectation of their behavior and the consequence if they display that behavior, then you don't get to be mad about them violating a boundary. You have to communicate what you expect. So what do you expect? So what is the answer? "Can you come by? Can you swing by and check out these years on the way home from work?" The answer is No. Now how do you communicate that No? You communicate that No by understanding why No is there. So why is it that you don't want to go do that? Like really, if you think about it, why do you not want to stop by and look at the ears on the way home from work? I'll give you, I can only give you my personal answer to this. My personal answer would be, me stopping by and taking a look at your dog's ears on the way home from work, I'm not going to have the equipment with me that I need to diagnose the problem. So at most I'm going to be able to say, "Yep, there's a problem" or "I don't think there's a problem, but I can't really tell because I also don't have an Otoscope. So I can't actually do a thorough physical exam". Right? So I can either like, take a peek or smell it from across the room, and be like, "Yeah, that needs to go be seen" or "Maybe, right. So, yep, there's a problem or there might be a problem. I can't actually definitively even say there's no problem because I don't have the equipment with me to be able to make that diagnosis. So I can't do my job at your house. I'm not, if I'm not a mobile vet, I can't do my job there". That's my reason for No. At the end of the day, that's my reason if I get all the drama away because I can't effectively do my job there. So how do I communicate that? That's really at the end of the day, if somebody asked me to come by and look at their pet, I need to figure out how do I communicate that I can't effectively do my job at your house. I can come up with a million reasons.

Just be honest. A lot of us used to be like, "No, sorry. You know, I can't do that because I can't really practice medicine outside of the hospital because it's against the practice act". So like, we're going to like deflect it to something else. That's not really the reason. Right? Because it comes back to the I can't. If we tag the I can't on it and I can't as a cop-out, what's true, even if let's just say, even if the practice act says that you cannot look at the ears outside of a veterinary hospital, it doesn't say that, but let's just say that it did, even the answer, "I can't do that because the practice act won't allow it", is a cop-out of an answer because you can, right? Like, the practice act can't physically stop you from doing something that is, that's not in the practice act. Can we agree on that? Like these

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written words on this paper or this bit of licensure requirement cannot actually stop you from doing anything. What stops you is what you believe about it, right? If you want to stay in alignment with the practice act, if you want to make sure that you're following the rules of the practice act, then you're going to make decisions that keep you in alignment with the practice act.

So let's just own our choice. Once again, let's not deflect it. Let's not have a cop-out and stop the I can't, which seems to like abdicate the responsibility of your choice to something outside of you. Let's not do that. Let's own our choices. So let's just say that you said you can't look at ears outside of a veterinary hospital then how would you respond? Somebody says, "Hey! Will you come by and take a look at my dog's ears on the way home?", then how would you respond? You're going to set a boundary. You're going to communicate information. You're gonna set that boundary. You're going to say, "Hey! Taking a look at ears outside of the veterinary hospital actually is against what is listed in the practice act, and it's important to me to maintain the integrity of the practice act. So I'm not going to come by and take a look at your dog's ears, but I'd be happy to take a look at them at work. So if you would like for me to take a look at your dog's ears or any other medical condition, please schedule a time to see me when I'm in the office. I appreciate your concern, and I appreciate that you trust me with your pet's medical wellbeing, but I'm just going to make sure that I maintain practicing within the bounds of what is listed for our profession". Something like that. Obviously more eloquently said.

If you want to like some blueprints on how to actually set boundaries in the right way, I've got a boundaries blueprint. I'll drop the link to that in the show notes. There's actually also, we're doing a boundaries workshop, setting boundaries workshop. By the time this podcast gets released that workshop's going to be over. But if you join us in Vet Life Academy, the replay is going to be available there. So the two-hour workshop on setting boundaries, the Q and A, and all that's going to be inside of Vet Life Academy is a free bonus, but I'll put the boundaries blueprint and link here as well.

That boundary, when you communicate that boundary, what are you doing? You're setting, like you're answering the question and you're setting an expectation of behavior, which is, "Don't ask me to take care of your pet outside of the office. And if you do, I'm not going. My answer is going to be No". So it's that you're communicating what the behavior is that you want, you don't want them to ask you. And what you're going to do if they ask, which is to say No. And you're letting them know that in advance. So once you've set that boundary, like in this case, if it's the first time they've asked you, you're gonna set that boundary right then, then the next time they ask you, you don't need to be offended.

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We can't control the humans. You can only control your response. You've already let them know, "Hey, heads up. If you asked me to come to take care of an animal outside of the veterinary hospital, my answer is going to be No". So when they ask again, you just say, No. "Nope, I'm sorry. If you would like me to take a look at your animal, please make an appointment". And then you just let go of the rest. The reason this is so hard for us is not because we don't know that we don't want to do it. Like, let's be real. We do know that we don't want to see these animals outside of the animal hospital. The reason that we have trouble communicating that is because of what our fear of how they're going to react.

It's the fear of how the other people are going to react that keep us saying Yes when we mean No, or keep us saying No and then being completely freaked out by what might happen if we say No. It's that fear of conflict and judgment and disapproval. And that fear of hurting somebody else's feelings that keep us saying Yes when we really mean No. It has us people-pleasing. But the thing of it is like I already said, we're not responsible for how other people feel in reaction to our words. Their feelings only come from their thoughts. We can't control their thinking. We think that we can, we try to soften it with words like "I can't" and "I shouldn't" because somehow we are believing if we can soften our No by abdicating the choice to something outside of us, maybe then they'll understand why we're saying No. My friends, you don't need them to understand your No. You need to understand your No. You need to be confident in your No. And then you just need to let them deal with your No in whatever way they're going to deal with it. The only reason that we don't allow them to process their own emotion over our answers is because we're feeling responsible for their emotions. You're not. It's not how it works.

Emotions are created by thinking and you can't control their thinking. So just realize that. We have this misplaced sense of responsibility for other people's emotions. Now I'm not saying that you don't care. I'm not saying that at all. I'm not saying that you're picking yourself over somebody else every single time, because that's not what's happening here. Lunch with mom. Let's go back to that. In that situation. You've decided to have lunch with mom and you care about mom. You care about her feelings. You can care about somebody else's feelings and make choices to honor other people and to do things that aren't your favorite things in the world to do. But what's happening is you're not saying Yes when you really mean No. You're saying Yes because you like your reason why. You're saying Yes because you know mom is happy and mom feels more connected and mom feels more appreciated when we spend time with her. That's why you're saying Yes because you want to honor your mother and your relationship there. That's why you're saying Yes. You want to say Yes so you're saying Yes. But when you're saying Yes and you mean No, what you've also got to see, you don't have your own back.

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You're definitely prioritizing somebody else's needs and wants over your own, which is never going to work out for anybody in the long run. And you're really devaluing your own choices.

When you say Yes when you really mean No, it creates a lot of inner turmoil. A lot of anger, quite honestly. We become angry because we believe that we have to do this thing that we don't want to do. The "have too's" give your power away. There's not a single thing in this world that you have to do. So what you've just got to realize when the people-pleasing activities, jump into play, when you find yourself saying Yes when you really mean No, and you're really believing that you don't have a choice, I want you to take a minute to step back and remember you always have a choice. There's nothing in this world that you have to do. So all of that, people-pleasing that you're doing because you are believing you don't have a choice, it's time for you just to call BS on all of that. That's not what's happening. What's happening is your deciding to do something because you would rather do that thing than personally deal with whatever the consequences might be if you don't. You're choosing to do it as a means of avoiding the reaction if you chose differently. Just own what's really happening there.

Sometimes we're still going to make that choice. That's cool. Totally fine for us to just decide to do something in order to avoid a different situation. If we do it from an empowered place and we know that's why we're doing it, fine. Do it! I don't even think it's people-pleasing at that point, because what you're doing is you're deciding to do something from an unintentionally powerful place. You're just electing not to get yourself embroiled in something else. Now, remember, there's actually no guarantee that there would ever be something to be embroiled in. It's just something that we're believing, but at least we can make that choice from an empowered place. I'm going to go to the family holiday gathering because I don't want to deal with all the comments that would come up if I didn't go. Might we choose that? Yes. Is it people-pleasing? No, because we're making an empowered decision for ourselves. Now, the trick is, the way that it really is not people-pleasing is if we go in and we enjoy our time there. If we go and the whole time we're there, we're telling ourselves we don't want to be there and we shouldn't have had to come, and this is just a bunch of crap and all of that. And it's the same thing every single year. And all this big, like drama and just the internal dialogue of complaining and misery, and, "Oh, poor me for being there!", then yeah, you're lying to yourself. You're being a people pleaser. But if you just go and you decided to have a good time and you decide to enjoy and really stand behind your own choice, you'll be become empowered in your choice to go, and you say, "Hey!" You know what, when that like, shit talk pops up in your brain about how you don't want to be there, you can be like, "Yep, and we decided to come. So we're going to have a good time. We decided to do this and we're

going to own our choice". You keep overriding that internal dialogue with the reminder that you chose to be here, then you don't become a victim of your own choice. But if you say Yes, and you want to say No, and then you have a pity party over saying Yes, and then you're a victim of your Yes decision, just recognize you've created all of that for yourself. It's all because of people-pleasing. It's never going to serve you. It's going to be very self-defeating. It's very disempowering and it's not the kind of choices that are going to move you forward to becoming the person you want to be or creating the life that you want to have.

It all boils down to how you answer Yes and No questions. Is your yes a yes? Then let it be Yes. If your No's, a No, then let it be No.

If you say Yes when you really mean No, use that as an opportunity to understand why. Why are you answering differently than what you want? Really dig into that, to understand why you've decided to communicate a decision that's different than what you wanted. If it's for a reason other than just a concurrent wanting to do something for somebody else more than you want to not do it for yourself. If it's something beyond that, then it's people-pleasing. It's disempowering and it's self-defeating.

If your No, if you answer No when you really want to answer Yes, again, just look at it. If it's a logistics thing like literally you want to do both things, you can't do be in two places at the same time, then it's a No. But it's a No and can we have a rain check? No, I'm doing this other thing. Can we do it another time? So it's a No with the caveat of, "I want to. I really still want to do this thing. Thank you for asking me." Like, you can be so excited about the invitation. Let's just figure out another way to do it at a different time. Let's work the logistics out. So that's what a No. Like a Yes that's a No is a No. It's just a logistics thing.

But if the Yes is a No because you're afraid: you're afraid to do the thing, you're afraid to commit, you're afraid of the reaction of somebody else if you say yes, again, an indicator that you've got to really understand why you answered No when you really wanted to answer Yes. Because again, it's going to come back to fear. It's going to come back to fear and fear of judgment and disapproval and trying to avoid conflict.

It's coming back to what the other humans will think and believe and say, and do as a result of your decision. Those are self-confidence killing decisions. You will never build your confidence if you continue to make decisions from a motivation of trying to create only a positive or supportive result or reaction from the people around you. That's not how self-confidence is built. That's not how you become the person you're supposed to

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be. And that's not how you create the future that you want.

So my friends, let your Yes's be, Yes. Let your No's be No. Learn how to set and maintain your own boundaries because you are the only one who can violate your boundary. You do those three things and everything opens up to you as far as what you think is possible. The "I can't's", the "I shouldn't's", and the "I have too's" need to go away. All of those, again, indicators that you've got more work to do to understand your own motives and more opportunity to stand up for what you really want, which will have you showing up authentically, which has you serving your purpose and the world to your fullest potential.

All right, my friends, that's going to wrap it up for this Episode. If you want to learn more about how you can actually dig into understanding your own thought processes and making different decisions that actually help move you forward. If you want to learn more about exactly how to set boundaries and you want to get your hands on that setting boundaries workshop, join us in Vet Life Academy. Check it out at [joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy](https://joyfuldvm.com/vetlifeacademy). That's gonna wrap it up for this week and I'll see you next time.

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