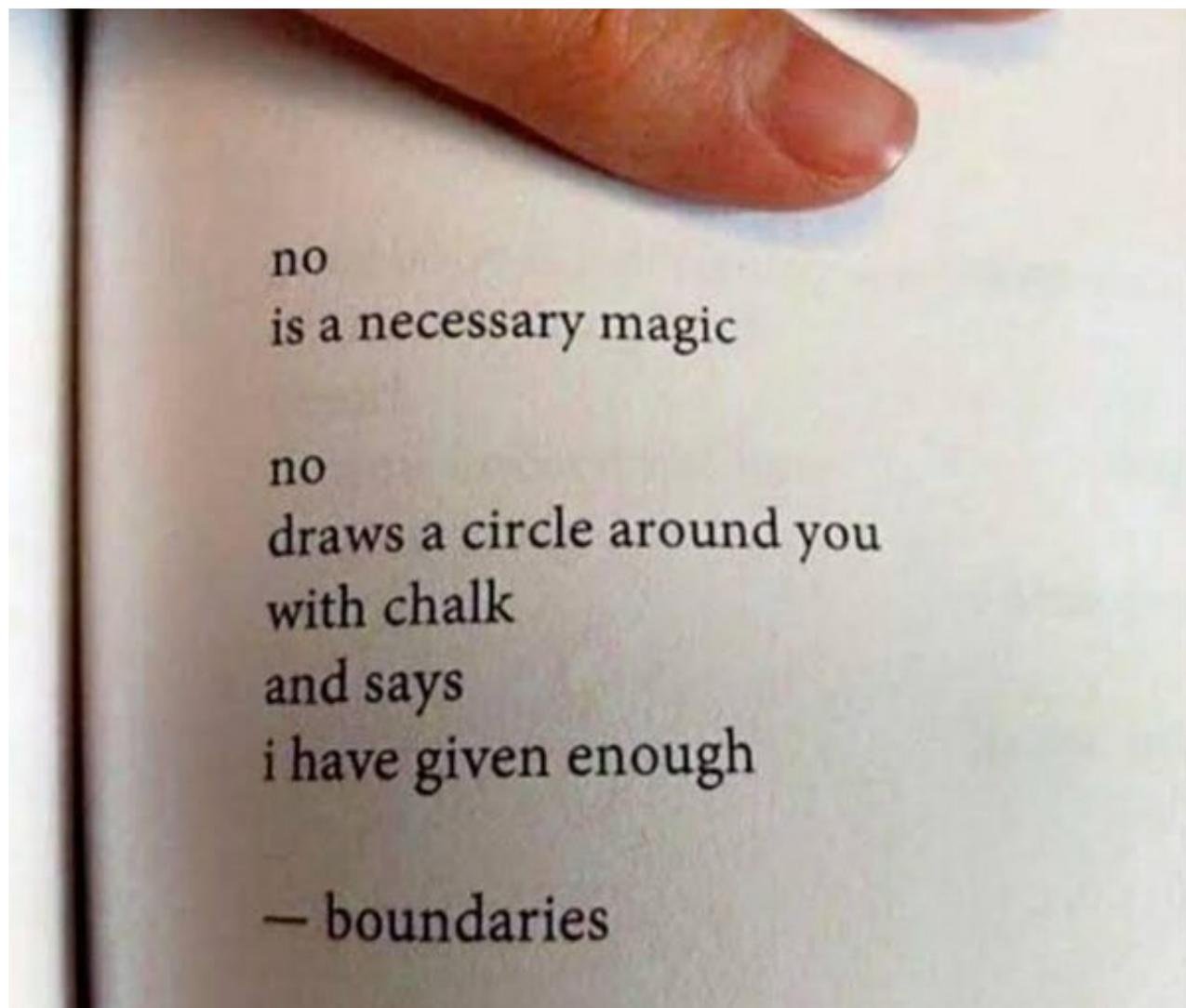


## This NO is a YES



We go through life through culturally defined communication patterns that have demonized saying NO in work, in relationships. in parenting and to the self to feed the greed and the fanfare of the hustle culture where having or doing more is valued higher than being more. However, the two-letter word that is more often a complete sentence and one of the most assertive stances we embrace, is probably the most powerful way to set healthy boundaries and access better choices. My personal power being an empathetic therapist was often intruded upon by people who often believed they were entitled to my time and services just because they demanded it, could afford it and often felt they could navigate through with recommendations from close friends or by shaming me through reviews online. That's when I chanced upon a lovely piece of research on how it was important for the most compassionate people to learn to say NO as a practice to keep their empathy and kindness intact. Pushing the limits and overreaching led to a pattern of self-sabotage that often led

to compassion fatigue that often got interpreted as rudeness or arrogance when it was just a small step in self preservation and self protection since true self care through assertiveness and boundaries was not possible. This happens in homes, in relationships, at work and in all transactions that involve human interaction.

NO is difficult to say because it goes against our cultural conditioning, it brings up unresolved emotions often around our own fears of rejection and low self-worth. However, once we begin to empower ourselves with a clear NO it paves way for

1. Deeper awareness of emotional states we need to integrate to claim our highest potential.
2. Helps us engage more efficiently with people who value us and keep away the ones who become users and abusers over time.
3. Helps us maintain the core of peace and calm that is required to remain empowered through our own compassion towards the self.
4. Makes way for the ability to bounce back and access our own resources through difficult times especially when our role involves balancing the "giving and the receiving"
5. NO attracts the right relationships and usually serves as a great tool to keep toxic relationships at a distance.

The journey to finding and reclaiming our highest potential often starts with the pact we sign with the ability to be assertive in our communication. Relationships do improve as soon as we begin to seriously commit to the value we bring to the table and the steps we are willing to take to set and maintain healthy boundaries. The unintegrated parts of our psyche will always send out excuses like, "this cannot happen in a family", "I cannot do this in my place of work", "it may work for you but

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I cannot even think about it" and so on. Any change work will meet its first adversary in resistance. It helps to keep us in dysfunctional patterns when change requires effort. Every time you find yourself giving in to someone or something more than you need to, repeatedly and feel drained or emotionally imbalanced as a result of the choice, you could become aware of the triggers and patterns that need to be reworked to be able to chalk out the path to your highest potential. Learning to say NO is probably one of the most empowering skills we will master on this realm.