Say yes to yourself

by Bao Tram Tran

Bachelor of Communication and Media

I was an easygoing person. And I still am.

"Do you want to be a volunteer for the family event?"
"Of course!" (Even though I was overloaded)

"Hey, wanna hang out this weekend?"
"Cool, I'll be there." (Even though I was tired)

"Can you help me with…"
"Sure…" (Even though I felt disconnected from myself)

For a long time, I thought saying yes made me a better person. Part of me also feared of missing out – classic FOMO. What if I wasn't invited next time? What if I missed a memory? So I kept saying yes, even when my body and mind begged for rest.

But FOMO left me drained. I showed up everywhere but wasn't really present. I took on roles but couldn't give my best. Constant yes wasn't kindness – it was self-neglect. Boundaries aren't walls; they're doors you control. Sometimes closing one for others means opening one for yourself.

Saying no doesn't make you selfish. It means saying yes to your health, your values, and your peace of mind.

I was an easygoing person. And I still am. But I learned to say "no".

Here are a few tips I've learned:

1. Pause before answering

When someone asks for your time, ask yourself: Do I truly have the capacity for this right now? Will it bring me joy, or just feed my FOMO? That pause helps separate genuine desire from guilt-driven obligation.

2. Replace guilt with honesty

It's okay to say, "I'd love to, but I can't commit this time," or "Thanks for asking, but I really need to recharge." Boundaries can be kind and still firm.

3. Prioritise rest

Rest isn't laziness — it's fuel. When you choose sleep, solitude, or quiet reflection over yet another activity, you're actually protecting your energy for the moments that matter most.
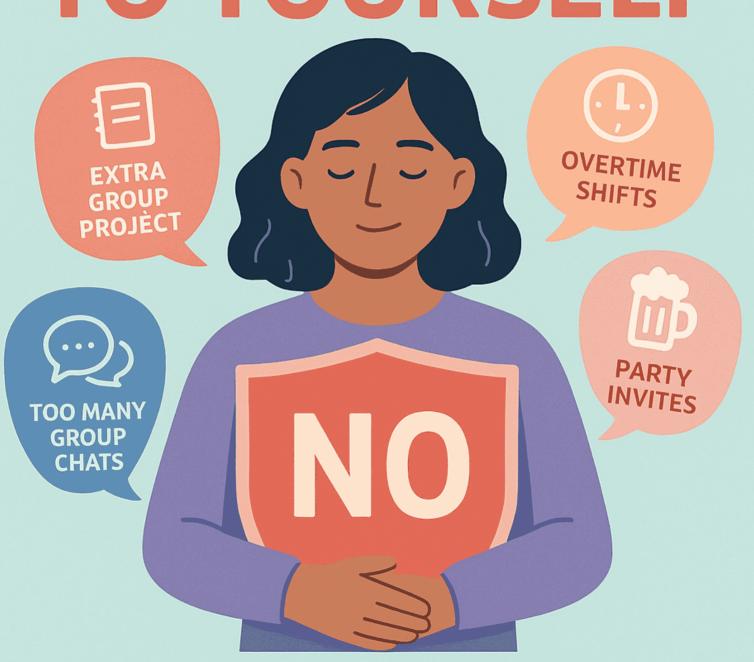
4. Focus on quality, not quantity

One meaningful yes is better than ten half-hearted ones. When you stop saying yes out of FOMO, the times you do say yes become more joyful and authentic.

5. Be compassionate with yourself

If you feel guilty after saying no, remember: you're not rejecting the person, only the request. Those who truly value you will understand.