

THE AUTHENTIC EDGE

Helping you to become who you are meant to be -- in your **personal life, relationships** and **career**.

June 24, 2025



The Joy and Pain of Saying Yes

I'll admit—I like to say yes to people. It makes me feel good to be helpful, generous, accommodating. But I've learned that when I say yes from a place of wanting to be liked or avoid discomfort, it isn't always authentic. In trying to be nice, we can lose sight of what we actually want or need. People-pleasing may look kind on the outside, but inside, it traps us in roles that keep us small, exhausted, and disconnected from our true self.

The fear of saying no doesn't come from your Authentic Self—it comes from your self-protective system. Whether it's guilt, anxiety, or the fear of disappointing others, these reactions are learned responses designed to keep you "safe" by avoiding conflict or rejection. But in protecting ourselves from discomfort, we often abandon our needs, our energy, and even our identity.

In this issue, we explore what it really means to set a boundary—from the brain's response to guilt, to why both narcissists and codependents struggle to say no. You'll find tools and insights to help you strengthen your ability to speak up, hold the line, and protect your energy without shame or apology.

Because saying no isn't rejection—it's self-respect in action.

Warm regards,

Anne Dranitsaris

Did You Know?

Guilt is a master shapeshifter. It can masquerade as empathy, loyalty, even love—but more often, it's control wearing a kind face. When we feel guilty for saying no, taking a break, or putting our needs first, it's usually not because we've done

something wrong. It's because we've been conditioned to believe that being good means being selfless. Guilt keeps us tethered to outdated versions of ourselves—versions that survived by pleasing, performing, and over-functioning. The truth is, guilt isn't a moral signal. It's a nervous system response. And the more you honor your boundaries in spite of it, the more it fades.

In This Week's Newsletter

Feature Article: How to Set Boundaries without Guilt

Brain-Based Tip for Dealing with Guilt When You Say No

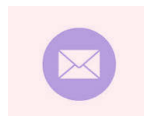
Did You Know? Guilt is a Master Shapeshifter

Statistics on the Fear of Saying No and People-Pleasing

Authentic Reflections: I Don't Mean to Seem Ungrateful

Upcoming Events: Summer & Fall 2025

Anne Dranitsaris, Ph.D.
647.227.0332





If you're someone who gives a lot—to your partner, your boss, your kids, your clients—you probably know the moment after you say yes. The one where your body tightens, your breath shortens, and a quiet resentment begins to rise.

You didn't want to say yes.

You just didn't know how to say no (Without feeling guilty, justifying, explaining, and overall, making things worse.)

For many of us—especially those raised to be good, helpful, or not make waves—setting boundaries can feel dangerous. We fear being seen as selfish. We fear disappointing others. We fear the pushback: the eye roll, the guilt trip, the silence. And so, we default to pleasing, over functioning, and sacrificing ourselves at the altar of being liked, approved of, or needed.

But let's be clear: setting a boundary isn't an act of rejection. It's an act of self-respect..

[Read the Full Article](#)

I DIDN'T MEAN
TO SEEM
UNGRATEFUL!

A True Story About Self-
Advocacy, Fear, and Finding
Your Voice at Work



When my 40-year-old client, Julia*, sat down in my office, she looked exhausted—mentally, emotionally, and physically. Her coworker had left the company months ago, and in that silent, all-too-familiar way, Julia was expected to take on both roles. No formal conversation. No pay increase. Just more meetings, more responsibility, and more pressure.

She was afraid to say anything.

Not because she lacked awareness that it was unfair, but because deep down, she didn't believe she was allowed to say no.

"I didn't want to seem like I wasn't a team player," she said.
"I didn't want to lose my job."
"I didn't want to disappoint them."

When I asked what she did want, she paused. Then came the quiet truth:

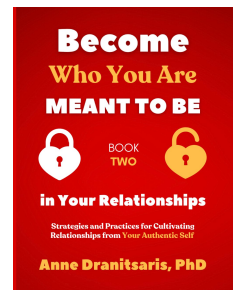
[Read the Full Article](#)

The fear of saying no often feels real in the moment—but it doesn't belong to your present reality. It's a reflex rooted in the past, shaped by experiences where setting boundaries led to rejection, criticism, or emotional withdrawal. Your nervous system learned to associate no with danger, disconnection, or being "bad." That's where the guilt comes from too. It's not a sign you're doing something wrong—it's a leftover emotional imprint from a time when your safety or belonging depended on compliance. Today, you're no longer that powerless child or that anxious employee trying to prove your worth. The fear and guilt may still echo, but they aren't telling the truth about who you are or what you're allowed to need. You can feel them—and still say no.

Statistics on the Fear of Saying No and People-Pleasing

If you struggle to say no, you're far from alone. Research shows that more than half of us agree to things just to avoid upsetting others—and many of us carry guilt long after we do. But guilt isn't a moral compass; it's a conditioned response from a time when saying no felt unsafe.

- 61% of people say they agree to things they don't want to do because they don't want to upset anyone (YouGov, 2022)
- 49% of women say they regularly feel guilty when they say no to others (Psychology Today survey, 2021)
- In workplace settings, 1 in 3 employees report they say yes to additional tasks out of fear of being seen as difficult or uncooperative (Harvard Business Review, 2020)
- 70% of people identify themselves as people-pleasers and struggle with setting healthy boundaries (BetterHelp internal data, 2023)
- Studies show that those with a high fear of negative evaluation are significantly more likely to comply with requests, even when they feel overwhelmed or resentful (Journal of Social Psychology, 2019)



Brain Tip for Dealing with Guilt When You Say No

Guilt Is Just a Signal—Not a Stop Sign

When you set a boundary, your brain may trigger the guilt response—not because you've done something wrong, but because you've stepped outside a familiar, self-sacrificing pattern.

This discomfort is your brain's prediction system reacting to a perceived threat to connection. For people conditioned to earn love by pleasing others, saying "no" feels like danger.

Your limbic system fires, releasing cortisol and flooding you with anxiety and guilt—even when you've made the right decision.

Tip: Reframe the Guilt as Growth



Workshops for Women on the Path to Authentic Living

Fall 2025

These workshops and groups are designed to support breaking free from the limitations of roles, beliefs and fears to get on YOUR path to individuating and achieving your authentic potential.

- **60+ Women's Group: Continuing the Journey**

A soulful, supportive space for women 60 and older who are committed to deepening their journey of individuation. Share wisdom, reflect on purpose, and embrace the next chapter with intention.

- **Imposter Syndrome Workshop: Reclaim Your Inner Authority**

Quiet the inner critic and step fully into your worth. This experiential workshop unpacks the root causes of imposter syndrome and provides brain-based strategies to rewrite your internal narrative.

- **Breaking the Chains of Attachment: A Codependency Workshop**

Learn to identify unhealthy attachment patterns, understand emotional entanglements, and create boundaries that support freedom and authentic connection.

More information about the sessions is coming soon. If any of the groups or workshops sound interesting to you, contact me at anned@annedranitsaris.com. **Fall Sessions:** October. Limited group size – secure your place early

I Need Your Help (And It Feels Weird to Ask—but Here I Am)

So here's the truth... I've poured my heart into my next book, Rethinking Codependency for the Emotionally Intelligent. It's the book I wish existed years ago—before all the therapy, before all the burnout, before I learned how codependency hides behind perfectionism, helping, and being “the strong one.”

But when I started looking for a publisher? I was told point-blank:

“Unless you have 10,000+ followers or subscribers, we’re not interested.” I kid you not!

It hit me hard. This work is ready. People need it. But to get it out into the world, I need more visibility. And that's where you come in.

If you've ever read something of mine that made you feel seen, or if you believe in the power of emotional intelligence to change lives, will you support me by liking, following, sharing, or subscribing?

Not just for me—but for the message.

Follow on **Facebook**

Connect on **Instagram:** @annedranitsaris

Follow and Connect on **LinkedIn**

► Subscribe on **YouTube**

Explore my **website:** www.annedranitsaris.com

And stay tuned: **TikTok** is coming soon. Quick hits. No fluff. Just truth.

Thanks for being here. **And thank you—for helping me take this next step.**

—Anne



Anne Dranitsaris, PhD

For over 40 years, I've been helping individuals, couples, leaders, and entrepreneurs break free from limiting beliefs, codependence, Imposter Syndrome, and other patterns that hold them back from living as their Authentic Selves. Through my work as a psychotherapist, leadership coach, and behavioral change expert, I've had the privilege of guiding countless people on their journeys to discover their true potential and lead lives aligned with who they're meant to be.

For me, the journey to connect with our Authentic Self is a lifelong quest—one that requires courage, introspection, and an openness to transformation. My work is deeply personal, shaped by my own experiences with family dynamics, emotional growth, and the path to authenticity. My passion is empowering others to thrive, and I feel privileged to share this work with everyone I encounter. If you'd like to learn more about how I can help you on your own transformative journey, contact me at anned@annedranitsaris.com.
