

PEOPLE PLEASING.....



What is People Pleasing?

People Pleasing generally refers to a combination of thoughts and behaviours that regularly (sometimes almost always) cause an individual to voluntarily comply with the wishes of others, against their own self interest.

Sometimes there are quite specific situations or relationships where this occurs, which may not constitute a problem. As a possible example, parents of young children all understand that their own needs rank far behind that of their children; this may not be appropriate with healthy adult children however.

It's important to consider whether the benefits to you of people pleasing are outweighed by the costs to you.

The benefits are obvious - people like it when their needs are met, even if yours aren't; and it might seem to make you popular or even loved. It can feel nice to be needed. It avoids the fear of disapproval if you don't comply. Sometimes it becomes a bit of a habit and part of the way we see ourselves.

What are the costs to me?

Unfortunately there are costs in being a People Pleaser and some have important psychological consequences.

Relationships that have ceased being balanced towards both parties may be of questionable value. Sometimes these relationships leave us feeling disrespected and a bit of a "doormat". Generally, the effort put in to pleasing others results in high levels of stress, and a sense of having no time for oneself.

Not having your own needs met very often (if at all) is damaging to your own wellbeing, and ultimately to your self esteem. It is hard to feel valued when the focus is always on others.

Not surprisingly, People Pleasing is often associated with Depression and with Anxiety.

Getting things back in balance can be hard, but the benefits to you are your own health and wellbeing, real support from real friends, and self respect. Below are some tips for how you might do this.

14 good ideas to help you stop people pleasing

1. **Realise you have a choice - you CAN say no**
2. **Set your priorities according to your values - ask "What are the most important things to me?"**
3. **Stall - it's perfectly OK to say that you'll need to think about it**
4. **Set a time limit e.g. "I'm only available from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m."**
5. **Consider if you're being manipulated/flattered - statements like: "Oh you're so good at"; or "Nobody does this better than you do"; or attempts to tell you what your availability is or what your time frame is such as: "just do that other stuff another day - I need you today...". Before you know it, they make the decision for you.**
6. **Say no with conviction, and don't make excuses -** It's tempting to tell them your reasoning but this gives the other person lots of wiggle room to come back and say, 'Oh, you can do that later,' 'You can adjust your schedule' or 'That's not as important as what I'm asking.'
7. **Use an empathic assertion -** let the person know that you understand where they're coming from, but unfortunately, you can't help.
8. **Remember that saying no has its benefits -** you are entitled to your time and you need to rest and rejuvenate to be there for the people you want to help out. Look at saying "No" as an opportunity to spend your time doing what you value in your life.
9. **Set clear boundaries — and follow through.** Ask yourself what you're willing to do, and don't go beyond these limits, be clear in communicating your boundaries. Don't bottle it up when boundaries are violated.
10. **Don't be scared of the fallout - don't catastrophise!** If you have a solid friendship, this isn't going to end it.
11. **Self-soothe -** Use positive self-talk e.g. "I can do this"; "I have the right to park in this parking spot"; "I made the decision that's right for me"; or "My values are more important than saying yes in this situation."
12. **Recognize when you've been successful -** Many people-pleasers tend to focus on what went wrong
13. **Realize that you can't be everything to everyone.**
14. **Start small - baby steps!**

This article does not constitute therapy or psychological advice.
© Proteum Psychology.