

# How to Stop People Pleasing



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Natalie Bacon**

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# How to Stop People Pleasing

Hi there. Welcome to the *Design Your Dream Life* podcast. My name is Natalie Bacon, and I'm an advanced certified mindfulness life coach as well as a wife and mom. If you're here to do the inner work and grow, I can help. Let's get started.

What's happening my friend? Welcome to the podcast. I have to say I am just delighted to be here with you today. It is the end of May, and that means we are wrapping up the Reinvent Your Self-Identity workshop course inside Grow You. This entire month we have been focusing on reinventing ourselves really from the inside out. Meaning not focusing on goals and desires that other people have for us, but instead really tuning in to the desires that we have for our future.

If you still want to get this workshop course, which includes the actual class, the workbook, and the coaching call replay, you need to get inside Grow You by the end of the month. That means right now. The best news is that when you join today, you not only get all of this May content that I'm speaking about. You will be there for all of June, which we are going to be diving into how to become your own best friend. That is the June curriculum.

Part of becoming your own best friend, the way that I'm teaching it, is very different. It includes habits you need to stop, and one of those habits that you need to stop is people pleasing. So come on over to Grow You and join us, [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching), and you will get the full class of how to stop people pleasing, stop the perfectionism, stop the external validation, and then the three habits that you need to start. These habits will help you cultivate the relationship with yourself where you really are your own best friend.

Today, I want to give you a taste of what that is like. I'm specifically going to do that by diving in to how to stop people pleasing. So people pleasing is saying yes to someone's request when you really want to say no. It's prioritizing what other people want as more important than what you want. So someone asks you to do something and you say yes because you want

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them to think and feel a certain way about you. You have this thought, I can't say no. That thought creates fear, disconnection, and anxiety. So what do you do? You say yes.

This is effectively lying to them because you're showing up fake. I think that we do this culturally, particularly as women and moms, we're taught this idea through really good virtues and values. Things like be kind to others, help others, don't be selfish. What happens is there's another part to all of that, which all of those ideas are very nice and lovely and we want to take care of other people, but we don't want to do it at our own expense. Which means we want to do what's true for us.

So if what's true for us is it's a no then we want to be able to communicate that. So if someone asks you to bring a side dish over to their house for dinner, and you are at max capacity and that's just not going to work for you, saying yes from a place of resentment and guilt and fear about what that person would think of you, that's people pleasing. That's doing everything for everyone always, and it's fear based because you're worried and anxious about what would happen if you told the truth and said no.

When you people please, you really want to control how other people think about you. You want them to think that you're the type of person who does what they want. You do this because you think that it will control and manipulate how they think of you.

So before I go into some examples and why we do this and how to stop, I want to go over some of the signs that you should pay attention to to see if you are actually a people pleaser. Because I don't know about you, but people pleasing is one of those things that I never really identified as the people pleaser.

Yet, as I have learned throughout my personal development journey 100% people pleasing is something that I have worked to overcome and not do as much. So I don't know. If you're like me, you'll likely find that even if you

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haven't identified as a people pleaser in the past, for some of these signs you for sure can relate to them.

You struggle to say no. This is a huge sign that you're a people pleaser. You have this idea that you can't say no, what creates the feelings of worry and anxiety and fear. When someone asks you to do something, what is your immediate gut response? Is the response that's true for you a no, but then it's followed by but I can't actually say no? That is people pleasing.

Another sign is that you're constantly busy. So if you have a lot of people pleasing tendencies, it's likely that your schedule is filled with things that other people have asked you to do that you don't actually want to do. So whether it's school activities for your kids and volunteering, whether it's work activities after hours or anything like that. Just take a look at your calendar and see how much of what you have scheduled are things that you don't actually want to do, but you've said yes to.

When I teach how to unbusy your life, it's one of the bonus courses inside Grow You, people pleasing is one of the lessons in there because people pleasing creates such a busy life. So if your life is really busy just notice are you saying yes to other people's requests at your own expense? Which means at the expense of feeling inner peace and calm and having a lot of white space and instead you're busy.

You are a people pleaser if you find yourself agreeing with everyone all of the time. You try to change who you are and your personality depending on who you're around. So it's one thing to listen and to stay connected and to be polite, but you can go too far with this. Because listening you can do from a place of connection, and you can stay connected and listen and disagree from time to time. That is an amazing quality and social skill to have.

When we take it too far, it's pretending to agree with anyone and everyone who we are around just because you want them to like you. You do this against your own values.

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So let's say that you are speaking with your in-laws, and they are talking about all of their political views. Not only are you listening, but you are agreeing with all of it. Now, this doesn't mean and I am not saying that you want to go to the other extreme end where you don't listen, where you leave the room, where you can't connect with people with different opinions than you.

But there's this space in the middle that takes a lot more courage and vulnerability and willingness on your part to stay connected and have a different opinion. So it might sound like I hear what you're saying and I actually want to know more of where this is coming from. Here's how I think about it, which sounds like it's completely different from how you're thinking about it. This is going to be something that is really foreign to you if you are a people pleaser because you've been in the habit of just agreeing with everyone. We'll talk about why in a little bit.

Another sign that you're a people pleaser is that you think other people create your feelings. So if you think that you have the power to make someone happy based on your actions, that is a really big problem because that's impossible. It's what I call a thought error. Inside Grow You we teach this.

So your thoughts create your feelings and your thoughts and feelings together create who you are being in the world and how you show up. How you take action, the decisions that you make. The same is true for someone else. So someone else is responsible for their emotions based on how they are thinking. With people pleasing, you think that if you say yes, that other person will be happy. So there's the thought error there in so far as you think that your actions create their feelings.

So you just want to slow it down and start to notice what's happening here with your actions and where it's coming from. If you are in the habit of people pleasing, you likely are constantly thinking about other people way more than you're thinking about yourself. So you're thinking about how other people are thinking and feeling and what they're doing. You're all up

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in their thoughts and feelings and actions. No one is managing your mind. No one is managing your feelings because you're busy managing other people's feelings, which is exhausting. Okay?

You apologize frequently. This comes from blaming yourself and also the fear of others blaming you. So when you are in the habit of people pleasing, you default to other people being correct about everything. About how they're living their lives, about their opinions, about all of it. So if you do something different than what they think or want, you apologize. You basically apologize for being you.

I can relate to this when I was younger. There's this constant sense of wanting other people to be happy and sort of blaming myself even though I wouldn't have articulated it in this way. That's how I was feeling. Like apologizing for being you. Because you prioritize other people and you're in other people's minds and feelings, you depend on them for validation.

You only give yourself permission to like yourself, to validate yourself, to feel good about who you are when others do it first. So then your worth becomes dependent on how others see you. So you're ignoring your own thoughts and your own feelings and you're looking to other people to indicate how you should think and feel about yourself.

So I think it's clear what people pleasing is, but I think having some examples can be really helpful. So I have a few here that I want to go through with you. They can be big. They can be small. They can be anything because it's really about your thoughts and your feelings about someone's request outside of you.

So let's say your neighbor asks you to watch their kids for the weekend. If you are in the habit of people pleasing, you will say yes because you think you should and that's what a good neighbor would do. But really, you don't want to. Really you're having thoughts like I don't have capacity for this. Their kids are so difficult. I really don't want to. You have all of these

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thoughts about it. The inner decision is a no, but you say yes because you think that's what a good neighbor should do.

Okay, example number two. Let's say your child's teacher asks you to bring in snacks for class on Friday and help chaperone the lunch. Again, you have an appointment on Friday at lunch. This appointment is really important to you. Maybe it's a doctor's appointment, and you don't want to miss that. But yet you say yes because you think that a good mom would say yes.

Example number three. Let's say your spouse, your partner, your husband, wants to spend Saturday with the kids downtown and go to museums. In your mind, you had the idea that you wanted to go to the beach, spend it outside, because it's going to be gorgeous. Instead of communicating that you say yes to your spouse because you have the thought I can't say no. Good wives would just say yes. So I'm just gonna say yes.

Example number four, you go to a social gathering. Everyone else is drinking there, and they offer you a drink. You say yes because you don't want them to think that you're not fun. Example number five. Let's say that you are on a no carb diet, and you have a goal of losing 25 pounds. You're out with girlfriends, and they're all eating carbs. So you say yes to the bread because you don't want them to think that you're weird.

In all of these examples, we prioritize what other people want of us over what we want for us. This can be for things that are bigger, like our goals. Like a goal of losing 25 pounds or drinking alcohol when we don't want to drink alcohol. It could be for something smaller, like where we're going to take the kids this weekend or whether you take snacks into school. So it's not based on the size of the request. If you are in the habit of people pleasing, you do this for everything.

Now people will say okay, well, what about just giving? What about volunteering? What about helping? So I want to distinguish here between people pleasing and giving. I love to give. Y'all know this. I talk about this.

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Giving from a place of generosity feels amazing. This is so different than people pleasing.

The way that you know whether you are giving from a place of generosity versus people pleasing is the feeling behind the action. Is the feeling connecting? Is it generosity? Is it loving? Is it very open and expansive? That is giving. That is what you want to do more of. Contrast that with people pleasing, the emotion behind the action will be disconnecting. It will be resentment. It will be lying.

So let's say that your best friend is having a baby, and you think she wants you to host her baby shower. She's dropping little hints. If you genuinely want to host the baby shower, that is giving. That is amazing. It's going to be fun for you. It's going to be a blast. This is something that you want to do out of the goodness of your heart. You want to give. People pleasing is I really don't want to host this baby shower at all, but I think that I should in order to be a good friend. So I will. That is people pleasing.

Now there is this space in between that I want to mention where you can go from people pleasing to giving. It sounds like you know what? At first, I really did not want to host this baby shower. But the more I think about it, the more I have decided that I actually want to be the best friend who hosts this baby shower. It's gonna take a little bit of work on my part, but I feel really good about it and I want to do this for her.

Okay, the same would be true for going to the museum on the weekends versus going to the beach. Husband wants to go to the museum. I want to be the wife who says yes here, even though if it was just me, I would go to the beach. The difference will be in how it feels.

That's very different than resentment and lying, which is people pleasing. It sounds like he always picks what we're going to do. I don't want to go to the museum. We have to go now because he wants to. I'm just gonna say yes because that's what I'm supposed to do. Then you fake it. So just pay attention to the emotion behind the action of saying yes. If the emotion is



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pretty positive and open then that's a good thing and that's open and expansive and you're giving. If it's closed and restricted and contracting, that is people pleasing.

The result of people pleasing is that you disconnect from others because you're lying to them. You don't show them the real you. It's also exhausting because you have so much mental chatter going on in your mind trying to manage all of these other people's emotions, which of course is impossible.

You end up really busy because you keep saying yes to things when you want to say no. So you fill up any white space you would have, which leads into the next result, which is you don't do your self-care. You really don't have time for it, let alone the fact that you're probably not even thinking about how important it is for you to have self-care because you're spending so much time in other people's thoughts and feelings, all up in their business.

You end up resenting other people. You're not enjoying yourself. You don't enjoy being you. You really don't even know the real you because you're so consumed with other people. You are constantly looking to others to define who you are.

That's really why I included people pleasing in the topic for how to become your own best friend because if you are in the habit of people pleasing, you're letting other people define who you are. You don't really know yourself. So you can't be your own best friend. So you have to stop people pleasing, or mostly stop it. At least be aware of it and be working on decreasing, getting out of that habit so that you can enjoy your life. So that you can love yourself. So that you can connect with yourself. From that place, genuinely connect with others.

I think understanding why we do this is really powerful. It makes sense. And from there, we can not beat ourselves up about it. So your brain, the primitive part of it, the survival part of it, the part that wants to make sure you are not stranded and die. That's really what the survival brain is all

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about. It wants to make sure that you are included and accepted by your peers. Right?

As humans, we are pack animals. So your survival brain on default will automatically think it's really important that my peer group likes me that I'm included. This is just a survival mechanism. Your brain doesn't know that as a modern woman and mom, you're not going to die if you say no to bringing a snack into school. Your brain obsesses over the chance that you would be excluded from the group.

So this is, again, that default automatic thinking that focuses on caring more about what other people think about you than what you think about you. So it's normal. It's normal because it's automatic. It's normal because on default your brain wants you to just to be liked by everyone. It's impossible.

So what happens if you don't manage your mind, if you don't see that this is happening is you will people please at your own expense, and you'll have all of those results in your life. It really does erode the relationship that you have with yourself and with others because you're disconnected from everyone.

So what you want to do is step one, notice that this is happening and hopefully, this podcast episode up to this point has helped you kind of be able to point that out in yourself. Then what we want to do is retrain our minds and change our mindsets to have a better way of thinking about requests from others. So how do you stop people pleasing?

Step number one is to notice how often you are in other people's business. Meaning notice how often you are in their minds. How often are you thinking about what husband is thinking, what husband is feeling, what husband is doing, or what anyone else is thinking, feeling and doing? Just start to notice it and bring your attention back to yourself.

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So let's take an example. Let's say that your neighbor wants you to come to her party and help her out ahead of time and get ready. If you immediately are thinking about her experience, how busy she is, how she needs the help, how you want her to like you, and how you need to do more to get her approval, all of this is being all up in her business, her mind, her emotions, what's going on in her life.

You simply want to notice it. This is a brain pattern. This is a thought pattern, a mindset pattern, and bring your attention back to yourself. What do I think here? What do I want to do? If I want to be a neighbor who helps, then I can say yes from this abundant place. But if I decide I'm an amazing neighbor, and also this is a no for me. That's also saying no from abundance. So, again, the difference is in how you feel. But you basically step one is getting out of other people's business.

Step number two is to find the thoughts and feelings that you are desiring. So when you are tempted to people please and when you have the thought, "Oh, I can't say no to neighbor." What are you desiring to think and feel by saying yes? Okay, so let's go through this in an example because it's sneaky.

When you say yes from a place of people pleasing, you are doing it so that you give yourself permission to think and feel a certain way. Because remember, whatever neighbor says in response to your yes has nothing to do with you. It has to do with her mind. So if neighbor says, "Oh my goodness, thank you so much for offering to help. I'm so grateful. You're such an amazing neighbor." That's just a fact. Whatever she says is a fact. You get to think whatever you want about it. So her saying that doesn't make you feel anything.

You have a thought about what she said. You might have a thought like, I'm a really great neighbor and friend. I love helping. I'm so glad that I could offer this. You feel love and you feel connection and you like who you are.

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So in that example, you are seeking feeling connection, feeling love, feeling liked. You are seeking telling yourself you're a good friend and you're a good neighbor. What you want to do is practice the thoughts and feelings, that's the next step, that you are desiring. When you practice the thoughts and feelings that you're desiring, you can do step number four so much more easily, which is tell the whole truth.

So if you are confident in the type of neighbor that you are, if you tell yourself I'm a really good neighbor, and I'm not perfect. Sometimes it's messy and sometimes, I can't show up the way that I want to, but I love myself. You feel really good and connected to your neighbor.

That is going to make it so much easier for you to tell the whole truth. The whole truth doesn't mean that you just say no to every request. That would be the other side of the spectrum. You don't want to say yes to every request and people please, but you also don't want to say no to every request.

The whole truth might be something like I love having you as a neighbor, and I am so excited for your party. Unfortunately, there is no way that I am able to show up with a good attitude and help you out all day. I need to take care of myself, take care of my family, take a nap, and it's just not gonna happen. You might even add in there. It's really challenging for me to even say this to you because I'm so used to saying yes to everything. You might explain that you're working on telling your truth or people pleasing, or you might not say that.

But telling the whole truth means that you do it from a place of honesty and connection knowing that you are responsible for your feelings. You are not responsible for other people's feelings.

People pleasing is one of the worst habits that I think breaks down the connection and intimacy that you have with yourself. It leads to a busy, resentful life. So if you would like more help on this, I invite you to come inside Grow You where we are talking about people pleasing all of this

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upcoming month. I would love to have you there over at [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching). Talk to you soon my friend. Take care.

If you loved this podcast, I invite you to check out Grow You, my mindfulness community for moms where we do the inner work together. Head on over to [nataliebacon.com/coaching](https://nataliebacon.com/coaching) to learn more.