

People Pleasing & Assertiveness



Breaking free from the approval trap

S.E.L.F. L.O.V.E. Transformational Project

About This Session

Session 13 continues the boundaries journey by going deeper into the people-pleasing pattern. We explore where it came from, what it is costing you, and how to replace it with grounded assertiveness. You will learn to say no without guilt and yes with genuine choice.

People Pleasing & Assertiveness

Saying yes when you mean no is not kindness. It is self-abandonment. This session is about learning to honour both yourself and others at the same time.

Exercise 1 — The People-Pleasing Inventory

Check any patterns that feel familiar. Be honest. There are no wrong answers here.

- ☐ I apologise even when I have done nothing wrong
- ☐ I say yes to avoid conflict, then feel resentful
- ☐ I change my opinion when others push back
- ☐ I feel responsible for other people's emotions
- ☐ I find it hard to ask for what I need
- ☐ I over-explain or justify my decisions
- ☐ I feel guilty when I disappoint someone
- ☐ I do things for others at the expense of my own wellbeing

Exercise 2 — Where It Came From

People pleasing is always learned. Think back to your early years. What happened when you said no, had needs, or disappointed someone?

What did you learn about yourself from those experiences? (e.g. "My needs are too much." "Being difficult is dangerous." "Love is conditional.")

Exercise 3 — The Cost of People Pleasing

For each area below, describe what people pleasing has cost you.

In my relationships:

In my work or career:

In my energy and health:

In my sense of self:

Exercise 4 — Saying No with Grace

Practise these scripts until they feel natural. Fill in the blank with your own words.

The simple no:

"No, that doesn't work for me." (Nothing more needed.)

The kind redirect:

"I can't do that, but I could _____ instead."

The boundary with warmth:

"I care about you and the answer is still no."

The delayed response:

"Let me check my capacity and come back to you."

Your own script:

A situation you face regularly. Write your exact words below:

Exercise 5 — Assertiveness in Action

Think of one relationship or situation where you consistently over-give or under-ask.

What is the one request or boundary you have been avoiding making? Write it as a clear, kind statement:

Assertiveness is not aggression. It is the quiet confidence of someone who knows their own worth and communicates from that place.

Reflection Questions

1. Where in your life are you most prone to people pleasing? What triggers it?

2. What are you afraid will happen if you become more assertive?

3. Who in your life makes it hardest to hold your boundaries? What do you notice about that?

4. What would change in your life if you said no 20% more often than you currently do?

My Notes

Use this space freely: observations, insights, questions, things to follow up on.
