No is a *complete sentence.*

Boundaries, ND-style: why limits can be extra hard to set when your brain works differently — and three honest answers you can reach for anytime.

IT'S NOT JUST YOU

Why boundaries can feel extra hard

Years of masking

Many of us learned to keep the peace by going along. People-pleasing can become automatic — "yes" slips out first.

Rejection sensitivity

If disappointing someone hits hard (often called RSD), saying no can feel far riskier than it really is.

Processing time

The answer you really mean often shows up an hour later — after you've already agreed.

Late warning signs

Many ND people describe not noticing a limit until they're well past it — and then it's shutdown or meltdown.

THREE HONEST ANSWERS

You always have more than one option

Yes

USE IT WHEN

It fits your energy, time and values — and you actually want to.

- "Yes, I'd love that."
- "Sure — I can stay until eight."
- "Yes, if we can keep it small."

Not right now

USE IT WHEN

You need time to process, or the answer depends on how you'll feel later.

- "Can I get back to you tomorrow?"
- "Not today. Could we try next week?"
- "Let me check my energy first."

No

USE IT WHEN

It costs more than you have — or it simply isn't right for you.

- "No, thank you."
- "That doesn't work for me."
- "I'm going to pass this time."

You don't owe a long explanation.

A short, kind answer is enough. Over-explaining can open the door to debate. If you want to add warmth, one line does it: **"Thanks for thinking of me."**

Continued on back →

YOUR TURN

Boundary builder

Pick one situation that keeps draining you. Work down the steps — in pencil, at your own pace. You can change it anytime.

1 I notice...

What your body or mood tells you

e.g. My jaw clenches when plans change at the last minute.

2 My limit is...

Where the line sits for you

e.g. I need at least a day's notice before plans change.

3 I will say...

Short, clear, kind

e.g. "I can't switch plans today. Let's keep what we had."

4 If it's crossed, I will...

Something you control

e.g. Head home early and reschedule for another day.

Remember: a boundary is about what *you* will do — not a rule for someone else. It's a way to protect the relationship, too.

BOUNDARY TYPES

Limits come in many shapes. A few to try on:

Sensory
"Can we turn the music down a bit?"

Time
"I can stay until nine, then I'm heading out."

Energy
"I've got one social plan in me this week."

Emotional
"I can't hold this topic right now. Can we come back to it?"

Physical
"I'd rather wave than hug — nothing personal."

Digital
"I answer texts in the evenings, not all day."