

# **Natural Awakenings**

## **Emotional Fitness: The Positive Power of No**

### **Honoring our Boundaries, Honoring Ourselves**

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There is a wonderful song in the Rogers and Hammerstein musical, “Oklahoma” titled ‘I Can’t Say No’ It’s a problem many women have. It’s important we all learn how to set and honor boundaries. Equally important is the knowledge that saying “no” can be a healthy influence in our lives and the lives of others we touch.

I tried to be a wonder woman once. Caught up in trying to be all things to all people, I was unable to draw boundaries and consequently over-extended myself, physically and emotionally. Thank God I had a best friend who woke me up to what I was doing. She asked a very simple question. “Why do you think it’s your responsibility to save this situation?” My defensive initial reaction was ‘If I don’t, who will?’

I took a couple breaths and realized I needed to look deeper into why I felt I had to be responsible for everything. What came from that examination was a healthier way of being with my Self. And the answers that came to me set new boundaries that honored my needs while dealing with the particular issue at hand.

Michael Bernard Beckwith (*The Secret*) writes in his new book, *Spiritual Liberation*, “Initiate a conversation within yourself. Call it a dialogue between yourself and your Self...I’m talking about cultivating a pattern of learning into your inner Self with confidence, so that you can skillfully handle whatever arises in your life.”

I think it’s time we reframe the word “responsibility.” It doesn’t have to just mean “burden.” Take a moment to break the word down. Response – ability, the ability to choose how you are going to respond. And always remember the issue is never the issue. It is our relationship to the issue that is the issue.

The following are some questions to use in “*Self Talk*” that can help guide you towards a new relationship with boundaries.

- **Can I be courageous and tell my truth?**
- **Am I willing to hear the answer?**
- **If I can’t change the present situation, will I allow myself to be aware of what’s really going on?**
- **Can I take care of myself even though I can’t or won’t get out of it now?**

- **How can I take care of myself?**
- **Is there a healthier way of being in the present situation?**
- **Can I appreciate what I am doing, to support myself and others?**
- **Do I know there is a better way?**
- **What's the first step I can take to get to that better way?**

These are starter questions.

**Refine** what works for you.

**Remember** it's okay to say "no."

Establish boundaries with *dignity*, *grace*, and the *assurance* you are setting up new and healthier patterns that will enrich your life.