

## Ep #67: When to Say No to Yourself



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With Your Host

**Desi Creswell**

## Ep #67: When to Say No to Yourself

Hey designer, you're listening to episode 67. In this one I'm talking about when to say no to yourself. It's not just clients you need to learn to say no to, it's you sometimes.

Welcome to *The Interior Design Business CEO*, the only show for designers who are ready to confidently run and grow their businesses without the stress and anxiety. If you're ready to develop a bigger vision for your interior design business, free up your time, and streamline your days for productivity and profit, you're in the right place. I'm Desi Creswell, an award-winning interior designer and certified life and business coach. I help interior designers just like you stop feeling overwhelmed so they can build profitable businesses they love to run. Are you ready to confidently lead your business, clients, and projects? Let's go.

Hello designer, welcome back to the podcast. I hope you all are well. Today is kind of a fun day here. This is a really random thing about me, but here you go. We are having a whole lot of carrots delivered to our house today. I think I ordered about 75 pounds of carrots. Our family goes through a lot of them.

We have this amazing farm, two farmers that we met at a farmers market that was near our old house. And we have built this relationship with them, we've been out to their farm and we get the majority of our produce from them whenever we can. And that includes buying a whole lot of storage carrots for the winter season. And unfortunately, they had an issue with their carrot crop this year. And so we already ran through the ones they were able to sell to us and I was able to track down some other carrots from another local farm.

Anyways, my kids and husband are very, very excited. They eat a lot of carrots. I eat them too, but they eat a lot more than I do. And I mean there is just such a difference between a store bought carrot and a farm carrot, even if the farm carrot has been stored. I mean it's not the same as the height of summer, but still it's so great.

So anyways I just had those delivered. They're in the refrigerator, we call it the carrot refrigerator, out in the garage. And we're just all very excited about that. So that's a really random thing that you can know about me, is that I buy a lot of

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carrots. So I think we all probably have that one random, or maybe multiple, quirky facts.

All right, so today I'm really excited. We're going to talk about how to say no to yourself. Now, often we talk about how to say no to clients, and I have an entire module on this in my group coaching program because I know this is a struggle designers face, but that's not what we're talking about right now. Today, we're talking about when you should consider saying no to yourself. And I'm also going to share the one time you shouldn't say no to yourself.

Before we dive in, I want to officially invite you to join me for To Do To Done, a five-week coaching intensive where I'm going to help you narrow your focus on one business improvement project. And then you're going to plan it out, with my support, in a way that fits with your current schedule and commitments, and then see it through to completion.

I offered this last fall and designers loved the combination of teaching, coaching, live co-working sessions and the ability to finally clear the mental weight of something they've been putting off or something that they know that they've been needing to do. Or really wanting to do, but just haven't consciously made the choice to do it and have a way to do the work that's not going to mean a bunch of stress and grinding and crunch time, but actually finding ways to fit it in alongside delivering to their clients.

In this round of To Do To Done, I'm really excited because we have added a community element. We are going to have an online portal, which is off social media since I know that can be a bit of a black hole. But this is where you can connect with your design peers and also then be able to ask me questions and get support between our live calls.

I just opened up enrollment, and if you sign up by the end of this week, which is February 2nd, you will be able to get \$100 off your enrollment. So it's only 347 to join the five-week coaching program. The link to join that is in the show notes. You can use the code done100 to get that \$100 off. And if you're listening to this past that cutoff for the bonus discount, you can still absolutely sign up. We start February 16th and then meet for five consecutive weeks.

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Of course, if you have any questions about what you might do in To Do To Done for the project that you're going to focus on, feel free to reach out to me either on Instagram at Desi Creswell, or you can always reply to one of my emails and I can make sure that you've got all the information you need to make a decision on if it's the right fit for you.

All right, let's dive into the topic of saying no to yourself, which is really, when you think about it, all about saying yes to what you really want in the long run. As we go along here, I'm going to be outlining the different ways that you might notice that you would want to consider saying no to yourself, how you say no to yourself and give some personal examples, and examples from clients as well, to give you an idea of how to start incorporating this into your practice.

So the very first time that I'd really encourage you to tell yourself no, is when you notice that you're ignoring or avoiding your capacity. And when I say capacity, I mean the truth of your capacity. And this is basically how much you can realistically do based on the math of your calendar. And that includes the hours that you want to work, not that you have 24 hours in a day and you could see how you could fit something in 24 hours a day if you just never slept and were constantly in motion.

What I mean is how much you can realistically do based on the hours you want to work and your capacity. And if you're interested in this idea of capacity, I did do an episode quite a while ago, episode four, on Client Capacity specifically. So you definitely want to check that out. This topic of ignoring or avoiding your capacity feels very relevant right now. And that's because it really would have been helpful if I had been honest about my capacity and said no to myself more at the end of 2023.

I want to share this as my own personal example, because let's face it, sometimes we do choose to ignore the signs in front of us. And we can learn from them. And this happens even to me sometimes. While this doesn't happen often at this point, this occasionally does still occur in my own planning process. And I need to remember to say no to myself.

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One of the really important routines that I have in my business is regular evaluation. And I look at it personally and professionally, and it's something that I teach my clients to do as well. And when I was evaluating, I found that because I was creating so much new content, so many new resources and tools, cognitively I was over capacity. And I was also over capacity in terms of time. I was working more than I'd said I wanted to work, and I'll explain a little bit why.

In hindsight now, with that curious evaluation that I teach, I can see that I would have been set up to support myself and my current goals in a way that would have felt more aligned with the way I like to work had I said no to myself just a little bit more. And now I want to just use this as an opportunity to call out how I'm talking about my choices.

This is not an opportunity for me to blame or judge my past choices. I'm using my evaluation to get clear on how I've arrived at this current point, so that I can make new decisions and integrate those lessons and see other ways where I can learn to really improve upon my planning because when I plan in a way that supports me, I win, my clients win, my family wins, it's for the better of everyone.

I also wanted to just share myself as an example here because whenever we're talking about managing our time, I want to remind you that it's never a perfect equation. We can certainly get into some steady states, but there will always be some level of ebb and flow. For quite some time I was feeling very steady, the work felt very contained. And then I went into this period where I made some different decisions and now I'm seeing, oh, okay, I know what thought process created those.

And sometimes you will consciously decide to take on more and sometimes it's unconscious. And sometimes it's because you let your brain convince you that the amount of things you're saying yes to, or that not saying no is a good idea and that you have time when you really don't. And that was exactly what happened to me. That was a big part of what I was seeing in my own patterning.

I was rounding out the year with the Out Of Overwhelm launch and I had come up with ideas for three quite large projects. So I had created an entire new masterclass around creating a profitable, fulfilling, efficient interior design

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business for that launch. I also created two bonuses for that launch; How to Cut Your Email In Half, and then a marketing workshop where I'm teaching the clients who attend how to attract, sign, and deliver to their ideal clients in a really sustainable, simple way, but in a way that gets you incredible results and the clients that you want to work with.

Now, I got really excited about all of these ideas and I wanted to implement them. And I mapped out the projects, I did the project breakdown process, I looked ahead at other commitments, just like I'm going to help you do in To Do To Done. But in my evaluation, I can see that I was fudging the numbers a little bit. I allowed my brain to convince me that I could make it work, I'm using air quotations there.

And my brain also was saying like, these resources are going to be so valuable for clients. They need these. And I truly believed that and wanted to deliver that to clients. And I let that override that the math wasn't really adding up or wasn't really realistic. And I chose to ignore the reality of what I was seeing from a planning perspective. I was avoiding or ignoring that capacity, like I said at the very beginning. And that is a time when you really should consider saying no.

I kind of chose to ignore the reality of it. And the problem is that reality always catches up with you. Or you then end up having to say no to something you really want to say yes to because you didn't say no to yourself before. So if you find yourself in this situation where you're kind of avoiding what is actually on your plate because you're feeling excited about implementing new things or wishing you could do more than you actually can from a math perspective, of course, you want to map it out, right?

That's that project breakdown process that I'm teaching in To Do To Done, where you can really look at what are all the bite-size results that I need to create and how is that going to fit into my current commitments and the time that I have available? And looking at that and seeing the math can clarify things very quickly and make it easy to say no to yourself.

But even then, sometimes you're going to want to avoid that math. And then it's really helpful to look at what is the trade-off? Acknowledge that for yourself. You

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can ask yourself, if I ignore what my capacity is now, what am I creating for myself later? And if there is an issue where what you need to say no to, but you say yes to is putting you over capacity, that's going to highlight, oh, I guess I don't really want to do that.

And then lastly, when this feels difficult to say no to yourself from a capacity standpoint, I want you to remind yourself that whatever it is that you want to say yes to can be a not right now. Sometimes saying not right now to ourselves can be a little softer and a little easier than saying no.

The second time I want you to consider saying no to yourself is when you're trying to convince or justify a yes. You might notice a little bit of that was showing up for me in the example that I shared above. When you notice these thought patterns that are justifying, convincing, that kind of energy or that kind of thought process, it's a good idea to pause and consider the option of no.

For you, this might sound like an additional project that is going to squeeze out all of your other timelines, but it sounds so fun. Notice that convincing justification? Another way this can show up is if you have a potential client that you meet with and you get kind of that off gut feeling about, I don't know if this is the right fit. But then your brain starts to justify and convince you, well, if that's the only thing, it's just your gut telling you no, maybe you should have a better reason. It's a good project. They might have some friends that they might refer you to, right? Like there's a lot of that justification.

Or even inside your own office, maybe there's a potential hire who you're interviewing and they don't have quite the right skill set. And you know this, but then your brain starts convincing you. Well, they could start really soon and I really need the help and I could probably train them.

So start to be onto yourself. If you notice convincing energy when you're considering a request, an idea, an opportunity, this is a really good time to check in. I want you to ask yourself, am I trying to ignore reality or an inner knowing I might actually want to acknowledge here? And then you can decide.

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Another angle of this question could be if I wasn't trying to talk myself into a yes, what would I want to do? That question alone can bring so much clarity and make the no easier if it's really a no for you.

The third way you might want to consider saying no to yourself is if you're shoulding yourself. That's if you're going to say yes because of a should. You think you should do something or someone else thinks you should do something and so you think you should do it too. And the truth is if you pause, you know it's an inner no but you're trying to should yourself into it.

I notice with this one, often the no to yourself is the first step. And then you might have to say no to others as well. And I think that's true of all of these, but I see it a lot with the shoulding where we're more likely to should when it's in relation to others, what others are doing or what they think we should do.

In this case, the no starts with you acknowledging how you want to lead yourself and what you value and prioritize in your life and business. So for you, it might be, I should market my business a certain way. I should charge this way. I should work on these types of projects. Maybe that should that you're being presented with is an option, but that doesn't mean you have to do it that way. And that's where you can give yourself that internal no.

I had to work through this last year, which really ended up being an opportunity to really solidify my own values and priorities. But I was invited to attend an out-of-state event that would have likely been a really great opportunity for my business. And I was telling myself I should go. I really thought if I asked others, they would say, yes, you should absolutely go.

And then when I heard all of the shoulds and took a little pause and started to explore what was right for me, the truth was I knew I wanted to be at home for personal reasons at that time. And so I chose to say no to myself first. It felt very much like it was not even a big deal to say no to the others involved. It felt like saying no to myself, knowing that there was that part of me that had the desire to go and saw the potential in that, but then also choosing to say no because there was something that I wanted and valued and prioritized more.



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One thing you can do when you're playing around with this idea of should I say no because I'm shoulding myself is to say, says who? Where is that should coming from? And this is really interesting to see when you ask yourself this question. Is this some rule you just made up for yourself?

It might be someone you admire. It might be someone that you really don't even want to take their opinion into account, and that could help you drop into the no. So ask yourself who says you should, and do I want to listen to that person? Or do I want to listen to that internal voice that's shoulding me?

Another way you can explore this is to check in with your future self. If you imagined yourself doing the things the way you wanted to do it, having reached the goals that you want and having a business that really feels like home to you, you can ask that future version of you, how did I do it my way? Not the way I should do it, but what advice would that future version of yourself give to you today about the path forward?

And you may find that some of those things that you should do are sound business advice or things that you want to implement. But I think even just taking away the layer of force and pressure of having to do it a certain way from that should gives you so much more freedom to make decisions and decide really what you want to say no to and what you want to say yes to.

The last one that I want to share about when you might want to consider saying no to yourself is when you're in a high energy cycle. This is something I've been really playing with over the last year or so. And I find that there are certain times of the month where I have higher energy. It's like a snappier feeling in my body, really alert, really creative, very much feels like my wheels are internally spinning.

And then there's other times when the energy feels slower and less available. And through my experience with noticing these cycles, especially when it comes to my own creative ideas, I've learned that I need to make a commitment to myself that I can always make a note of whatever comes to me in these higher energy cycles and come back to it later when my energy feels more steady and grounded.

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This is because when I have these high energy spikes, I really feel like I can do anything and I'm coming up with all these ideas. And because I think I can do anything, I'm wanting to implement all of them all at once. But then I also have to remember that those spikes aren't always there. That is not the average of my energy. And the energy that I want fueling my decisions about what I say yes or no to is grounded energy.

I want you all to even think about this when you plan out your projects or tasks for a day or a week. Are you making a plan about what you say no to, what you keep off the plan for the version of you who is the very most motivated, well-rested, most on top of it version of you? Or are you making a plan for average you, which is likely going to require you to say no to more things. And that's because average you is going to be more likely to show up on any given day.

So notice when you have these energy cycles. Maybe it's throughout the day, or maybe it's weekly or monthly or over months of time. But start to notice what those cycles are. And when you find yourself saying yes from the high energy cycle to appointments, projects, volunteer commitments, social outings, you name it, from this energetic state, only to notice that when it comes time to implement them, that high energy state has maybe passed and you're in more of that either lower energy or more steady or more average energy state. We want to be saying yes and no from that place so that we set ourselves up for success.

So those are the four times that I really encourage you to consider saying no to yourself. To recap, those are when you're ignoring or avoiding your capacity, either your emotional capacity or your calendar capacity. Number two is when you're trying to justify or convince yourself of a yes. Number three is if you're shoulding yourself into a yes. And number four, if you're riding an energetic high.

As with saying no to others, the difficulty in saying no to ourselves is never in the actual words we need to use. We've all heard that phrase no is a complete sentence. We don't need to explain it. No is no. It's just one word. But it's the discomfort we experience from saying no to ourselves that is what really feels hard about saying no.

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And if you want to start to practice saying no to yourself in order to honor the things that you really do want to give your energy and attention to, and again, that's not to say that the things you say no to, you don't want to give your energy and attention to. But you have to reconcile that there is a limited bandwidth. And so even if you would like to say yes to something, sometimes you still need to say no. And this is really where you have to allow for the emotions that come up that you'd maybe rather not experience.

One of the things that I find really helpful to remind myself of, and to remind my clients of is that there's going to be discomfort either way. You'll have the discomfort of saying no to yourself or you're going to have the discomfort that comes on the back end from over committing yourself, going against your own inner wisdom and so on. All those things where it would have been maybe more helpful to say no in the now so that you felt more freedom in the later.

I find that disappointed is an emotion that often comes with saying no to ourselves. And I really think that's what I was avoiding when I created all of those additional launch projects that I took on. And in the moment when I had those ideas, I was going to be disappointed if I said no to myself, if I wouldn't get to engage with those ideas at that time. And so disappointed is often a feeling that we have to allow for versus resist, and that is a practice.

Maybe it's the feeling of frustration that you need to allow for, because maybe you don't understand quite why something is a no for you and you think you should have a good enough reason or a better reason. And so you're frustrated with yourself. Or you're frustrated with circumstances, maybe being a primary parent or caregiver to your own parents, that limits your capacity in some way and makes it so that you have to say no to yourself, maybe more than you would prefer.

Or maybe the emotion is lonely or left out if you're doing something that's against the grain or outside the norm. Or maybe even worried because your brain tells you that if you say no to yourself now, you're going to be missing out or getting behind in some race that your brain has concocted. And that race is often someone else's race that you're trying to run.

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As I often recommend, a pause is a great tool to use here. And the pause is taken when you resist saying no to yourself. What I want you to consider in that pause is what are you really resisting? What are the emotions you're trying to push away? Because that's what you're really trying to avoid, not the no, it's the emotion. And then it really becomes a process of letting the discomfort be there so you can honor your no.

Although it doesn't sound like the flashiest skill, Getting Comfortable with Discomfort is one of the most essential skill sets you can equip yourself with as an interior design business owner. As the business owner who's going to be stretching and doing new things, it really is key. And if you want more support around that topic, check out episode six where I talk about that specifically.

What I want you to take away from this is that while saying no to yourself sometimes can feel very freeing, it sometimes doesn't feel that great. And I think that's a lot of times where we get stuck in the pattern of we say we want more rest, we say we want more no time, but then we're resisting the discomfort of saying no to ourselves. And if we're resisting the no, then we're resisting what we say we actually want, which is that more spacious schedule.

When you learn to say no to yourself, you have so much more focus too. If you say yes to every idea or opportunity that you have, you're going to get distracted and dilute your efforts. That is one of the things that I am teaching in To Do To Done, is how to stay focused so that you actually make more progress. And that's going to require a no to yourself.

The other thing that happens when you learn to say no to yourself is that you get to honor your true priorities and values, which is so fulfilling. Whether that is in your personal life or in your business. And then, like I said, it can feel like freedom. You free yourself of discomfort and mental weight that occurs on the back end.

I can't say that I've heard anyone else talking about how saying no to yourself is an essential skill as the CEO of your business, but I really want you to understand that it is.

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As we wrap up, just as I promised, I wanted to also share the one time you should never say no to yourself. And that is when you're telling yourself you aren't capable, so don't even bother trying, or that you aren't worthy of the opportunity, or you hear that little voice that says, who are you to do that thing? Whether that's presenting your highest design fee to date, reaching out to that dream builder in your area, sharing your work on social media, or pitching your work to a national publication or your favorite podcast to have you on as one of the interviewees.

Do not listen to those no's and do not say no to yourself in those instances. That is really an invitation to say yes to yourself and to believe in yourself. It's completely possible that you're going to hear no from someone else when you start saying yes to yourself in this way, but I know that you can handle that. Let them be the one to say no, not you.

That is what I have for you today. I would love to hear what you thought of this episode. You can leave me a rating and review with what you enjoyed about it or what you'd love to hear more of on whatever platform you listen to your podcast on. I'll be back next Wednesday with a brand new topic, and I'm really looking forward to seeing some of you in To Do To Done and getting to work with you directly. Until next Wednesday I'm wishing you a beautiful week. I'll talk to you in the next episode.

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Just click the link in the show notes to submit your review so I know how to get in touch. I can't wait to select a winner and it might be you. I'll talk to you next week.

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