



Episode 189: Protect Your Future Self from Burnout

With Dr Rachel Morris

How often have you said 'yes' in the moment only to regret them in the future?

It's easy to overbook when you feel pressured to do so. We are often driven to say 'yes' because we try to avoid missing out or our ambitions make us feel we cannot afford saying 'no'. Yet, how often do we think about our future selves and their feelings?

Let's face the reality --- we cannot commit to everything. So, it's important to distinguish what we can say 'yes' or 'no' to.

In this episode of You Are Not a Frog, we talk about how we can take better care of our future selves and set boundaries without sacrificing what is important. This workbook will take you through the exercise of practicing compassion to yourself and assess your boundaries.

Podcast links

Check out our [Permission to Thrive CPD membership](#) for doctors!

Find out more about the [Shapes Toolkit Training programme](#)

[Email Rachel](#) or reach her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

Check out more [free resources](#) from You Are Not a Frog

Join the [Shapes Collective FB group](#).

Visit the NHS website for [coaching and mentoring programmes](#).



Quote to remember:

“When you're tempted to overbook, just stop yourself and say, ‘what would future me thank me for’ and keep that as a mantra.”

What You Will Learn

Don't you sometimes wish you could go back in time and take back some commitments you've made? We often think we can say 'yes' to everything because we need to achieve our goals or be a good friend, spouse, or parent; but what about ourselves? What about sudden emergencies we can no longer accommodate because we've packed our schedules to the brim?

In this activity, you will be challenged to identify and set stronger boundaries. This starts with knowing your 'big rocks' or non-negotiables. Remember this, when you're able to say 'no,' it's being able to say 'yes' to what is important.

Even when we know our priorities, it may be difficult to say 'no' especially when you're used to accepting everything. Here are where personal rules come in. Instead of relying on sheer willpower everytime someone asks you to do something, it's better to have clear rules for yourself.

The activity also helps you discover past experiences and regrets so you can make better decision moving forward. Learn to be strategic, understand your own energy levels and make space for rest.



Activity: The Future is in Your Hands

In your own experience, do you think you have a tendency to say 'yes' too often and overbook yourself? **Recall past experiences and try to identify times when you resented yourself for past commitments.**

Is there a recurring pattern in how you commit? For example, is it the inability to say no or the fear of missing out?

Let us take a step back and think about our priorities.

If you've filled your jar with sand and pebbles, you can't put in big rocks. If you place the big rocks first, the sand and pebbles will fill whatever space is left. In the same way, work and commitments are like sand and pebbles --- they will always expand to fill time and space. Unless we have our big rocks in place, it's easy for these to take over our lives. **What are your big rocks?**

Recall your past experiences again about commitments. **Are there any regular pinch points?** For example, do you find yourself always saying yes in a particular situation or time?

Now that you're more aware about your priorities, pinch points, and patterns, it's time so set some ground rules. In the space below, **brainstorm ways where you can make sure your future self will not burnout.**



The guide questions will focus on two categories: rest and saying no. When thinking about your personal rules, draw on your past experiences. For example, making time for rest may mean that you can go out with friends only once a week. When thinking about your rules for saying no, refer to your big rocks.

Guide Questions	Rules
How can I make sure I have enough rest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
When should I say no?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••

In the space below, write a letter from your future self thanking your present self. What are they thanking you for?

Managing your commitments and boundaries is not easy. There will be times when you can't help yourself and feel too pressured to say 'yes.' It's important to catch yourself in these moments and learn from them.

CPD time claimed:

For more episodes of *You are not a frog*, check out our website www.youarenotafrog.co.uk follow Rachel on Twitter @DrRachelMorris and find out more about the [Permission to Thrive](#) CPD membership for doctors and online and face to face courses on surviving and thriving at work at www.shapestoolkit.com.

