



BODY WISDOM · PEOPLE-PLEASING · HEALING

# Your Body Is Screaming at You

*The Hidden Cost of People-Pleasing — And Why Listening to Yourself Is the Most Radical Thing You Can Do*

By Jazmine L. Ramzy

My stomach hurt. Again. Sharp, twisting pain that doubled me over while I was making dinner. I'd had it on and off for months. Sometimes mild. Sometimes debilitating. I told myself: it's probably just stress. It'll pass.

It didn't pass. My doctor ran tests. Everything came back normal. "It might be IBS," she said. "Manage your stress." The medication didn't help. The pain continued.

What I kept ignoring was what my body was *actually* trying to tell me. I had lost my closest friend. I went back to work the next day. Customer service. Smiling at strangers. Solving problems that felt impossibly small compared to the enormity of what I'd lost.

*"Suppressing your truth doesn't make it disappear. It creates physiological tension. And eventually, your body will make you listen."*

That's when the stomach pain started. I kept going to work. Kept saying yes when I wanted to say no. Kept pushing through. Until a customer called an ambulance for me.

## THE RESEARCH: YOUR BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

Dr. Gabor Maté, author of *When the Body Says No*, spent decades studying the link between repressing emotions and chronic illness. People who habitually ignore their own needs, suppress anger, and prioritize caregiving for others over themselves have significantly higher rates of autoimmune disease, chronic pain, digestive issues, and other conditions.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, in *The Body Keeps the Score*, puts it bluntly: "The body remembers what the mind tries to forget." You can say you're "fine" all you want. But your body knows the truth.

## 7 WAYS YOUR BODY SAYS "STOP"

### 1. Digestive issues (stomach pain, bloating)

Your gut is often called the "second brain." When you're constantly swallowing your feelings, your digestive system rebels.

### 2. Chronic pain (back pain, headaches, muscle tension)

You're carrying too much. Doing too much. Expecting too much of yourself. The weight is literal — it manifests as pain.

### 3. Autoimmune disorders

When you can't say no to others, your body starts attacking itself. It's not a coincidence.

### 4. Exhaustion that sleep doesn't fix

Not physically worn out. Spiritually depleted. Running on empty because you're always giving it away.

### 5. Anxiety (constant worry, panic, feeling unsafe)

When you abandon yourself repeatedly, your nervous system stays in fight-or-flight. How can you trust the world when you can't even trust yourself to protect you?

## HOW TO STOP BETRAYING YOURSELF

### Step 1: Notice and pause.

When someone asks something of you, notice your body's response first. Does your stomach tense? Does your jaw clench? Your body knows the truth before your mind catches up.

### Step 2: Name the feeling.

Don't rush to "I'm fine." Name what you actually feel: resentful, overwhelmed, exhausted, angry. Naming it makes it real.

### Step 3: Ask the truth question.

*"If I could answer with zero consequences, what would I say?"* No guilt. No judgment. Just truth.

### Step 4: Say no — with or without explanation.

Not: "I wish I could, but—" Try: "No, I'm not available." or "That doesn't work for me." You don't owe anyone an explanation for honoring yourself.

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*"You don't need permission. You don't need to wait until you collapse. You can choose yourself now. Your body is screaming at you. Are you ready to listen?"*

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*Jazmine L. Ramzy is a writer exploring the cost of people-pleasing and the radical act of listening to yourself. Her forthcoming book, *Shut The F\*\*k Up*, includes a chapter on listening to your body before anyone else — because that's where truth lives. Follow her at @jlashae on X.*

**Take a deep breath right now. Ask yourself: What does my body need? What am I ignoring? Where am I betraying myself? Then honor the answer. → [jazmineramzy.com](https://jazmineramzy.com)**