

Why it's GOOD to say NO

At this time of year the invitations and diary dates start to mount up, but you needn't feel you have to say yes to everything. Why not discover the joys of missing out instead?

IT WILL SOON BE THE SEASON OF bright lights, fizzing cocktails and Christmas parties. The months where sequins become totally acceptable daywear and your calendar fills up with social events. But what if some nights you'd rather snuggle up on the sofa with the new Marian Keyes? In this age of constant connections – and especially at this time of year – there's a certain pleasure to be found in choosing to stay at home. The concept of JOMO, or 'joy of missing out', was coined by blogger Anil Dash in response to FOMO, the 'fear of missing out'. After his son was born, he realised there was pleasure in missing certain social events. 'There can be, and should be, a blissful, serene enjoyment in knowing, and celebrating that there are folks out there having the time of their life at an event you might have loved, but are simply skipping,' he said.

THE MISSING OUT MENTALITY

Because JOMO is motivated by a positive emotion, joy, rather than a negative one, it can

Prioritise what you really want to do with your time – it boosts confidence and raises self-esteem.

be really good for us, especially at this time of year when everything seems rather hectic and busy.

'The prefrontal cortex is an area in your brain involved in making choices and decisions,' says GP Dr Radha Modgil. 'When a decision comes up a very complex series of events occurs where your brain will analyse past experiences as well as potentials for rewards, to weigh up whether to say yes or no to something.'

JOMO, therefore, allows you to feel you've made the right choice to stay in, because doing so will give you a more pleasurable experience – it's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

'Ultimately, JOMO means you're prioritising your own feelings and desires, above the perceived pressures of going out,'



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*BARCLAYS SURVEY.

says Dr Modgil. ‘So it reaffirms your self-esteem and self-worth.’ This is especially important during the festive season, with more and more opportunities presenting themselves for going out than at any other time of the year.

Allowing yourself time off – and enjoying it with a clear conscience – becomes even more valuable. ‘Otherwise, how exhausted would you be at the end of the season?’ says psychotherapist Hilda Burke. ‘There’s a reason a lot of people get sick or feel down in January – they’ve just run themselves ragged. It’s about managing your energy levels. And usually at this stage of your life you know yourself well enough to recognise what you need, and then make a decision starting from that vantage point.’

BE POLITE YET FIRM

So how can we most tactfully decline? ‘It’s best to be straightforward when it comes to turning something down,’ says Dr Modgil. ‘You shouldn’t feel as though you have to justify or explain yourself. You can do this politely and firmly and not get drawn into being persuaded.’ It’s also important to turn down any invitations in a timely way, especially if it involves any restaurant reservations or transportation waiting to be booked with you in mind.

A common factor that gets in the way of embracing the JOMO is the worry you’re being antisocial, or that you’re damaging your friendships and connections. But being honest about your JOMO can actually make your genuine relationships stronger. ‘A lot of us



13%

That’s the proportion of people who frequently spend more money than they want to because of feeling they have to go out. So JOMO can save you some money at at this pricey time of year*.

want other people to get us, to understand us,' says Hilda. 'But how can they if we're busy pleasing them and don't let them know what's really going on? Yes, maybe there are weaker friendships that might fall by the wayside if you don't fit in with the other person's agenda. But I think ultimately, the friendships you do have will be more honest.'

The fact of the matter is, some nights you'd rather be at home with a cuppa, fluffy socks on and a fave film playing on the television, than going out listening to loud music, dancing and waiting for cabs in the rain – and making that an honest and mindful choice is actually empowering.

'Most importantly, if you've made a decision to stay in, enjoy it!' says Dr Modgil. 'Turn off notifications on your phone and don't look at social media posts. Live in the present moment and remember, there are plenty of future events you can go to and enjoy to the fullest.'

REASONS TO LOVE STAYING IN

● **Time to beautify:** It's an opportunity to get on top of your beauty regime, ready to look amazing on those nights when you *will* hit the town! We're loving Tisserand Aromatherapy's new launches. Give yourself a collagen-boosting facial by adding a few drops of their anti-ageing powerhouse **Carrot Seed Oil** (£11.65, tisserand.com) to **Jojoba Blending Oil** (£13.80) and massaging it into your skin before bedtime.

● **Great TV:** There's some interesting TV drama this season that's worth staying in for. We're most excited about *Alias Grace*, another Margaret Atwood adaption, coming hot on the heels of the multi-award-winning *Handmaid's Tale* – which is hitting Netflix on 3 November.

● **A chance to read:** If the last chance you got to sit down with a book was on your summer holiday, now's your chance to embrace reading. Baileys Prize winner Ali Smith's new book *Winter* (£11.89, Hamish Hamilton) is part of a seasonal quartet and is perfect for lovers of contemporary fiction.

Once you've decided to embrace JOMO, make the most of it by doing things you enjoy.



Quiz

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO NOW?

The last thing you want is to end up with FOMO, so take this quiz to know what events you'll most enjoy and which to swerve.

- 1 How energised are you feeling?**

 - A** I'm happy to hibernate as much as possible at this time of year.
 - B** Pretty balanced. I've been busy lately, but I'm well rested.
 - C** I'm itching to burn off some spare energy!
- 2 What does your ideal night involve?**

 - A** Cashmere, curry and a box set binge.
 - B** Tapas with my closest friends.
 - C** Boogieing to cheesy tunes until the early hours.
- 3 What do you do if your workplace is planning a night out?**

 - A** Stay out of the loop – I need to preserve my social energy.
 - B** Listen up to see what the plans are – I might go along for a bit.
 - C** Give suggestions for the newest bar and live music venues.
- 4 What's your attitude to social media?**

 - A** I think I once signed up for Facebook.
 - B** I check it a couple of times a day, but not when I'm out.
 - C** I rely on it to stay updated and let others know what I'm up to.
- 5 At the office Christmas party you will mostly be found...**

 - A** Slipping your coat on after a few chats and a couple of vol au vents.
 - B** Enjoying a couple of glasses of fizz with your best work buddy.
 - C** Regaling the crowd with your rendition of Wham's *Last Christmas*.

YOUR ANSWER...

Read on to find out which kind of activities best suit your socialising personality.

Mostly As?

You're happy to embrace JOMO. Time to light that candle, run the bath and relish avoiding the hustle and bustle.

Mostly Bs?

You're pretty balanced, but keep an eye on your energy levels. Start with a low-key

catch-up with old friends over cocktails and see where else the night takes you.

Mostly Cs?

You love being a party animal, which is great! Make the most of your energy. But it can be good to mix things up by staying in on the odd occasion to recharge your batteries.