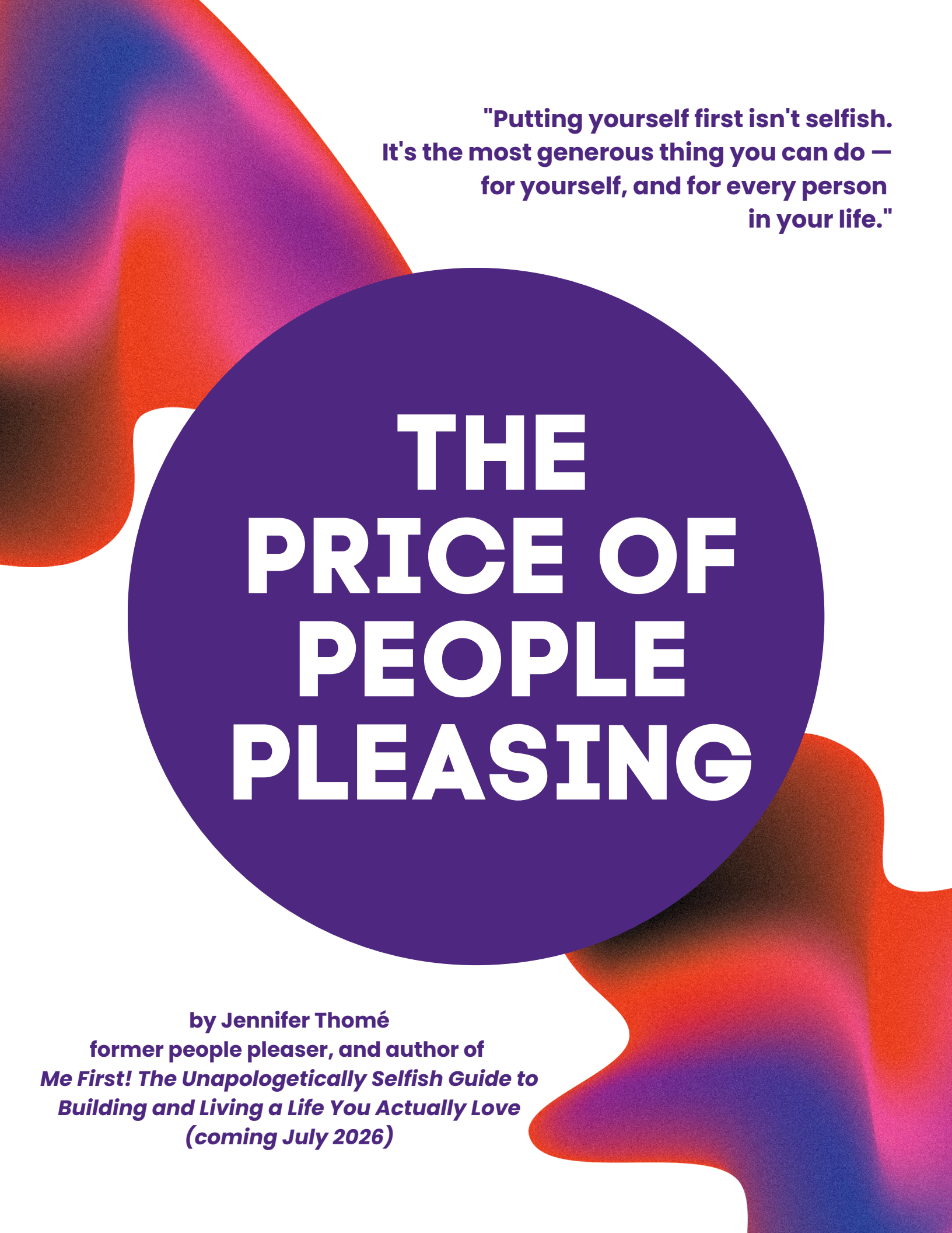




**"Putting yourself first isn't selfish.
It's the most generous thing you can do —
for yourself, and for every person
in your life."**

THE PRICE OF PEOPLE PLEASING

by Jennifer Thomé
former people pleaser, and author of
Me First! The Unapologetically Selfish Guide to
Building and Living a Life You Actually Love
(coming July 2026)

People Pleasing is costing you *thousands* in wasted time, wealth and health.

People pleasing isn't kindness. It's a slow leak in every area of your life. And today, we're counting the cost.

Your health pays first. Chronic stress from carrying everyone else's problems floods your body with cortisol, wrecks your sleep, and compromises your immune system. Research on work stress and heart health found it increases your risk of death by up to 43%. You skip workouts. You eat whatever's easiest. Your body becomes the physical record of every boundary you failed to hold.

Your time disappears next. The average person spends the equivalent of a full month every year on unpaid emotional labor. And those aren't clean minutes, they're sticky ones. A 20-minute vent becomes 20 minutes of listening, 2 hours of ruminating, weeks of checking in and carrying someone else's anxiety in your nervous system. Psychology calls this *emotional contagion*. By retirement, the tab is close to half a decade of your life spent on other people's problems.

Your money follows. Women who don't negotiate their salaries earn \$500K-\$1M less over their careers, and studies show that people-pleasers are far less likely to advocate for themselves. That's a house. Your of retirement. Your freedom. Add in the money lent without repayment, the spending to keep up appearances, and the financial band-aids for problems that aren't yours, and your future is quietly being defunded by someone else's comfort. That \$5,000 raise you're too afraid to ask for? Invested monthly over 20 years, it can grow to \$200,000. Over 30 years, nearly \$500,000. Still not worth the awkward conversation?

And then it spirals. One bad "yes" creates three more. Lost sleep makes you too foggy to fight for yourself the next day. A financial hit stresses your health, which drains your energy, which leads to impulse spending, which steals the time you needed to build the life you actually want. One client calculated that if she added up every massage, therapy session, and treat she bought herself just to offset burnout (not for pleasure, but to keep from drowning) the total topped \$20,000!

The antidote isn't another supplement or act of self-care purchased to paper over the cracks. It's alignment. It's boundaries. It's deciding that if the cost is unsustainable and the benefit is unclear, the answer is no.

Awareness is where it starts. In the following pages you'll write down what being nice has cost you: your time, your money, your health, your joy. Don't soften it. The more clearly you see the price, the easier it becomes to stop paying it.

It's time to put yourself first!

THE PRICE OF PEOPLE PLEASING

A Me First!™ Worksheet

PART 1 • YOUR TIME HAS A DOLLAR VALUE

Before we talk about what you've lost, let's establish what your time is actually worth. You don't have to be a business owner for this to matter. Your time is money whether your employer pays it or not.

My annual salary (or estimated value of my time per year):

e.g. \$60,000 — if you're a stay-at-home parent, mark your worth!

Working hours per year:

Standard = 1,920 hrs (40 hrs/wk × 48 weeks)

Your Hourly Rate:

Annual salary ÷ Working hours = \$_____ per hour

PART 2 • THE DAILY DRAIN

Think about the people-pleasing behaviors that show up in a typical week. Use your hourly rate to calculate what they actually cost you.

Behavior/Situation	Hours/Week	Cost/Week
Activities caused by saying yes when I should say no		
Over-explaining, over-apologizing, ruminating		
Doing or re-doing work because I didn't speak up		
Pointless conversations, peace-keeping		
Jumping in to assist rather than delegate		
Weekly Total Cost		

Now take your Weekly Total Cost and multiply it by 52 to see your annual loss.
Write the number in the rectangle to the right.

PART 3 · THE COMPOUND COST OF STAYING SMALL

Here's where it gets real. People pleasing doesn't just cost you today, it steals from Future You. Money you don't ask for doesn't just disappear; it compounds in someone else's pocket. Here's one example:

The raise you're afraid to ask for (\$5,000/yr) invested at a modest 7% return:

Timespan	Future Value
10 years	\$69,082
20 years	\$204,977
30 years	\$472,304

Now let's make it personal:

List all of the money or support (asking your kids/partner to help clean instead of hiring it out, etc.), money lost by not asking for raise or searching for a job or upskilling to earn more, and anything else you're not asking for. Be honest!

Now let's add those up and multiply!

Your Number (pink box)
PLUS all of the additional
money you're spending
putting yourself second.

Years to Retirement or
Financial Freedom

Future cash value of
your niceness.

Tip: You can plug it into a
compound interest
calculator to get your
compound number.

PART 4 · THE COSTS THAT DON'T SHOW UP ON A SPREADSHEET

Not everything can be quantified — but that doesn't make it free.

Often we also pay the price emotionally and with our health.

Check every box that resonates and sit with those feelings. Be honest with yourself.

I end conversations or commitments feeling drained, resentful, or invisible.	
I've lost track of what I want because I've spent so long focusing on others.	
My closest people don't fully know me because I've hidden my real needs.	
I resent others for not knowing what I truly want in life.	
I've watched others take the spotlight, the promotion, the stage — because I stepped back.	
My stress, sleep, or body has paid the price for my people pleasing.	
I can't remember the last time I said yes to something just because I wanted to.	
I have thoughts, ideas, and gifts that the world hasn't heard yet.	
I give more than I receive.	
People owe me money but I don't feel comfortable demanding it back.	
I overpay for services because I don't have time to think things through.	
I don't have the time or energy to develop my skills or start my own company.	
I have a nagging feeling I could show up better in the important areas of life.	
I feel guilty for what I have.	
I feel envious of what others have.	
I am always tired and/or frazzled.	
I don't have the time or resources to treat myself.	
I always feel like if I don't do it, it won't get done. Or at least not to my standards.	

PART 5 • THE ME FIRST! PIVOT

Awareness without action is just sadness with extra steps.
Let's turn this into something useful.

The ONE ask I've been avoiding (that it's time to make):

The ONE 'yes' I need to change to a 'no' this week:

What I will do with the time/money I reclaim:

What does the version of me who has already made these changes feel like:

People pleasing isn't free. Every 'yes' you didn't mean, every ask you swallowed, every boundary you abandoned — they all carry a price tag. Today we're going to count the cost. Not to shame you, but to wake you up.

Your Reminder:

Living Me First! Isn't Mean. It's the Most Generous Thing You Can Do!

Putting yourself first doesn't make you a bad person. It makes you a sustainable one. There's a simple litmus test:

- Kind people give from overflow, and it energizes them.
- People-pleasers give from depletion, and it drains them.

The goal isn't to stop being generous; it's to stop being generous at your own expense.

Here's what that looks like in real life:

People-pleasing: You assist on a colleague's project because you don't want them to think you're unhelpful, even though your own work is suffering and you'll be up until midnight.

Me First!: You say "I'm at capacity right now, but here's someone who might be able to help." And you mean it, without guilt.

People-pleasing: Your friend calls in crisis (again) and you cancel your workout, your dinner plans, and your sleep to talk them off the ledge.

Me First!: You show up for them with a time boundary: "I have 30 minutes and I'm fully here for you." And then, you protect the rest of your evening.

People-pleasing: You've been doing the same job for three years, you're underpaid, and you stay quiet because you don't want to seem ungrateful.

Me First!: You schedule the meeting, and make the ask. Your silence isn't humility, it's self-betrayal.

People-pleasing: You say yes to the obligation you dread, smile through it, and spend the next three days recovering emotionally.

Me First!: You show up for the things that matter and give yourself permission to skip the ones that don't, without a five-paragraph explanation.

Do any of these sound familiar? They did to me, too! When I finally stopped carrying everyone else's mental load, emotional labor, and late-night crises, I didn't become cold, I became happier, more generous and free. I donated real money to causes I cared about. I consulted with companies who lit me up. I played with my kids instead of answering late-night emails.

That's the selfishness I'm talking about: the kind that makes you more present, more purposeful, and more powerful. When you stop shrinking yourself to fit everyone else's needs, you don't take anything away from the world. You finally show up fully in it.

**"Putting yourself first isn't selfish.
It's the most generous thing you can do
for yourself, and for every person in your life."**

— Jennifer Thomé, *Me First!*

You've just taken the first step, and that matters more than you know.

This worksheet is a small piece of a much bigger journey, and if what you uncovered today resonated with you, there's so much more waiting for you.

My upcoming book *Me First! The Unapologetically Selfish Guide to Building and Living a Life You Actually Love* goes deeper into everything you touched on today — the science, the stories, the method, and the roadmap for building a life that finally works for you, not everyone else.

If you're ready to do the work with real support, the upcoming *Me First!* online course walks you through the full Body → Mind → Soul transformation at your own pace, with the tools and exercises to make the change stick.

And if you want to go faster, further, and with someone in your corner every step of the way, I'm here to help you with that, too!

I'd love to be part of what comes next for you.

Find me, the book, my calendar and the course at www.instagram.com/jenniferthome or on my website JenniferThome.com.

It's time to put yourself first — for real this time.

With love,

Jennifer Thomé