

Just Say No

I used to put everyone else's requests and needs first and if there was any time left over at the end of the day for what I needed and wanted to do, that was acceptable. That is until I began to realize that if you and I are going to be **Effective Time Managers**, we have to stay away from allocating our time solely on the basis of those who demand it. Instead, if you and I are going to be effective Time Managers, **we have to allocate our time on the basis of those who deserve it.**

I don't mean this in any negative or arrogant way. It's just you have limits to the amount of time you have to spend and so one of the most powerful words in your Time Management vocabulary is the word, "**No**". Almost everyone you encounter will think they have a better idea about how you should be spending your time. It doesn't make others bad. It's just the way the world works. If there is a void in your Time Management life, someone, or many for that matter, will jump in to fill that spot. The problem is that they do not have the full understanding of where you are taking your life and if you keep saying "yes", they will continue to take up your time, possibly keeping you from accomplishing what you really want to do.

"No" is sometimes difficult to say because you have been taught differently. You have been taught to say, "yes", to please, to serve, and to accommodate. There is nothing wrong with saying "yes" most of the time, *but occasionally there is a line you choose not to cross, when saying "yes" is really not the best use of your time to get you to where you need and want to be.*

If you had unlimited amounts of time, you could "yes" all the time to everyone. But you don't. You have 24 hours each day, 7 days a week for a total of 168 hours. And you get to spend that time only once, so you have to spend it wisely.

I have listed **seventeen ways here to say "No"**. Don't let me put the words in your mouth. Take the ones you like, change them around and you use the words that are comfortable for you. The point is, if you are ever in a position when you can never say "no", then you are always saying "yes", and like the song says, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for everything".

Try these:

"I'm sorry. That's not a priority for me right now."

"I can't help you on this now, but I can get to it next week. Would that be okay?"

"I have so much on my plate now I don't know when I can get to it. But I do know someone over here who can help you now."

"Before I take this on for you, let me show you a few things so that you might be able to do it yourself."

"I have made so many commitments to others, it would be unfair to them and you if I took on anything more at this point."

"If I can't give you a ride to the school dance on Friday, how else would you get there safely?"

"I don't know how soon I can help you on this, but I will get back to you as soon as I am free to help you."

"I'm sure we're close enough that when I say "no" you'll understand it's for a good reason."

"Sure I can help you with your request as long as we both agree and understand that the item I agreed to do for you yesterday is going to have to wait."

"Before I take this over from you, what do you think we ought to do about it?"

"I've got good news and bad news. The good news is, I sure can do that for you. The bad news is, I'm so overloaded with everything else, I've become delirious and have been lying about my commitments."

"When I get overwhelmed like I am now, I remove every third person who asks me for something, from my "Good Friends List" and the second person just left."

"No."

"Thanks for thinking to ask me, but, no thanks."

"I would like to help you out on this but you understand I don't have the resources available to do the right job for you."

"Now that's the type of thing I would love to help you on if only I had the time."

"Just like you, I get overloaded sometimes and have to tell some very special people, "no". This is one of those times."

And as you speak, smile.