

Saying "No" -- 6 Questions To Manage Your Time

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I've always hated telling people, "no" about anything. Especially if they just wanted to talk.

Yes has always come so much easier to me. I guess it's because historically I've always been a bit of a helper or people pleaser, wanting to be thought of as the "nice guy" and be helpful. It works up to a point, fine. But once I started another company I had to be mindful of how I spent my time.

These last few years I've gotten much more deliberate about saying "no" to requests for

grabbing a coffee, or listening to a pitch -- or just invitations that just seem out of bounds for me. :)

What's interesting to note is my fear of saying "no" always felt like people would think less of me. They might think I'm being stuffy, too good for them or worse, just a plain dick.

I couldn't stand the thought of someone thinking I was a dick.

--- But things changed ---

I had a family of 5 now and a company -- both needed my full attention to take care of -- it was vital that I started being more selfish with the time I could offer.

If I didn't start watching my time, I was going to become overwhelmed. Then I'd be no good to anyone. Here's why we all need to be better about saying "no" with our time:

1. It **interrupts** the flow of our day by creating one more thing to schedule.
2. Well intentioned people start **driving your priorities** with requests for intros and advice.
3. People's **frustration or stress** will begin to affect your own levels of happiness.
4. Invites to "grab a beer," take precious **time away from family**, coworkers & close friends.
5. You need to make time for **your own rest and recovery**.
6. What if **you can no longer say "yes"** to what you want to do?

So, how do you decide what to say yes to?

1. **Can this conversation propel you or the person you are helping forward?**
Sounds selfish, but 'what's in it for me' is a good filter.
2. **Will this conversation be positive or negative?**
Often times negative conversations tend to make you negative. Are you in a healthy spiritual place where you can overcome that tendency?
3. **Is the request from someone you genuinely WANT to help?**
If they are a stranger, is the person who introduced you a reliable source.
4. **Is the request a fit for your expertise -- can you actually BE helpful?**
Be realistic, or are you just wanting your own ego stroked.
5. **Do you owe this person a favor, or will you need their help in the future?**
Planting seeds for a later harvest is not a bad motivation.
6. **Do you actually have the time for another meeting?**
Seriously.

It's healthy to guard your time -- and your heart. Choose to do both wisely.



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