

Getting To No

By Carol Gegner

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Are you living your life in the fast lane? How many balls can you juggle and keep your life in balance? It is easy to get caught in the mind trap that more is better and fast is good. We are so busy trying to do it all that we forget we can make a choice to slow down.

I was reminded of this a few days ago when a client talked about how she completely overextended her commitments for the week. Her “yeses” far exceeded her “no” responses. By the end of the week she was feeling the effects of doing too much. Her normal zest for life was out of reach. The joy of the day was lost.

In analyzing the situation, she realized her “yeses” came from wanting to please others and from a sense of obligation. She also didn’t want to miss out on any potential business networking. Yes was her operative word. She filled her plate high with business, family, and volunteer activities. Her juggling act started falling apart. She wondered what happened to her well-meaning intentions.

Her dilemma is familiar to many of us. Over extending has become a way of life. We start to believe we can do everything. We overbook our commitments and start feeling frustrated, exhausted, and overwhelmed. These are clues telling us it is time to examine what we are doing. Continuing in the yes mode can be detrimental to our quality of life.

Why is it so difficult to say no? (1) You don’t want to disappoint people. (2) You want to be liked by everyone. (3) You don’t want to create conflict by rocking the boat. (4) It’s just easier to say yes. There are many reasons why we hesitate to say no. What is yours?

Learning to say no is like building muscle. It takes a lot of repetition to gain strength and confidence in your ability to say no with ease.

You can implement getting to no using the following ideas.

1. Be realistic with your time. Trying to do just one more thing before you walk out the door is another way of pushing yourself to the edge. It’s a silent yes.
2. Schedule down time for yourself on a regular basis. Ten minutes of quiet time will help calm your mind. Do this daily and you will soon be back in control and making conscious choices.

3. Set limits for yourself. Know what you are willing and not willing to do. Living a life based on “shoulds” builds resentments.
4. Set limits with others. Know where and what your personal and professional boundaries are. Stop tolerating people infringing on your time or in your space.
5. Set priorities. Decide what is most important to you for your business and your life. That becomes your absolute yes list. Everything else is a no.
6. Stop the automatic yes response. Take time to look at your weekly calendar with your most important activities already scheduled. Then make your decision.

Remember, saying no to a yes is a sure way of getting to no!

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