



TOPIC: TIME MANAGEMENT

TITLE: THE POWER OF SAYING NO

February 7, 2001

It seems as I talk with people lately, many of us are starting to feel compressed for time, overextended and a little stressed. So often we find ourselves overcommitted, and wonder how it happened. Usually, it's because we've added more to our plate, without taking anything off.

I'd like to talk to you today about the power of saying no. So often, we overextend, and don't feel we have the ability to say no. Here's the truth: WE DO! But, it can cause a lot of anxiety for many reasons: fear of conflict, guilt, loss of control, etc. I'd like to dedicate this newsletter today to helping you say no.

Let's walk through some steps:

What are your top five goals for this year?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now that you know what you want to achieve, what are the things you're going to say "yes" to so that you can accomplish your goals?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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Now, let's talk about what you're going to say "no" to. In order to achieve these goals, what are the actions or behaviors you need to stop doing?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now that you've identified what you're going to say yes to and what you're going to say no to, let's talk about how you say no. This is often the hardest part for many of us. So, here are some tips on how to go about saying no.

- 1) Explain why. This is where you communicate the "big picture" - what are your goals, what are you trying to achieve, what are you saying yes to and what are you saying no to.
- 2) Communicate "no" clearly and firmly. This is the time to be very clear about what you can't or aren't willing to do. For example, if your goal is to lose weight, you might say no to fast food. The point is, that once you've made the decision to say no, you need to completely say no, not maybe or I'll think about it, etc.
- 3) Offer options where available. If you can't do or meet the request, offer alternatives. In the weight loss example, an alternative might be to go somewhere else for lunch, meet at another time, etc.
- 4) Ask for support. In most cases, if you explain why you're making the choice, offer options and ask for support, you will get it. Very often we just say no, without communication why. Once people know why, they have a better understanding and are very often willing to offer you support in achieving your goals.
- 5) Create accountability for yourself. If you're going to commit to some "yes's" and "no's", how will you be accountable? Accountability is critical to staying on track. Ask someone you trust and respect to hold you accountable to your commitment.

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My challenge for you this week is to develop your own personal yes/no list, and start saying no.

What are the three things I want to say "no" to?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How will I be accountable to this commitment?