



Your boss asks you to stay late again.

Your boss always asks you to stay late. And you always say yes. Because you want it to help your career.

You're concerned if you say no that your boss will hold it against you. So you say yes.

The PTA president reaches out and asks you to organize the next fundraiser.

You are stretched thin. And you are exhausted. But if you don't do it who else will?

So even though you want to say no you say yes.

Your friend reaches out and wants to get together. On the one free night you've had in weeks.

You want to say no, but you don't want to be a bad friend and you don't want your friend to be mad at you.

So you say yes.

Do any of these sound familiar?

Do all of these sound familiar?

If so, you're in the right place.

Today we're going to talk about saying no. Why it's important why it's hard and how to make it easier.

I'd like to do that by framing saying no as a time management strategy.

This isn't necessarily how we always think about it or talk about it, but I'm hoping that by framing it this way. It might help manage it a little bit better and a little bit more effectively.

Because very often when it comes to saying no, we focus on the emotion behind it and we will address that too.

So it's hard if we think people are going to be mad at us or we're going to let somebody down. It can be hard to overcome that.

Maybe hopefully if we think a bit think about it as a time management strategy that might help us get a better hold on it.

Often when we think of time management, we think of things like calendar management or some technology or a tomato timer. Those things can help too.



But until we get a grasp on learning to say no then we're going to continue struggling with our time management.

Equally our career management.

Saying no has a lot to do with where our careers are and where they have the potential to go.

So let's try to approach this emotional difficult topic within this framework and thinking of saying no as something that can help improve both your time management and your career management.

I only recently heard this term non-promotable tasks, although I understood the meaning of it once I learned what it meant.

Non-promotable tasks are just that- they're tasks that you may be doing and many of us are in our jobs that while they might be helpful, they're not doing anything to help us get promoted.

These are things like planning the office party, bringing in the snacks, coffee, donuts, organizing the charity drive, being the one who gets everybody to sign the birthday card or pitch in for the retirement gift.

All of these things benefit an organization, but unfortunately they don't benefit your career. When you are spending time volunteering or being voluntold to be in charge of tasks like this, it's taking away the time you have to focus on the promotable tasks.

The work that you've been hired to do.

And the work that's going to help you get promoted and get to that next step.

So learning to say no to things like non-promotable tasks can be a huge benefit to both your time management and your career management.

Saying no is important because it saves time it helps you focus on what's most important.

It builds respect that people know you are focused and driven on what you were hired to do. It helps your career. And it prevents burnout.

For most of us when we say yes when we really want to say no, we have a hard time letting go of the resentment the frustration behind that and all of that leads to burn out.

So saying no and doing so confidently or only saying yes, when we really mean yes, and we really want to say yes can help to mitigate this very common response of resentment frustration and burnout.



But it's not that easy, right? There's a lot that we bring into this. There's a lot of baggage that goes into saying no.

These are some things we tell ourselves sometimes which is why we struggle with saying no.

See which of these might sound familiar to you.

I want people to like me.

I want to be a team player.

I don't want to be a burden to others.

I don't want it held against me.

If I don't do it, it won't get done. (That's a biggie!)

So take a look at this list see what sounds familiar.

If you're whatever you say to yourself isn't on this list then work with that.

If all of these sound familiar or several of these, work with those. But really take some time to identify what you have been telling yourself that has contributed to this challenge of saying no.

Think about how you might reframe it.

I want people to like me. People like having an effective leader and saying no is going to help me become a more effective Leader by focusing on my leadership.

I can be a team player by being an effective leader. That's my role on the team. That's how I can be a strong team leader.

Why am I so concerned about burdening other people to the point that I keep burdening myself? Why is there burden more important than mine?

This fear that it will be held against us. Who is holding it against us? How are they holding it against us? How are they holding this against us? Is this even true?

It won't get done if I don't do it. Maybe, maybe not and if so, so what? How has that become your responsibility?

So again, some of these reframes might really resonate with you. Some might not, so work on finding one that really resonates with you so you can come back to it again. And again when those old stories when that those old lines keep coming back in your head that you can reframe it in a way that best serves you.



One thing that's helped me a lot with this is to think of when I'm saying, yes I'm still saying no. Maybe not verbally, maybe it's not coming out of my mouth. But every time I say, yes, I'm still saying no to something else. So is the yes I'm saying yes to more important than the no I'm still saying no to?

You need to say yes to what matters.

Warren Buffett has this quote that really successful people say no to almost everything.

It's easier to say yes. It's harder and much more important to learn to say no.

So, how can you do that?

Let's look at some different ways.

No, thank you. Period.

Do you want to come to this event outside of work hours? No, thank you. Period.

Can you help me with this? Not right now, but I can help you...

I can't help you this time, but I can help you next time if you give me some notice or you send me an email or you send me the document ahead of time.

If it's coming from a boss, you might say I can do it, but I have all these other things to do. Which one would you like to take its place?

And sometimes no response is the best response.

If someone sends an email to the whole company and is looking for volunteers, sometimes no response is the best response. Or if you've already said no multiple times and someone keeps asking you sometimes no response is the best response.

So I hope this was helpful.

I hope you start to think about how you can say no more frequently and more effectively.

So the most important question for you is what will you start saying no to?