

The Power of Saying No

In today's society, we all seem to be over-scheduled and running ourselves ragged. We are continually running at an unrelenting, non-stop pace, hoping things will slow down soon. Rather than slowing down, it seems as though there are more and more demands on our time. Many of these requests for our time can be eliminated by simply saying "no". But how many of us actually make it a regular practice to say "no" and mean it? The truth is that there is great power in saying "no".

Each of us has been blessed with the same 24 hours each day. This is a non-negotiable fact of life. What we do with them determines our level of balance (or lack of balance, as the case may be) and fulfillment in our lives. You can't wish for more hours (you can try, but it won't come true). You can't buy more hours. You can't borrow more hours either. You just have to work with the 24 hours that you've got. Besides, even if you were granted a couple of extra hours a day, wouldn't you schedule something else and end up in the same predicament of not enough hours in the day? Without allowing ourselves time to recharge our batteries, life can become very unbalanced. But, by using the power of "no", we can regain control of our schedules and live more fulfilling lives.

Begin by saying "no" to any new requests. This will allow you to maintain your current scheduling. Obviously, this one is easier said than done, particularly when the "no" is accompanied by feelings of guilt. There's just no room in a well-balanced life for the guilt that comes from saying "no". You would be surprised to know that most people don't get mad when you say no to something. They aren't disappointed in you and they don't hold it against you. They move on and ask someone else. You may be surprised to find out that you weren't the first person they asked. Just because someone asks you to help, does not mean you are obligated or required to say "yes". We only have a limited amount of time in life and we shouldn't fill it with things we don't enjoy. You can very politely say "no" and give a reason if you are so inclined. Perhaps say you are working on other projects or are expecting something else to come up or just don't have the time/will/desire to take on anything else right now. If you don't feel like giving a reason, remember that "No" is a complete sentence. Chances are, they are looking for someone to do a good job. If your heart isn't in it or you feel pressured or guilty, are you giving it your best? Do them a favor as well as yourself, say no and let them find someone else.

Now that your schedule is not getting busier, take a look at your current volunteer activities. Evaluate them and see what you really enjoy. If you don't get satisfaction from that activity, fulfill what you have already committed to and find something else that you do love. Life is just too short. Besides, there may be someone that really wants that position and has been waiting for it to come open. You would be doing everyone a favor.

Saying "no" should also be practiced in your professional life. This is a little more difficult in some respects, but perhaps even more important. Many people have the tendency to take on additional work to make themselves look like the model employee. But once you are overwhelmed with work, are you doing your best work on those assignments or are you barely getting it all done? Do you think you are more likely to receive recognition for the volume of work that you took on or will you be reprimanded for missing deadlines or not doing your best work? The added stress of having too much work will end up affecting other parts of your life and making you feel like you are out of balance. Some people say they thrive on the stress of having deadlines but more often than not, the quality of the work has suffered.

You are the one that holds the power to say "no" and mean it. This power can help you create a more balanced and fulfilling life with time to do the activities you enjoy. With this one simple word, you can regain control of your schedule and your life. Remember that saying "no" to one thing allows you the freedom to say "yes" to something you love.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

April Mims is a life and career coach specializing in work/life balance issues and life and career transitions. Her coaching practice is Nexus Coaching Partners. She is passionate about empowering clients to balance the demands of a successful career and a strong family life. April invites you to a complimentary 30-minute coaching session to see if coaching could benefit you. To learn more or subscribe to The Nexus Connection newsletter, visit <http://www.nexuscoachingpartners.com>.