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Start with "NO"



Take **4 Steps** to Reclaim your **Time, Focus,** and **Power**
without Damaging your Relationships.

DR. MICHELE WILLIAMS



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Strategy ONE



The Positive "No" Mindset

Strategy 1a |

The Positive "No" Mindset

Welcome to the "Start with the Power of 'No' " Cheat Sheet.

Are you ready to take back your time without the fear of appearing rude or self-centered? Get ready to gain freedom from your pattern of "Yes!" It will only take 5-10 minutes per strategy to start eliminating those automatic "yeses."

I suggest that you work on one strategy per day so you have time to reflect and complete the exercises for each strategy, but you may decide to go more quickly or more slowly depending up how much practice time you would like to spend on each strategy.

Today we will focus on mindset. Being generous with your time and knowing that others can count on you as their go-to person is important, but when those requests start to eat away at the time you need to work on your dreams, spend time with friends and family or enjoy your hobbies, a mindset shift can help.

When you say "yes" to requests, you are probably trying to help someone out, help your organization or be a team player. These are important values. But sometimes saying "no" may help others and be fairer to you.



YES

NO

MAYBE



Mindset shift 1: Saying "No!" is can be helpful.

Remember: Saying "Yes" may immediately solve someone else's problem, but saying "No!" can provide another person with an important opportunity. For example, they may learn a new skill, showcase a skill or develop their network.



Mindset shift 2: A Request is a Problem-solving Opportunity.

Remember: Saying "no!" does mean you that you abandon the person making the request. It may mean that you suggest an alternative or that you work with them as a joint problem-solver. But it does mean that you do not take on the request yourself in the way it was requested. If you automatically say, "Yes!" Then you lose the opportunity to generate a long-term solution or one that is fair to you and to others.



Strategy TWO



Finding Your Absolute,
Resolute "No"

Strategy 2a | Finding Your Absolute, Resolute "No"

Welcome to Strategy 2!

Feeling the momentum yet? Yes? No? Well ,let's keep building our tool kit!

Today we will focus on your Absolute, Resolute "No!" This type of "no" is highly valuable and highly challenging. It requires us all to **face our fears**—fear of rejection, of being rude, of being labelled selfish or uncaring.



When you say "yes" to requests, you are probably trying to help someone out, help your organization or be a team player. These are important values. But sometimes saying "no" may help others and be fairer to you.

Strategy 2a | Finding Your Absolute, Resolute "No"

What do you fear most about saying "no?"

So is an Absolute, Resolute "No!" ever really necessary? Yes! When saying "yes" will overburden you or cause resentment, missed deadlines or burnout, then saying "No" is a reasonable option. And I mean "No!" not maybe or possibly.

When I started out as a consultant, before joining academia, I received the sage advice that I should say "no" to any commitment in the future that I would not be able to fit into my schedule within the next two weeks. "Why?" you ask. Because that commitment would eventually be two weeks away, and I would be scrambling to fit it into my schedule. Of course, you may be one of those rare individuals, like author and Wharton professor Adam Grant, who plans months in advance and finishes everything early, but it is more likely that your pattern of automatic "yeses" has left you with very little time to plan that far in advance.

Note, that an Absolute, Resolute "No!" does not have to be rude or unkind, but 1) it should provide an honest explanation, and 2) it should reject the task, not the person making the request.



Here are some examples of Resolute "Nos" from a blog post, - Let Them Down Easy" by Adelaide Lancaster on *TheMuse*:

--Thanks lot thinking of me for this opportunity I really wish I was in a position to take advantage 01 4 because your organization and mission sound terrific However. I've recently decided to locus on [Insert your goal or dream] Unfortunately,. I will not be able to take on this opportunity and reach this goal.

- "What a great idea to look for a promotional partner for your upcoming product launch! Unfortunately, I don't think my company the been fit we have a policy that we can only promote our members' services I'm sure that there we other communities, however, that would jump at the opportunity'

Strategy

THREE



Developing Your
Negotiator's "No"

Strategy 3a |

Your Negotiator's "No"

Strategy THREE, You're Almost there!

I'm so delighted by the progress that we're making. You are all rock stars!

So far, we have tackled:

1. The Start with "NO" Mindset
2. The "Absolute NO"

Today we will focus on your collaborative "Negotiator's No," while, yesterday we focused on your absolute, resolute "No." You need both to navigate the workplace.

The "Negotiator's no" is designed for you to give yourself the time and space to decide if this request is something you want to do and under what conditions you might want to do it. It also allows you to initiate planning for further discussion, which could either be about carrying out the request yourself in a revised manner or about problem solving other ways to solve the requester's problem.



Can you imagine your self saying something like “I would love to help with that, but I am swamped right now. Do you want to meet for coffee to talk about who might be available to help?”




Examples of a Negotiator's No

Take Sam's break room example. Sam had volunteered several times to clean up the breakroom at work. This time the supervisor asked Sam directly. Sam declined explaining that it was important that everyone felt responsibility for the shared space and suggested a rotating schedule. Sam's supervisor loved the idea and created the sign-up sheet herself.

In another example, Jane was asked to take on additional work while her boss was on leave. She said "yes" and learned the new time-consuming skills that she needed to perform the payroll-related tasks that were critical to her organization. When her boss extended the leave, Jane was asked by her boss's boss to continue doing the extra work. Jane used a soft "no." She said that while she really wanted to help out, but it was a great deal of extra work, and she didn't want her own job performance to suffer. She asked to set up a meeting to discuss it more. She then had a few days to plan for that discussion. She talked with colleagues and decided to ask for a new job title, a bonus and a part-time assistant. She prepared documentation of her extra work to support her request.

Strategy FOUR

 Using the
Power of "No" Wisely

Strategy FOUR already?

I can't believe it's our last Strategy together!

That's right! Just one more lesson and you have completed the Freedom from "Yes" Challenge. You rock!

Of course, deciding when to say "No" to requests is never actually done. But I hope you really did get a great jump-start.

During this challenge, we covered.

- The "Start with "No" Mindset
- The Absolute, resolute "No"
- The Negotiator's "No"

NO

Today, we will focus on when to use your power to say "**NO.**" After all, it is much easier to say "no" to boring, unpleasant tasks than it is fun tasks where you might meet great people or receive recognition.

Do you sometimes say "yes" because you fear missing out?

Personally, FOMO (fear of missing out) has been responsible for many "yeses" that I later regret. Sometimes the challenge is saying "no" to something that you would like to do if time were unlimited. But since it is not, saying "yes" will limit the time you have to pursue your goals and dreams.



When faced with a potential opportunity, don't let FOMO compel you to say "Yes!" Take time to evaluate how the opportunity fits with your goals, passions and values. If it is not a good fit with two or three, it will be easier to say "no." If it is nearly a good fit, you may still want to use negotiator's "no" to help you problem solve around the aspects that could be improved.

Completion| Freedom from “YES” Final Reflections

Completion Survey:

Please click [here](#) and fill out the [Completion Survey](#)!

***You will be entered in a weekly drawing to win a Laser Coaching Call with Dr. Williams to review your “No” Tracker and next steps on your path to Freedom from Yes!

Dr. Michele Williams

Professor Michele Williams, Tippie College of Business, University of Iowa, has taught negotiations to executives, startups, MBAs and undergraduates at leading schools of management for over 10 years. She is co-author of the Four Capabilities Assessment.

The research and work of Dr. Williams (University of Michigan, Ph.D.), which began with a focus on Trust and Relationships at work, now intersects with work on Women in Leadership & Entrepreneurship. She addresses two challenges that organizations face:

Trust and Relationships—Building, maintaining and repairing trust in team-based relationships and across demographic and organizational boundaries; Sustaining high performing, cross-boundary relationships.

Women in Leadership & Entrepreneurship— Social construction of gender; Gender equity within firms and across established and entrepreneurial ventures; Factors affecting women as team members, boundary spanners, and business owners.

Michele, assistant professor and the John L. Miclot Fellow in Entrepreneurship, recently joined the Management & Organizations' faculty at University of Iowa's Tippie College of Business. She is also a scholar at Cornell University's Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution and with the Smith Family Business Initiative Cornell's Johnson College of Business. Previously, she was a member of the faculty at Cornell University and MIT's Sloan School of Management.

She has authored papers and case studies, published in notable academic journals, and speaks at academic and professional conferences on her topics of research. She produced a unique course offering on Women in Leadership, Negotiation & Entrepreneurship and has spoken on this topic at JP Morgan. She is co-author The Four Capabilities Leadership Assessment—an online 360° assessment used by organizations to enhance the leadership potential of managers.

Dr. Williams earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at Johns Hopkins University, her Master of Arts degree in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and her Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan.



Professor Michele Williams, Tippie College of Business, University of Iowa, has taught negotiations to executives, startups, MBAs and undergraduates at leading schools of management for over 10 years. She is co-author of the Four Capabilities Assessment.



Congratulations

on completing the Power of “No” Challenge!

I would love to hear how these strategies worked for you and the type of things that you were able to say "no" to!

Email me, michele@drmichelewilliams.com, anytime and feel free to share this “Start with No” Cheat Sheet at drmichelewilliams.com.

Best,

Michele



Next Steps



For step-by-step exercises, download the **Complete Workbook with 5+ Exercises** and the **Ultimate “Yes/No Tracker.”**



Have more questions? Sign up for a Live “Say Yes to Less” Workshop or schedule a workshop for your team on “Negotiation Strategies for Creative and Flexible Problem Solving.”



Want more support? Sign up for 1:1 Laser Coaching. A set of 15-minute coaching sessions focused on a specific negotiation situation in your life.