

HOW SAYING 'NO' CAN IMPROVE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY





"No", is such a simple word yet many people find it extremely difficult to say it. They say yes to every request and opportunity that comes their way. At the end of the day, they find themselves committed to more activities than they can handle. The stress from trying to fulfill all the obligations gets them feeling overwhelmed and resentful.

If you find yourself in the situation described above, you may be lacking an important life skill – the skill of saying no. Being unable to turn down requests can hinder your productivity. This article shows how beneficial saying no can be.

Myths about saying no

There are some common erroneous beliefs about saying "no". If you are going to learn how to say no confidently without guilt, you need to unlearn these beliefs.

Myth: Opportunity comes but once.

Truth: The belief that opportunities are so scarce that you must jump on everyone that comes your way is wrong. If you take on every task, every contract, every internship, you will end up stressed. Saying no to certain opportunities is saying yes to yourself and freeing yourself up for more convenient opportunities in the future.



Myth: Being “selfish” is a bad thing.

Truth: To be selfish is to put ourselves first. Although society tells us it is bad, sometimes we need to be selfish. That's because your life is yours and no one else will take up your responsibilities. If you leave your life unattended, you will suffer consequences that will eventually affect your ability to be available to other people.

Remember that you can't pour from an empty cup.

Myth: You must always follow through on commitments.

Truth: People tend to believe that integrity means never changing your mind. And so, they feel that saying no after they have said yes makes them lose their integrity. Unprecedented situations can arise that will require you to renege on commitments if you are to handle things right. That doesn't make you a person who lacks integrity.

Myth: If you can, you should.

Truth: The notion that you should always be the hero is not right. Of course, if it's convenient for you to help someone with their shift or babysitting, do it. But sometimes taking on a task because you have free time is not in your best interest. Free time does not equal emotional or physical readiness to do the task.



When should you say no

People make commitments without considering their limits. They imagine that saying no denies them opportunities to be valuable team members. But no matter how badly you want to make a name for yourself or maintain certain relationships, you must say no in certain situations.

Here are a few times when your answer should be no.

1. When you don't feel psychologically prepared or energized to carry out a task.
2. When the task is not on your to-do list because it throws a wrench in your productivity goals.
3. When there's not enough time to bring your best effort into executing the task.
4. When you are tired and need to rest for the sake of your mental and physical health.
5. When the requests stop you from fulfilling your priority obligations.
6. When you feel someone is manipulating you to pull someone their weight.



Why you should say no

Saying yes comes at a price, it requires your time and resources. You should only say yes when the conditions necessary to meet the obligations fit within your personal and professional limits.

Saying yes too often can put you in situations that overstretch your time and energy. That could lead to you being less productive than you could be.

Below are some benefits you get from saying no when you should.

You are more productive

Every task you commit to, consumes your time and energy. You may not have enough time to do important things if you have too many things to do. We know that the temptation to tackle easy tasks on our to-do list is strong. And so, if your to-do list is filled up with small favors for other people or non-essential tasks, you may find yourself working on those rather than your main tasks of the day.

Saying yes to every demand made on your time by your boss, colleagues, friends and family is not smart. You are setting yourself up to miss deadlines and disappoint them.



You are better motivated

If you feel in control of your schedule, you are better motivated to get through your tasks. But if your workload consists of tasks taken unwillingly, motivation will be hard to come by. This can be a crushing feeling.

Saying no, puts you in control of the items on your to-do list to a large extent.

Sets boundaries

Sometimes, people want to take advantage of your good nature and manipulate you into pulling their weight on the team. Saying no is a way to stand up for yourself and create boundaries. It shields you from exploitation. You can be a dependable employee or friend and still say no sometimes. It will even bring you respect for not being a people pleaser.

Promotes mental and physical wellbeing

Overtaxing yourself to meet up with every single demand made of you is unhealthy. Your body as well as your mind need rest. So, it's okay to turn down an offer or request so that you can rest and recharge.

How to say no

Saying no can be difficult and nerve-wracking sometimes but there are ways to avoid the awkwardness. When faced with a request, rather than saying no



on the spot, ask for some time to consider the offer. You can buy some time by asking the person to allow you to check your calendar or review your present commitments.

Conclusion

It takes courage to say no so if you are worried that people might not like you for turning them down. Remember that they will like you even less when you are unable to fulfill your promises to them.