

# JUST SAY NO!!

Recently invited to join a colleague on a big project, she complimented me by saying I was the perfect partner for this venture. She also said she selected me because of my energy and enthusiasm for everything I do. She is extremely successful and her comments flattered and enticed me. I said I would consider it.

I thought about the revenue potential, which was quite good and how much I would enjoy collaborating with her. We had a few telephone meetings, and then set a date to get together. We agreed on objectives that we would both accomplish before our meeting. I was doing research and moving forward with the project when I began to realize that I really didn't want to do it. My vacation was coming up and I realized this project would mean continuing to read and research during vacation. And even when I wasn't reading, it would be on my mind at a time when I was looking forward to relaxing.

My usual reading materials are business books, coaching books and self-help books. I thought, wouldn't it be great to go on a vacation and bring the novels

I've wanted to read for a long time? It would feel great to relax and not to have to think about the project.

Another thing I started to consider was my five-year plan for my business. Was this in line with my plan? Was I on track? I called my colleague and told her I had decided to say no. I suggested someone else who might be more interested at this time. The two of them connected and the project is developing without me.

It was difficult for me to say no. I don't like to disappoint people. I did feel relieved after I bowed out of the project because it wasn't totally on track with my long-range goals

I often work with clients who struggle to stay focused on what is really important to them. An interesting project that takes away time and energy from what is really more important for their business plan sidetracks them. One client wants to sell his business in five years. He was diversifying too much and accepting any project that came his way. We worked on fine-tuning his business strategies and he decided to accept only projects

that would increase the value of his business. Sometimes it is difficult to say no to a prospective client, but it can definitely get you off track when you say yes to everything that comes along.

Ask yourself before saying yes, "Will this enhance my business or my life?" "Will working on this project be joyful or stressful?" So often lawyers accept cases knowing they will be difficult and draining. Financial planners accept clients knowing that the size of their estate is not up to their minimum standards. Some projects are easy to say no to. Most of the time it's difficult.

As we strengthen our "saying no" muscles we want to look at our values. What is it that we truly value? Before accepting any offer, ask yourself if it is in tune with your values. Do you want to improve relationships or improve your health? Do you start out with the best intentions but get sidetracked because of all the projects and obligations that get in the way? What do you have to say no to? What are the logical steps needed to get you where you want to be in five years?

It wasn't easy for me to turn down this project. I like a challenge and I could have made the necessary time available, but it wasn't getting me closer to where I want to be. I created space for something more in line with my values at this time. It's important to say no firmly and gracefully to what you don't want. So, the next time you're offered a project or a new opportunity, first pause, reflect and then respond. And if it's not on track with what you really want to do, just say NO!

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