



UNION COLLEGE ATHLETICS

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Just Say No

2008 ECAC-SIDA Table Topic, Hillary Haynes, Assistant Sports Information Director

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We all have many demands placed on us every day, whether at work, at home, or somewhere in between. With the barrage of information constantly flying at us comes more choices that need to be made in less and less time. As the little obligations of our lives start piling up higher and higher, we can become more stressed out, reducing not only the quality of our lives, but also our productivity. By simply saying No to some of the demands placed on us, we can simplify our lives, relieve stress, increase our productivity and make more room for things that really matter to us.

But that tiny two-letter word we so easily said as a toddler has become more and more difficult to say as an adult. We worry whether someone will dislike us for saying it, whether there will be repercussions later on, or if we are doing the right thing. We all have the right to put ourselves first sometimes and decide when we feel it is right to say No.

The Difficulty of Saying No: Maintaining the balance between exercising your power vs. tending your relationship

Three Common Approaches (AAA):

- Accommodate: Say Yes (stresses relationship) "I will stay until midnight to do your All-America voting"
- Attack: Say No poorly (stresses power) "Are you crazy?! I can't possibly do that!"
- Avoid: Say nothing/denial

Positive No: The Yes-No-Yes Sandwich

Yes	No	Yes
Expresses Your Interests	Asserts Your Power	Further Relationship
Internally Focused		Externally Focused
Respects Yourself (doesn't accommodate)		Respects Other (doesn't attack)

"My daughter has a dance recital Thursday night. I will not be able to be at our rescheduled basketball game vs. Spring State. I am more than confident that my intern Joey will be able to handle the game that night."

Strategies

- Use nonverbal assertiveness: eye contact, shake your head no while speaking, maintain confident posture
- Pause or ask for time to think it over
- Keep in mind an alternative, a "Plan B" or "BATNA"
- Speak with respect: *stand on your feet, not on their toes*
- Listen to your emotions; have them, but don't be them

Do I Really Want To Say No?

- Long term vs. short term commitment (Academic All-America Committee vs. one-time bake sale)
- Do I have the necessary skills to complete the task in the given time?
- Can I delegate some of my work to make room for it?
- Am I the only person who can successfully complete this assignment?
- Does the other person actually want me to do something, or do they just need to vent to me?

"You can please some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time." Lincoln/Lydgate

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New to Saying No? Three Steps

1. Identify Opportunities
-- Identify past situations where you could have and should have said No. Think of times when you've thought or said, "I never should've agreed to do this."
2. Backing Up
--When you say Yes when you really mean No, go back to the person and tell them you've changed your mind. This is often the most difficult step.
3. Do the Right Thing at the Right Time
--Say No at the right time: immediately.

Practice saying No in small situations, every day

- to the telemarketer who calls you at dinner
- to the bagger at the store that puts the meat in the same bag as the drain cleaner
- to the credit card offers at sporting events (really, how great is that free towel/hat/cooler?)

Phrase Ideas

- Sure, but I'm swamped right now; can I get back to you on Thursday?
- I don't want to commit unless I can do a great job on it.
- I have other projects I am committed to finishing before I take on anything else.
- I am not able to provide this kind of solution right now.
- Let me make a phone call to check something and I'll get right back to you.
- If you need an answer right now, the answer is No.
- I prefer to decline rather than do a poor job.
- I have a policy not to lend money to friends.
- I need to focus on my family/personal life right now.
- No, I will not be able to help with that.

Reflective Listening

1. Paraphrase what the person said
--"So you have to host a dinner tonight, finish the media guide by tomorrow and help Sammy with his George Washington Carver project that is due on Wednesday?"
2. Comment on the person's emotion
--"Wow, Jane, it really sounds like you're overwhelmed."

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