

## Schoveing Series 5: Your Guide to a Quality NO

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### ABSTRACT

Have you ever said NO and felt guilty, ashamed, anxious, frustrated, or angry afterward? Or better still, have you said NO and walked away feeling calm, poised, balanced, and centered? The two-letter word NO can pose both danger and authority when proclaimed, and that is why understanding the various ways of saying NO is crucial. Leadership, management, coaching, mentoring, facilitating, parenting, marriage, teaching, recruiting, hiring, firing, and many other roles require the mastery of the word NO. The most valuable assets as you progress in your career and life are your time, the ability to think, doing things in the order of their importance, and relationship building. Therefore, protecting these valuable commodities requires a strategic and tactical delivery method of saying NO. Your time on earth is too precious to be wasted with the inability to say NO or have failed relationships. This paper will help you unlock seven ways of saying NO by deprogramming your habitual thinking patterns to achieve greater self-confidence, control, trust, and healthy relationships. The art of saying NO in a quality way allows you to surround yourself with positive-minded people and eliminate toxic people, jobs, and relationships.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is to inspire anyone with the ability to say NO and not feel any shame, guilt, anxiety, frustration, or anger about your response to a situation or action. The word NO is the most used after THEY and many other words. If you are a parent, you probably want to eliminate the word NO in your vocabulary if you have young infants or children. When introduced in infancy and childhood, the word NO creates the problem we are dealing with in this paper. The word NO is supposed to be a beautiful two-letter word that expresses your position on your decision regarding a situation or action against your beliefs or values or whatever evidence-based status you are in.

While the word NO is supposed to keep the other person from attacking you, stopping what they are doing to you, or even making you stop doing what you are doing because someone else said NO to you, caution has to be placed in the delivery of the sentence that implies NO. We are what we think all day long, and what we believe is what we are. What separates human beings from the animal kingdom is our ability to put thoughts into words and sentences. Therefore, when you say NO or deliver a sentence that implies NO, keep in mind the power of your words. When spoken or delivered verbally, your words are powerful, and it's up to you to deliver your message at the appropriate moment. Saying NO every instant is foolish without any substance attached to it.

The views in this paper are purely mine, and I hope we can all learn to say NO, respect the word NO, and use it to create an evidence-based world that uses critical thinking in our decision-making process. I also interviewed four people who had diverse thoughts about the topic.

*What is the Schoveing Series?* It's a plain and meekly made-up name that I thought would be great to come up with when I am given the chance and honor to present at significant conferences! That's it to the name.

### KEY 1: SAYING NO AND MEANING IT

When you say NO and you mean it, that calls for the other person to keep their distance and hold their emotions to themselves. Here is a practical and personal story as an example. I belong to a group of chitchat women of all ages and temperaments. According to Steiner (2012), there are four temperaments, Sanguines, phlegmatics, melancholics, and choleric. These temperaments show themselves vividly in the group. What is most interesting is certain members' expectations on how each member should communicate. Here is an excellent example: "*Good morning, Priscilla. I want to ensure I'm not taking offense when I shouldn't be, so asking a quick question... I sent in one of the group texts to have a safe trip back... YYY also said to have a safe trip back. You took the time to single reply to her in the group chat to say thanks while ignoring my same message. Did you ignore me deliberately?...*" This is not the first time I have received such a text from this group member. I am not sure how group texts work sometimes or the untold etiquette of texting. I have received worse texts for not responding to immature or texts that you know so well, are aimed to attack you and cause you to swim in that negative attacking wave. Back to my response to the text above, I said, "Thank you, CCC."

Now, I have a situation to fix, and I am not going to go about the bush by saying unequivocally that CCC, we are not friends; I respect you for being a member of this group, and what we are will never amount to being friends or acquaintances beyond the chat group. To say this, I need to be honest and say NO and mean it to such texts. Saying NO is an art. The word NO conjures up many emotions, and the person getting the NO will have their muscular, nervous, and glandular nerves in defensive mode. They will attack back, and it will be an emotional attack and always not pleasant. So to say NO and mean it requires that you take ALL EMOTIONS out of your answer and, with no feelings and no shame ... humbly say to the person... "CCC, There will be no more communication between us, thank you!" Then, walk away. This can only be done in person, and you cannot send a text, email, or call. A call might work; however, for this sentence to work, the delivery has to be person to person. You must say thank you because gratitude is essential in our relationship building. The thank-you offers a soft landing to the hell journey!

## **KEY 2: SAYING NO AND NOT EXPLAINING WHY**

The best saying I ever heard went something like ... "Better give your path to a dog in contesting for the right; even killing the dog would not cure the bite!" Sometimes, you have to say NO and not explain why. Here are a few statements to say NO:

- "I choose to stand with my current position."
- "I have no regrets about my current position."
- "My decision is final."
- "I have nothing to explain about my decision."
- "My position is clear."

In my line of work, I have come across all kinds of people and their infallible position on what they believe YOU should be doing. Some text to chitchat, and my question is always focused on, "How can I exceed your expectations?" After acknowledging their greetings, I wish them a good day and close the chat if I don't get a clear, concise answer. It is that simple.

## **KEY 3: SAYING NO AND LET THE OTHER PERSON FIGURE IT OUT**

For self-care and self-management, we must learn to say no. This means that you prioritize what is important to you at that moment allowing balance and meaning to who you are. Dr. Kirudja once told me that agreeing to everything mindlessly is lethal to your life and connections. It is detrimental to your prioritization. You do not have to explain why you are saying no each time. The other person could be playing dumb or trying to find a way to get you to do what they want. In addition, saying thank you or starting with thank you makes you feel less guilty that you said no. Avoid being a people pleaser.

Here are a few ways to conquer this type of NO:

- "You have heard my previous position, and I choose to stand by it."
- "My decision will not change unless new evidence is introduced, thank you."
- "Thank you so much for thinking of me. I would love to, but unfortunately..."

## **KEY 4: SAYING NO AND IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS**

Many a time, we are brought into matters that we have no clue about, or if we did, the whole situation is none of our business. If you are not a counselor, you have no company providing input or advice on matters that have nothing to do with you. We have people who specialize in being subject matter experts in every situation they hear. They provide unsolicited advice to family, relatives, strangers, colleagues, and even animals! Have you encountered yourself in this situation, or are you the advisor in action?

The book of Proverbs says that getting involved in what is none of your business is like going to the streets and catching a dog by the ears, so the best way is to restrain yourself from giving unsolicited advice. Additionally, you can say NO by using the statement:

- "Thank you for your advice, your time is valuable, and I would like to respect it" – Then leave!
- "Thank you for the opportunity to let me know" – No further comments, and leave!
- "I feel you are pressuring me. Please understand why I really can't, yes."

### **KEY 5: SAYING NO AND GIVING AN EVIDENCE-BASED EXPLANATION**

Critical thinking is an essential element when it comes to making decisions. The ability to provide evidence that answers the why and how a situation should be approached is practical importance. Why? Research that offers foolproof evidence to answer a research question with evidenced-based work goes a long way compared to research based on assumptions, heresy, or undocumented material. We receive so many emails at work, and we tend to overestimate that the other person wants an answer immediately. Pause, please, before responding. What is the rush for? Always buy yourself time and even ask for more information to make an informed decision. A few examples:

- "Can I get back to you later?"
- "Do you have more information for this request?"

### **KEY 6: SAYING NO AND YES TO LEVEL THE SITUATION**

Henry Ford is accredited to honing the skill of balancing his view and the other person's view. To level the situation, we need to listen and acknowledge what the other is expressing actively. Most women have difficulty saying no because society expects them to heed cries for help. Tactfully saying no is necessary and yet provides a solution to the problem. The idea here is to soften the blow. You do this by offering to do something else for the other person. This is called a positive no and works favorably in negotiations. Ensure that what you offer to do works for both of you. A few examples are provided below:

- "The answer is no to your request. However, I am happy to ...."
- "What I hear you say is .... That is not possible .... I am willing to ..."

### **KEY 7: SAYING NO LIKE A POLITICIAN**

I have not come across a politician who did not believe in their lies and truths. Growing up, I recall a politician who was known to explicitly teach the multitudes about the art of luring people to think what you say is true without proof of evidence. This politician would constantly repeat the half-truth in campaign meetings and even have flyers distributed the same. He would ask people to repeat after him quotes that had left out key facts. Dishonesty breeds toxic relationships, and it is imperative never to use white lies. For example, lying that you are busy when you know that you are stewing around is wrong. Other people doing your work is not cool. To say no like a politician, use some decency clothed with honesty:

- "I appreciate you asking, but I don't think that will fit my schedule."
- "I'd love to hang out today, but I reserve my Friday evenings for time to think."
- "I'd love to come over, but I reserve evenings for time with family."

### **CONCLUSION**

Goyer (2018) posits that time and relationships, including the one with yourself, are two of your most precious commodities. Treat them right by practicing saying "No" when you mean it. We have forgotten to say No, and especially it becomes hard for those that we care about. After two years of the Pandemic, we are burned out on schedules and stress that seems all work and energy draining. Saying no is your ultimate self-care and self-management strategy. A simple no with no lengthy bullshit excuses goes a long way. You won't have to work to remember your reason because you gave a simple no. The word no can be a complete sentence if used well.

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And to you, the reader, THANK YOU, and see you soon for an exciting and remarkable Schoveing Series 6!

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