

Secrets of Happiness at Work

Happiness is different for each of us - here are a few generic principles worth thinking about:

1. **End the Search** - Rabbi Harold Kushner said "Happiness is like a butterfly—the more you chase it, the more it flies away from you and hides. But stop chasing it, put away your net and busy yourself with other, more productive things than the pursuit of happiness, and it will sneak up on you from behind and perch on your shoulder." I liken this to needing to find an item of clothing at the store, and because you are looking, can't find it, but when you're not...there it is.
2. **Evaluate your expectations.** Thinking you can be happy with your job all the time is an unrealistic expectation.
3. **Exit your misery.** It's a dangerous thing to hang our happiness on the shoulders of some other person, a career, or a business. We will experience disappointment, unmet expectations and the death of dreams and goals in our work lives. But refocus, monitor your reaction, and push forward.
4. **Entertain an agenda other than your own.** The people most unhappy with their work are those who choose to constantly think about themselves and how unhappy they are.
5. **Expand your thinking.** If you continually think about yourself then misery rather than happiness will remain your companion. Remove yourself from the temptation of the personal pity party and do something about what you can do something about.
6. **Energize the current situation.** If you fall into the category of the people continually dissatisfied with their jobs, there is hope. You do have a choice to be happier on the job by focusing and acting on the influences within your control. You can also decide to remain forever miserable.

How do we commit ourselves to lifelong learning? by Sharon Gilchrest O'Neill

- "Know your strengths and weaknesses better than anyone else."
- "Cultivate your curiosity."
- "Teach others something you have learned...at a staff meeting, over coffee, in a debriefing with your supervisor, in an article for the company or association newsletter"
- "Don't ever take the attitude, "It's not in my job description." Instead seek to stretch the boundaries of your work.
- "Keep a special list..."

- Super ideas
- Very creative thoughts
- Sparks of imagination
- Flashes of insight
- Know that you play many roles. Become more aware of their differences and similarities...Individual contributor, team member, leader, expert, generalist, supervisor...
- Consider the **Soft and Hard Skills** you should have according to Mac Alexander MacDonald:
 - Hard skills are...
 - Communication - Concise writing, careful listening, and effective speaking
 - Being Analytical - the ability to see the big picture, assess, gather information, seek multiple perspectives, and then apply sound judgment.
 - Computer/Technical - staying current on them.
 - Adaptive - the willingness to learn new skills and assume additional responsibilities.
 - Leadership/Management - Demonstrate initiative. Be willing to lead, follow, or get out of the way.
 - Planning/Organization - The ability to take a task from beginning to end on budget and on time - even if there is no end.
 - Problem Solving - be creative (or persistent).
 - Time Management - self-explanatory
 - Teamwork - Takes communication; knowledge of each player's needs; and patience
 - Professionalism - it's not only a code of conduct and a sign of maturity. Professionalism covers a host of behaviors from being fair and responsible, to listening to superiors, never filing a grievance or going above an immediate supervisor until all other avenues have been exhausted, and listening well to all employees. Never be petty but also don't let yourself be walked over.
 - Soft skills are...
 - Integrity
 - Flexibility

- Reliability
 - Positive Attitude
 - Self-confidence
 - Respect for Others
 - Patience
 - A Good Listener
 - Willingness to Learn
 - Multicultural Sensitivity
 - Ability to Work Independently
 - Loyalty and Dedicated
- Question yourself about change.
 - How do you view it?
 - Do you adapt to it? How?
 - Can you change yourself?
 - Do you anticipate change?
 - Are you courageous about change?

Here are a few strategies to consider as you become a leak fixer.

- **Admit there is a leak.** You can't solve a problem unless you first admit you have one. "Recognizing a problem doesn't always bring a solution, but until we recognize that problem, there can be no solution," says James Baldwin.
- **Be realistic about the size of the hole.** The classic "don't make a mountain out of a molehill." John Maxwell believes, "People need to change their perspectives, not their problems." Overreacting or "catastrophizing" puts the power in the problem rather than your ability to solve it.
- **Don't wait for a lifeguard.** Accept responsibility for the problems you are experiencing and you can begin to rise above the crisis. Wait for a lifeguard to rescue you, and you may drown before help arrives.
- Leo Burnett says "Nobody makes mistakes on purpose. When you do make a mistake, I urge that you shouldn't let it gnaw at you, but should get it out into the open quickly so it can be dealt with. And you'll sleep better, too."

Effective Time Management requires being results oriented rather than activities oriented - **don't confuse activity with accomplishment** - and requires an effective system and discipline. What works for one person may not work for another.

Getting Started

- Figure out what is working and what's not.
- For one week, keep a log to find out what you are doing. Then analyze.
- Create systems and routines. Streamline as much as possible.
- Schedule in time for specific tasks that need to be done - ordering supplies, preparing checks, etc.
- Batching like tasks together - like phone calls - will save time.
- You may want to reorganize your day to suit your personal energy levels and to avoid time traps.
- Check that you're not wasting the 1st hour of your workday. Having the chat & 1st cup of coffee, reading the paper & socializing are the 3 costliest opening exercises that lower productivity.

Productivity Suggestions

- "Most people tackle the easiest tasks first so they can check off a lot of little things that don't matter at the end of the day." Instead, develop a more efficient habit. Every day, evaluate the items on your to do list in terms of importance. Ask yourself, 'if I ran out of time today, what would be the one thing that completed, would give me the greatest sense of accomplishment and contribution?' "Then focus on that." - Julie Morgenstern
- "You need to learn to protect your valuable turf if you want to get more done. Many people are constantly dealing with ad hoc issues that crop up throughout the day. Productivity expert Kimberly Medlock says you need to build a wall around a chunk of every day. She calls it the "90-minute rule which is carving out and protecting about 20 percent of each day/week for working on your most important tasks or projects. She recommends rounding off to a good solid 90 minutes of planned, prepared for and uninterrupted time. This helps to not just get things done, but also gives you the focus power needed to do the most important things: tasks that when left undone keep us up at night, nag at us throughout the day, and leave us feeling down rather than built up." -Kimberly Medlock
- "If you can't say Hell, yes! Then learn to say No!" Or Hell, no! - Elizabeth Cogswell Baskin

- "If you have difficulty bringing closure to your work, pretend you're going on vacation next week. I'm convinced a national survey would produce a phenomenal correlation between efficiency, effectiveness, results and the timing of vacations." - Glenn Van Ekeren

Here are some simple phrases that will help you praise people and encourage them to repeat their positive behavior...from Glenn Van Ekeren

- I appreciate the way you ...
- I'm impressed with ...
- You're terrific because...
- Thanks for going all out when you ...
- One of the things I enjoy most about you is...
- I admire your...
- Great job with...
- I really enjoy working with you because...
- Our team couldn't be successful without your...
- Thank you for your...
- You made my day when...
- You can be proud of your ...
- You did an outstanding job of...
- It's evident that you have the ability to...
- I like your ...
- You deserve a pat on the back for...
- You should be proud of yourself for...
- You're really good at...
- You've got my support with...
- What a great idea!
- It's evident you have a special knack of...
- You were a great help when...
- You have a special gift for...
- I enjoy being with you because you...
- You're doing a top-notch job of...
- It's fun watching you...
- I know you can do it!
- I believe in you.
- Your commitment to _____ is appreciated!

Professional Keys for Success - NES Spring 1991

Honesty and Integrity

Humility

Initiative

Good Manners and Courtesy

Sense of Humor

Compassion, Sensitivity, Empathy

Learn to Listen

Flexibility

Optimism and a Positive Outlook

Professional Pride

Confidentiality

Don't Hesitate to Admit Mistakes

Loyalty

Be Friendly

Self-Image

Be Responsible

Be a Caring and Sharing Person

Set Goals for Yourself

Be Tolerant

Professional Skills from Mac Alexander Macdonald

Live, eat, and breathe as a professional. Consistently think of yourself as a professional, not as a job title, not as "only this" or "just that" in this or that department. You are a consultant. You are a specialist. Know your industry inside and out. Know our side of it. Cross-train. Embrace the mission. A doctor doesn't do medicine, does she? No, she practices medicine. A lawyer doesn't do law, he practices law. What does professionalism require? Practice. You mean too much to think any less of yourself. You are an integral and proud contributor. Never forget it. Now however, if you have burned out, have lost passion for your organization, are just there to collect a paycheck, you show up physically and not mentally, quit. You are ripping off your employer or the public?"

Quotes

"Motivation is a fire from within. If someone else tries to light that fire under you, chances are it will burn briefly." - Stephen Covey

"Only those who constantly retool themselves stand a chance of staying employed in the years ahead." - Tom Peters

"As long as you're green, you're growing; as soon as you're ripe, you start to rot." - Ray Kroc

"Character is what we do when no one else is looking. It is not the same as reputation...success...achievement. Character is not what we have done, but who we are." - Bill Hybels

John Luther once said, "Good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are, to some extent, a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it piece by piece—by thought, choice, courage, and determination."

"Maintain the highest standards. Your character comes to life through your values, integrity, and honesty...the consistency between your words and actions. - Glenn Van Ekeren

"Look upon every single thing you accomplish or don't accomplish as your own responsibility." - Brian Tracy

"Remember a dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream." - WC Fields

"What you accomplish in life depends almost completely upon what you make yourself do. The very first thing one should do is train the mind to concentrate on the essentials and discard the frivolous and unimportant. This will assure real accomplishment and ultimate success." - Lyndon Johnson

"One of the basic elements of success is to be good at what you do. You won't be good at what you do unless you polish your skills and perfect your moves. Master the talents you possess. Be determined to live as a *will be* not a *has been*."- Glenn Van Ekeren

"Your remarkable and unusual combination of education, experience, knowledge, problems, successes, difficulties, and challenges, and your way of looking at and reacting to life, make you extraordinary. You have within you potential competencies and attributes that can enable you to accomplish virtually anything you want in life. Your main job is to decide

which of your talents you're going to exploit and develop to their highest and best possible use right now." - Brian Tracy

"Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable, or happy & strong. The amount of work is the same." - Francesca Reigler

"Attitudes are contagious. Are yours worth catching?" - Dennis and Wendy Mannering

"Teamwork is what the Green Bay Packers were all about. They didn't do it for individual glory. They did it because they loved one another." - Vince Lombardi

"Destiny is not a matter of chance; but a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for. It is a thing to be achieved." - William Jennings Bryant

"Remember, when you can, that the definition of success has changed. It is not only survival, the having—it is the quality of every moment in your life, the being. Success is not a destination, a place you can ever get to; it is the quality of the journey." - Jennifer Jones

"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you." - Henry Ward Beecher

"A fun working environment is much more productive than a routine environment. People who enjoy their work will come up with more ideas. Fun is contagious!" - Roger Von Oech

"Humor, and its sidekick laughter, are tension reducers in times of change, emotional stabilizers during adversity, creativity stimulators, and marvelous reminders to live enthusiastically. Medically speaking, we know that laughter increases endorphins. Those little guys energize us and increase our endurance." - Glenn Van Ekeren

"He who does not get fun and enjoyment out of every day, needs to reorganize his life." - George Matthew Adams

"I would rather be ashes than dust! I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry-rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them. I shall use my time." - Jack London in *Call of the Wild*

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations." - George Bernard Shaw

"Our brightest blazes of gladness are commonly kindled by unexpected sparks." -Dr. Johnson

"In time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. Those who have finished learning find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists." - Eric Hoffer

"Nothing limits achievement like small thinking; nothing expands possibilities like unleashed imagination." - William Arthur Ward

"Success is a journey, not a destination." - Ben Sweetland

"What keeps our interest in life and makes us look forward to tomorrow is giving pleasure to other people. Happiness is not a goal, it is a by-product of a live well-lived." - Eleanor Roosevelt

"A true friend is one who hears and understands when you share your deepest feelings. He supports you when you are struggling; he corrects you, gently and with love, when you err; and he forgives you when you fail. A true friend prods you to personal growth, stretches you to your full potential. And most amazing of all, he celebrates your successes as if they were his own." - Richard Exley

"People burn out, I suspect, not because they have too much to do, but because they get exhausted by the trivial and the inconsequential." - Rev. Louis Lotz

"Your ability needs responsibility to expose its possibilities. Do what you can with what you have where you are." - Theodore Roosevelt

"We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own." - Ben Sweetland

"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit." - Albert Schweitzer

"If you are irritated by every rub, how will you get polished?" - Rumi

"There comes that mysterious meeting in life when someone acknowledges who we are and what we can be, igniting the circuits of our highest potential." - Rusty Berkus

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be...your playing small does not serve the world." - Marianne Williamson

"Sometimes we truly begin to find ourselves...when we are so broken and weak. And in that moment a spark ignites and we dig down and find the strength to stand strong and fight on." - Unknown

"You're a spark plug for good. Thanks for igniting something amazing." - Unknown

"An individual is but a silent spark when they must stand alone, but when others stand beside them, that simple spark becomes a vigorous flame." - Deanna Lee

"Go within every day and find the inner strength so that the world will not blow your candle out." - Katherine Dunham

"Nothing can dim the light, which shines from within." - Maya Angelou

"Without inspiration the best powers of the mind remain dormant, there is a fuel in us which needs to be ignited with sparks." - Johann Gottfried Von Herder

"Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must first set yourself on fire."
- attributed to Fred Shero/Arnold H Glasow/Reggie Leach

"Workers develop routines when they do the same job for a while. They lose their edge, falling into habits not just in what they do but in how they think. Habits turn into routines. Routines into ruts." - Robert Kriegel

"Then let us all do what is right, strive with all our might toward the unattainable, develop as fully as we can the gifts God has given us, and never stop learning." - Ludwig Von Beethoven

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives." - Willa A Foster

"The secret to success on the job is to work as though you were working for yourself. Your company provides you with the work area, equipment and other benefits, but basically you know what has to get done and the best way to do it, so it's up to you to run your own show." - Lair Ribeiro

"In today's world, people who eliminate excuses, proactively work from the heart, invest themselves passionately in what they do, and apply their skills and talents to the fullest are maximizing their professional potential." - Glenn Van Ekeren

"Feeling grateful or appreciative of someone or something in your life actually attracts more of the things you appreciate and value into our life." - Christiane Northrup

"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put into words is all that is necessary." - Margaret Cousins.

"The finest gift you can give anyone is encouragement. Yet, almost no one gets the encouragement they need to grow to their full potential. If everyone received the encouragement they need to grow, the genius in most everyone would blossom and the world would produce abundance beyond the wildest dreams. We would have more than one Einstein, Edison, Schweitzer, Mother Teresa, Dr. Salk and other great minds in a century." - Sidney Madwed

"Fires can't be made with dead embers, nor can enthusiasm be stirred by spiritless men. Enthusiasm in our daily work lightens efforts and turns even labor into pleasant tasks." - James Mark Baldwin

"There is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers. To "maximize our potential," we must take advantage of the resources available designed to increase our understanding of ourselves, the people around us, and the life we are now involved in. We become what we indulge ourselves in. The opportunities life offers help us tap our potential and can be explored when we are equipped with the right tools." - Erich Fromm

"Success is focusing the full power of all you are on what you have a burning desire to achieve." - Wilfred Peterson

"Much of the stress that people feel doesn't come from having too much to do. It comes from not finishing what they started." - David Allen

"We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"When someone does something good, applaud! You will make two people happy." - Samuel Goldwyn

President John F. Kennedy borrowed the statement from Jose Marti, the famous Cuban patriot, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Well, I say don't ask what you can do for the country; ask what sets you on fire, because what the country needs is more people on fire. Then, once you are on fire, once you are impassioned and emblazoned, once you are sparked with purpose, then give back. We are only as strong as the foundation we are standing on. To become greater than we are, we make a shift in consciousness from one based on "what's in it for me?" to "how can I help?" - Mac Alexander Macdonald

"Live, eat, and breathe as a professional. Consistently think of yourself as a professional, not as a job title, not as "only this" or "just that" in this or that department. You are a consultant. You are a specialist. Know your industry inside and out. Know your side of it. Cross-train. Embrace the mission. A doctor doesn't do medicine, does she? No, she practices medicine. A lawyer doesn't do law, he practices law. What does professionalism require? Practice. You mean too much to think any less of yourself. You are an integral and proud contributor. Never forget it. Now however, if you have burned out, have lost passion for your organization, are just there to collect a paycheck, you show up physically and not mentally, quit. You are ripping off your employer or the public?" Mac Alexander MacDonald

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"Achievement is talent plus preparation" - Malcolm Gladwell

"When a group of friends have enjoyed fine conversation together, you will find that suddenly something extraordinary happens. As they are speaking, it's as if a spark ignites, passing from one speaker to another, and as it travels, it gathers strength, building into a warm and illuminating flame of mutual understanding which none of them could have achieved alone." - Socrates

Reference:

12 Simple Secrets of Happiness at Work by Glenn Van Ekeren

12 Simple Secrets in a Topsy-Turvy World by Glenn Van Ekeren

12 Simple Secrets to Happiness: Finding Joy in Everyday Relationships by Glenn Van Ekeren

Lur'ning by Sharon Gilchrest O'Neill

Hell Yes! Two Little Words for a Simpler, Happier Life by Elizabeth Cogswell Baskin

Lighting Your Own Fuse by Mac Alexander McDonald

officePRO Magazine from IAAP

Real Simple Magazine

www.amandagore.com

www.mindtools.com

www.deskdemon.com

www.drjohnizzo.com

www.kimberlymedlock.com - for time tracking worksheet

http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/time-management?click=main_sr -

article on Find More Time and Energy Every Day

A Self Analysis Examination
Of My "Moments of Truth"
Mac Macdonald "Lighting Your Own Fuse"

On a scale of one to ten, one being the lowest, rate yourself according to the following questions:

How much effort do I put into making my company or my family a better, happier, more communicative organization in which to live or work?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How much am I welcoming new staff and making them feel like a member of a mission-oriented cadre?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What is my ability to stop pointing fingers of blame and examine my own interpretations of, and reactions to, certain issues?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How willing am I to leave the past in the past and create a new and better future?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How willing am I to avoid cliqueish behavior?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How willing am I to empower others through taking a genuine interest in them and their jobs?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I would rate my general attitude towards life and about things a . . .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When burnout issues arise in our office or work areas and stress builds, how willing am I to open up and communicate, to express my fears, to be honest?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When I criticize something I always have a solid, well thought out, win-win suggestion to replace what I don't like.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How willing am I to accept someone else's comments as a professional guide rather than as personal criticism?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How well do I treat others around me with respect in order to create an atmosphere of trust?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How well do I create a sense of teamwork by providing all the information someone else would need in order to make his or her job successful, never withholding information to make myself stand out or look better?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How much do I give recognition and appreciation for the support and contributions of others?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How willing am I to acquire new skills for future success, to push myself as a professional, to dress for success, to promise a lot and give even more?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My co-workers would rate my attitude as a . . .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How well do I appreciate that the consequences of my thoughts, comments, and actions (basically how I "show up") impact all other parts of the organization?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How much of the passion and dedication I implied I would show, (towards my work and the people that surround me) when I first signed on with this organization do I show now? How about with a love partner?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Results: It doesn't matter what your score is. The lesson lies in the process. There is good news and bad news about rating oneself. The higher you score yourself the more that though will show up as reality. You are the way you see yourself. If you see a low number, you can't get worse. However, you can't begin to get better until you see yourself in the higher numbers. *So, see 10s then act them.*

The Leader's Checklist

“It is not the truths we don't know that do most people in, it is the truths we know well but do not regularly practice” Mark Twain

This is a daily leadership checklist. Like a checklist a pilot uses before takeoff, checking off these items every day or week will ensure your people leadership gains altitude.

- _____ Took time to say good morning to my people and thanked them for coming in
- _____ Recognized someone for doing good work today
- _____ Asked my people for their opinion on something this week and listened to that input
- _____ Asked people what is happening in their lives outside of work
- _____ Celebrated “team wins” this week to help my team feel like winners
- _____ Communicated what is happening in the larger organization this week to keep my people connected to the bigger picture
- _____ Demonstrated passion and enthusiasm for my own work
- _____ Told a story or in some other way reminded my team of the higher purpose of our work
- _____ Wrote two personal thank you notes this week to a team member or colleague
- _____ Mentored someone on my team this week with feedback that will improve their career and life
- _____ Communicated my expectations clearly this week so my team knows what matters
- _____ Made rounds, ideally every day, to stay in touch with customers and associates
- _____ Took time for pursuits that are important to my own wellness
- _____ Took time to learn by reading or viewing material to enhance my leadership competence

SpeakSTRONG: For Admins **Stop Doing Everything And Start Getting Things Done**

by Meryl Runion Rose



I am blessed with a devoted and competent sister in Cincinnati, where my parents live. For years, she sandwiched caring for their needs between being a mother to her five kids and the rest of her life. When Mom recently had a medical crisis, her role suddenly became undoable. I flew in to help them transition into assisted living.

Since I live a thousand miles away, I can't do everything for them in the way my sister did. Instead, during my visit, I *did* a lot, but I mainly *got a lot done*.

What's the difference?

My visit was as much to see what resources were available to everyone as to take care of doctor appointments, senior home visits and so on. I got my dad hearing aids so my mom wouldn't have to shout at him and so he could hear to handle things himself. I found a full-service mover who packed the house for them. I enlisted a point per-

son in my mom's medical care as my ally in making sure the conversations that needed to happen did. I focused on empowering everyone to develop and use the existing resources.

Getting Things Done Doesn't Mean Doing Everything

That included facilitating my sister's transformation from doing everything to getting things done. I thought twice about every request. I declined to take my dad for a haircut off-site when they have a hairdresser in their new home

because I wanted my sister to be freed from haircut runs after I left. Sure, the pharmacy is on the way to their new home, but the pharmacy delivers, so that's another thing we didn't need to do for them.

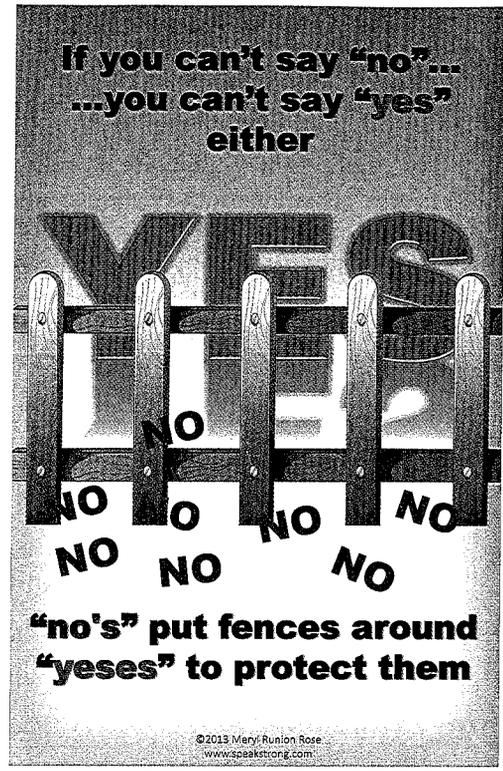
Like many employers, my parents had a habit of relying on their familiar assistant and disregarding other available resources. And like many assistants, my sister had a habit of saying yes to requests exactly as made. A great truth was spoken when my father told her "the list keeps getting longer and

you still don't know how to say "no."

"At least he gets it," she told me.

"You're the one who needs to get it," I replied. And bit by bit, she is getting it. Her visits are becoming more about visiting as she gets more done instead of doing everything.

This approach is imperative for me because I live a thousand miles away. Her reality is something of a "death by a thousand cuts," one little errand that wouldn't take long, after another that seems reasonable enough. (Kind of like how admins' jobs become undoable over time.) Small, reasonable requests add up. The time is ripe for her to change those "wimpy" ways.



A Learned Skill

Saying no isn't easy for me either, but it's not as impossible as it once was. My yes-saying habit was so extreme that I wasn't the author of my own life. Early in my recovery, I decided to go on a "yes fast." To break the yes habit, I committed to six months without saying an immediate yes to any request. I would pause, say something like, "let me see about that," and only after serious consideration would I say yes. If I felt resistance, I wouldn't say yes on the spot at all. I would wait until I felt clear about my choice.

I was relieved when the six months ended and I allowed myself an immediate yes again. I now could say yes from choice, not default. I had developed (although not mastered) the ability to say no.

Phrases To Help Set Good, Flexible Boundaries

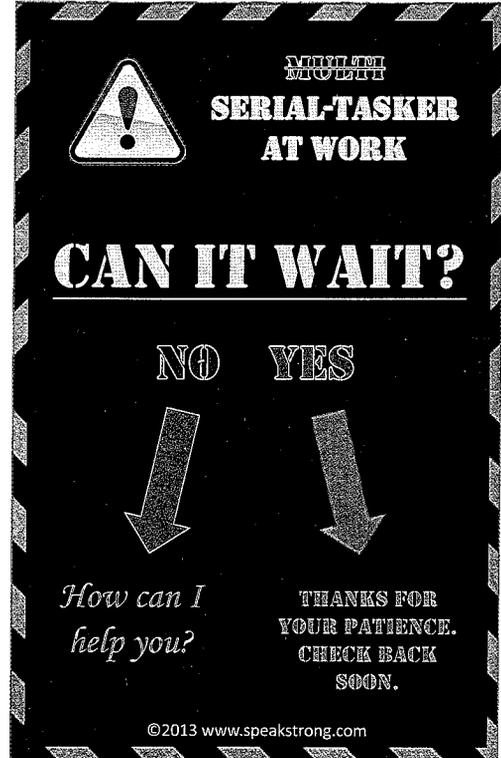
The yes fast forced me to develop phrases to say no, or not say a knee-jerk yes. One phrase is, "can it wait?" That

gets people to consider their requests. If it can't wait, I'm happy to help. (Otherwise I wouldn't use that phrase.) If it can wait, the delay gives them a chance to resolve it themselves, which often happens. If they can't resolve it, we take care of it on my/our terms, not theirs.

I offer a couple of printable poster downloads to help transition from being one who does everything to one who gets everything done. The "can it wait?" poster and the "your no's protect your yes" poster are at speakstrong.com/admins.

Set The Goal And Go For It

The posters and phrases are just tools in the quest to empower ourselves at work and at home. The real gold is in knowing the distinction between an empowered facilitator and an errand guy or gal. Make the distinction, set the goal and go for it. Trust me, if I can do it, so can my sister and so can you.



About the author:

Meryl Runion Rose is the author of ten phrase books including *Perfect Phrases For Office Professionals* and *Perfect Phrases For Virtual Teamwork*. Information about her upcoming webinars, including *Opportunity/nowhere: How To Grow Your Career Organically* at www.speakstrong.com/admins.