

Saying No to Everything

No, from the Old English *ne* ‘not’ + *ā, ð* ‘ever,’ means to give a negative response. Some people *won’t take no for an answer*. Sometimes *the noes have it*. At other times, there’s *no two ways about it*. Evolved from Shinto rites, *No* is the name of a traditional 14th century Japanese all-male masked drama. And *No* is the designation for chemical element Nobelium. Here, however, are talking about the plain ‘ole answer you’ll get if you ask someone on the street for a million dollars.

How often and for what reasons do you say, “No?” As for me, I say “no” all the time, probably 20 times a day. Even as I write this, my first reaction is, “There’s no way I say ‘no’ that much!” But, I think I just might.

People say “no” not just to things that deserve it, but also to new ideas and possibilities. For some it’s a first reaction, a knee-jerk response without thinking—you know, a habit. Saying “no” stifles your chance to experience new things, make unexpected discoveries, learn, and grow.

Every day holds opportunities to try a new food or go to a movie you wouldn’t usually see. In doing these simple things, you begin learning how to say “yes.” And saying “yes” more often will allow you to see what life has to offer and, in the process, discover more about yourself.

Of course, it’s impossible to say, “yes,” to everything. There are lots of times that saying “no” is the right answer. Like when the store clerk offers you a 2-for-1 deal on DVDs you’ll never watch, the waiter wants you to have dessert even though you’re not hungry, or a person comes to your door and wants you to buy magazines you’ll never read.

Sometimes it's not easy knowing when to say "yes" and when to say "no." It takes practice and understanding to strike the right balance. Here are some dos and don'ts for those of us always leaning toward "no."

Saying No Dos and Don'ts

- Think before you say "NO!"
- Look for the right opportunities to say "yes."
- Say "no" when it's deserved.
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