

THE HALF-ASS YES
VS.
THE RESPECTFUL NO

By Joann Lim

*“Be who you are and say what you feel because
those who mind don’t matter
and those who matter don’t mind.”*

Dr. Seuss

THE SCENARIOS

1

You have been working late for the past couple of nights and are looking forward to a night in to relax. Then you get a call from a friend inviting you out for dinner and a night out. What do you say? Do you give her a half-willing yes knowing that you really would prefer to stay in or do you give her a respectful no knowing that although it might disappoint her, it is important to get your rest?

2

You have just informed your boss that you would like to take a leave of absence for a couple of months and if the company does not approve, then you are willing to resign. He then offers to promote you to a new role including a raise in salary and extra vacation. What do you say? Do you give him a half-willing yes because it's a promotion even though you know that you really need to take the time off or do you give him a respectful no understanding that your role with your company is uncertain but taking the time off is more important?

3

It's been a couple of months since your last date and a guy who you are friends with but have no romantic feelings for, asks you out on a date. What do you say? Do you give him a half-willing yes even though you know you have no romantic feelings for him or do you give him a respectful no, reiterate how much you value his friendship and suggest doing something as friends?

The Half-Ass Yes

We have all been there.
Instead of giving our best, we give less.

We say YES to something

- a) we don't agree with;
- b) we don't have time for;
- c) we don't have any interest for;
- d) we have no intention of going to.

By giving a half-ass yes, we give a fraction of ourselves.

We say, "yes" to save face, fear of what others may say, and so forth. In the end, the half-ass yes may accomplish all of these things but leaves us feeling less than whole. It leaves us feeling incomplete. Feelings of guilt, self-consciousness, doubt, etc. pervade us.

We live in a society that fosters "Yes" people.

We see this in corporations that punish individuals who go against the grain.

We see this when we punish ourselves for even considering saying, "No" to a friend/family.

We are pervaded with messages that tell us "say, 'Yes'" to everything to get ahead in your life and career.

While saying, "Yes" can be beneficial to opening up new opportunities and fostering new possibilities, it can also result in feelings of being overwhelmed, over-committed, and guilt.

The Respectful No a.k.a. The Authentic Yes

No is often one of the first words a child learns. Prior to even speaking the word, they use their body language (nodding their head from side to side) to communicate, “No.”

In our society, we have been brought up to believe that “Yes” is good and “No” is bad.

What would it be like to remove the preconceived meanings of these words and use them as a means of communicating our authentic self?

Somehow more challenging than giving a half-ass yes, the respectful no is a call to our spirit. It asks us “what do we believe in?”, “what do we stand for?”, “who are we?”

The Respectful No is that tiny voice that tells us what we truly want to say, what we truly want to do, and who we truly want to be.

The Respectful No is really an Authentic Yes in disguise.

**It gives us an opportunity to be completely us.
It gives us the opportunity to stand for something.
It gives us a say in who we are.**

Being able to use and ultimately master the respectful no allows us to give more authentic yeses. It allows us to give ourselves more fully to others AND ourselves.

Our words become more powerful. They become a better reflection of who we are and what we stand for.

WHICH DO YOU GIVE?

1/2 Ass Yes

-Based on *pleasing others, saving face, fear*

-Despite saying, "Yes," you know you

a) *don't agree with it;*

b) *don't have time for;*

c) *have no interest in;*

d) *have no intention of going to or doing*

Therefore, saying "Yes" is meaningless

-Easy answer to give

-**Consequences:** *feelings of guilt, self-consciousness, doubt, less than whole*

-**Key Question:** What would you think of someone who consistently gave you 1/2 ass yeses?

Respectful No

-*Value based; Honoring self & others; Intentional response*

-**In alignment with what you stand/don't stand for**
Respectful No=Authentic Yes in disguise

-More challenging

-**Requires:** *courage, intention, confidence, respect, compassion, understanding*

-**Key Question:** What would it take for you to trade in giving a half-ass yes and offer a respectful no?

LIVING AUTHENTICALLY.

“Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind.”

-Rudyard Kipling

Kipling uses this famous quote as a metaphor for the power of our words. They have the ability to influence the way another person acts and feels similar to the effect of drugs.

How can we utilize the true power of words such that they are more authentic to who we are? How can we become more confident in offering a respectful no in place of giving a half-ass yes?

By developing a mastery of our words, we develop a mastery of ourselves. By developing a mastery of ourselves, we develop a mastery of our words.

Consider the following:

- *What am I committed to? What do I stand for*
- *What will I not stand for?*
- *What does living authentically mean and look like to me?*
- *What does speaking authentically mean and sound like to me?*
- *What am I willing to do and feel in order to maintain my commitment to being 100% me?*
- *What would it be like to give 100% of myself to others?*
- *Who would I rather be friends with: someone who gives half-ass yeses or someone who is comfortable to give me a respectful no?*
- *In what situations or circumstances am I willing to offer a respectful no in place of a half-ass yes?*

*Those who know others are intelligent;
those who know themselves are truly wise.*

*Those who master others are strong;
those who master themselves have true power.*

Lao Tzu

References

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