

The YES/NO Book

Five steps to make NO more easy

Step 1: The Moment of Choice

Think about the moment of choice, when you have to respond with a yes or no. Make a note of two or three occasions when you have fallen easily into an uneasy "yes". These are times when you did not feel in control and you said "yes" for no better reason than that it felt easier than saying "no".

1.

2.

3.

One at a time, relive those experiences as fully as you can. It may help to close your eyes when you do this. Notice what was said, how you felt, and what went through your mind. Was there a moment when you suddenly felt compelled to say "yes" against your better judgement? Did you ever think "no" or was "yes" completely automatic?

My Feelings

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Step 2: Your Mental Models

What did you think about at the time? To what extent were you in control? What did you believe about the other person or people involved in those events? What did you believe about yourself? Were those beliefs rational, or not? Thinking back, to what extent could you have done something different?

My Beliefs

Step 3: Consequences

What happened as a result of what you said or did? How did things change as a consequence? What opportunities opened up, and what closed down? How did your beliefs guide you to do something you regretted?

The Consequences

Step 4: Challenge

Now start to challenge your beliefs, one by one. What is the evidence for each belief? What alternative beliefs does the evidence support? What would be the consequences of a different set of beliefs about yourself, other people and the choices you have available to you? How would those alternative beliefs change your actions, world and the outcomes you can achieve?

The Alternatives

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Step 5: Action

Make a note of the actions you can take, to seize control of a “yes-no moment”. What will you do differently? How committed are you to these actions, on a scale of one to ten? What would it take to move you even closer to ten? How can you do that too? When you know what actions you are going to take, write down your commitments.

My Options

My Commitments

1. Will I ...
2. Will I ...
3. Will I ...
4. Will I ...
5. Will I ...