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Compromising often leaves both sides wanting

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Compromising is a lose/lose proposition, because it often leaves

both sides wanting.

A friend and I planned to take advantage of the lovely autumn day. We scheduled a meet at an outdoor café. When my friend arrived, I had already situated myself at a table in a sunny part of the patio.

"Hey, there. I've forgotten my sun glasses. Do you mind if we move to that shady table over there? Then I won't have to squint at you all afternoon."

"Oh – well, I actually tried that table earlier and it was a little too chilly for me. The sun really warms up the air. But I don't want you to have to squint."

"Well – then let's just sit in the car and talk."

"mmm – Let's try one thing first. Let's move that table to the right. Then half will be in the sun for me, and half will be in the shade for you."

He agreed and we moved the table to be half sunny and half shaded.

While this is a simple story, it does illustrate a good point – if you take the time to actually understand both sides of the issue, majority of the time there's a solution that makes everyone happy. Although "compromising" is a common negotiation tactic, often times it leaves both sides wanting.

I much prefer Comprehending over Compromising.

In the above story, if my friend and I had settled for the "sitting in the car" solution – we would have both forfeited our common goal of enjoying the beautiful weather. Spending that little extra time understanding our individual situations allowed us to create a solution that was a Win/Win. A Win/Win solution is not a compromise but the collaboration of wants.

But – don't you need to compromise in most relationships?

This is only true if you accept that premise. A compromise is actually a short-cut. Take for instance the thought that one spouse wants to live on the ocean and the other wants to live in the city. It's difficult to imagine how both people could be happy. It seems that one or both might have to compromise.

Well – first step is to understand **why** the other wants what they want. For example, one spouse wants to live on the ocean because:

- 1) He enjoys the fresh air.
- 2) He enjoys the relaxing sounds off the water at night.
- 3) He enjoys swimming and other water activities.
- 4) He wants an easy yard (or no yard) to maintain.

Once explained, his wife agrees that she also enjoys all of the above.

She wants to live in the city because:

- 1) She likes to stay active in other non-water hobbies that are easily accessible in the city
- 2) She likes going to the gym, movies and shopping
- 3) She likes meeting her friends at her favorite lunch spots
- 4) She is responsible for much of the house chores, and doesn't want to drive a long distance to accomplish her tasks.

He realizes that he wants those things as well.

Neither of their desires is outrageous or unreasonable. Both realize that they actually want the same things. Taking some time to focus on the essence of their wants (the "why" they wanted it) helps clarify what they really want. After clarifying what they really wanted, they were able to find a house on a lake within the city limits (and near an easily accessible highway). This home covered all their goals without compromising what each of them truly wanted.

Treating people the way I want to be treated.

Another phrase I hear often and somewhat disagree with is: *The key to my success is treating people the way I want to be treated.*

I much prefer: To be truly successful *I want enjoy treating people they way **THEY** want to be treated.*

I realize that at first glance, this statement is a head scratcher. But there are two critical points in the above statement.

The first is “treating people the way **they** want to be treated” – not necessarily how I would like to be treated. Not everyone is like me (my friends would say, “thank goodness!”). So, to treat everyone as if they were me is absurd.

Another example (and this is an exaggerated example meant only for illustrative purposes): Sally Saint is a “giver”. She loves to give, compliment, help others, dote to the extreme, serve, mother, etc. She is, however, very uncomfortable in the receiving mode. She doesn’t like to accept any help. She doesn’t like to be served or receive gifts. She doesn’t want any acknowledgements or recognition of any type. So, if she **truly** treated people the way she wanted to be treated, she would not help, dote, compliment or try to please anyone. She would also be miserable, because she is going against her natural instincts. So, her perfect matches are people that are good receivers, moochers, users, beggars and takers who feel entitled (exaggerating for illustrative purposes). These two types of people (the giver and the taker) complement and are in harmony with each other. These puzzle pieces fit together.

The second point is that “I want to enjoy” treating people the way they want to be treated (i.e. do these things **in joy**). For me to be happy, the “way they want to be treated” needs to fit my personality. If those things are outside my comfort zone, or I feel that I am constantly compromising and negotiating to keep the other person happy then I won’t be a happy camper. I will eventually resent the person and will dislike the person I have become. If I’m doing these things in joy because I love doing these things, because that is already who I am – then it’s very easy, natural and instinctual for me. I am not compromising. I’m getting exactly what I need out of the relationship and they are too. In a relationship like this, I often feel that I’m getting the better end of the deal, and the other person feels they are getting the best end. It’s a perfect combination. For this collaboration to balance our needs rarely are the same thing; instead they are complementary and harmonious.

You’re talking about a soul mate. Not every relationship is like that.

All relationships (whether a professional, personal, or a passing relationship) can fit this example. It’s very evident in marketing. A “seller” doesn’t seek other “sellers”. A “seller” looks for a “buyer”. A golf instructor isn’t looking for someone wanting to learn to swim. You don’t want to make “everyone happy”. You want to attract and deal with people (whether in your professional or personal life) that are already “in tuned” and “up to speed” with what you want to offer. Those are the collaborations that are the most fun and successful.

Conclusion:

So – think about Comprehension over Compromising; choose Finding the fit over Forcing a fit. Preferring these things takes a little more time, but the results are worth it.

Undoubtedly you’ve heard the advice **“Just Say No”** to things when you’re feeling overwhelmed. In actuality, saying **“no”** to life and its opportunities is a resistive, defensive and negative attitude producing additional stress. This stress management presentation shares fun, practical and life-changing tips on ways to say **“YES”** to things -- **on your own terms**.

Visualize this scenario: You’re a very busy mom or dad, a corporate manager, spouse and you raise funds for your community’s charity. You receive daily requests from children, employees, spouse, and charity organizations. You not only have daily demands but daily desires in not only those areas, but your health and finances.

Another client’s complaint is: *I don’t have a problem with assessing a task, etc. My problem is that I have big ideas and there’s just too many that I’m working on. Note: there is a queue and I do prioritize. I guess I am impatient or realize the time is opportune and thus want to change priorities and continue with projects and add others - they are all viable and provide revenue. These are my own pressures created by myself.*

Conventional wisdom suggests taking control of your list and to start saying **“NO”** to things. But, saying **“No”** to things is dodging the ball. Spending time and energy dodging and evading keeps you in the same place. Just like the game **“dodgeball”**, the more you dodge the more you attract balls to evade. It doesn’t really make time, space or energy for other things. You haven’t really accomplished much in that amount of time. You’ve just spent the time saying **“NO”** to more things.

I have a workshop that covers the **three T’s to saying “YES”** on your own term in detail. With these 3 T’s, you will be able to navigate through various scenarios with ease and professionalism. Please contact me if you are interested in more information about these workshops.

“No” is a defensive tactic. It is a strategy fueled by the attitude of scarcity, of “not enoughness”, of lack. There’s not enough time, there’s not enough me, I can’t do it all, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t. and **“I Can’t”** is a defeatist attitude. So – in essence, we are spending time and energy **“creating a defeat”**. In my mind, that doesn’t make much sense.

A more beneficial attitude is one of **“abundance”**, I am capable, there is enough time for everything that matters. This can be done. It may be a lot to do, but it is doable.

I have an abundance of time, talent and resources at my disposal. And it doesn't have to be done all at once or all by me.

I like the idea of saying "yes" under your own terms. Everything that crosses our paths "normally" has value. I'm not a big supporter of "saying no" to things JUST because you feel that you don't have time. If those items do not support your overall goals or paths -- definitely hand it off to someone that it's more of a match to. But there are also techniques on "how to have our cake and eat it too". There are ways to say "yes" -- by perhaps streamlining the task, delegating, delaying and combining with something else, or tuning into the pure "essence" -- the actual "why I would do this/value" versus the explicit task. In my opinion -- the important thing is to accomplish the "essence" or to figure out the "value" of the thing being done (or asked of you). Often times the "essence" can be done with a lot less effort and time -- if you don't focus on a specific task or action item -- but on the "real value" or the why your wanting the results that your trying to accomplish.

Although this isn't rocket science, it does take some practice to become comfortable saying "yes" in this way. Imagine some of the following scenes and create some on your own. Practicing your "Yes" responses to your typical scenarios will help you proactively prepare for them. Some examples are below.

Some script dialogue to help prepare for various scenes:

- 1) Yes – I would love to help you on this. I want to give you the time and attention that this really deserves. Let me check my calendar. Yes – I have an hour over lunch next Wednesday. Is an hour enough time to brainstorm on this?
- 2) Yes – I realize that you've been trying to get connect with me on that fundraiser matter. I am interested. I'm on my way to another meeting – but we'll both be at Saturday's soccer game. Let's commit to sitting next to each other and discuss it then.
- 1) Yes – I see that this is important to you. While this doesn't quite fit in my individual development goals, current project lists or my target client base, I may know someone that is a perfect match for this. Joanne Smith is working on a similar profile. I think her project is a better match for your idea and I know her very well. Her number is xxx-xxxx. In fact, she will be at a general meeting on Thursday at 8:00am at Bear Rock Café. If you attend that meeting, I can introduce you to her at that time.
- 2) Yes – I can see that you're frustrated by this situation. I do regret the procedures we have to follow around here. I know they may come off as ridiculous for those lucky enough not to have to work in this type of industry every day. Is there a particular the restrictions or policies that you have a question before we go any further? My overall intention is to make you a happy customer – even if it's not at my store. I can see by your specifications that our product is not a good match for you. I think you'll be much happier with this manufacturer. Let me goggle their contact information for you.
- 3) Yes – that is a great project for you. I recommend your next step to work up a business proposal with marketing trends and income/expense forecasting. Mary Jane is great at mentoring folks that are setting up their own project plans. She mentioned that her last protégé is off starting their own business. And she is looking for a new mentoring opportunity. If you want, I can setup a meeting between the two of you – see if you guys hit it off.
- 4) Yes – boss, I can do this. Let me make sure I understand your expectations. You have me already working on these other 4 projects. Help me understand the right priority on this list. Where does this new request fit? Before this one? Ah – as soon as possible. Okay -- to me, as soon as possible means, completing my current task (which you wanted done by Thursday). Is that your understanding as well? Ah – okay – you want me to stop all work on my current task and do this instead. Great – placing this task here will push the completion date on this one out until next Wednesday. Is this okay with the other stakeholders of this project or did you want to assign it to someone else?
- 5) Yes, Joe – I agree with you that someone does need to meet with your employee regarding his progress on the website. I've gotten several complaints from my crew that Randy hasn't been responsive to their requests. I've also tried to contact him myself. But he has not been responsive to my emails or telephone messages. Can you assign someone from your team that has some influence over him to find out what's going on? OR can you assign someone else from your team to fulfill that part of the contract?
- 6) It's 4:30pm and the boss just handed you something to look at and says to you, "Here's something to look at. Have a good weekend". "Great! I look forward to reviewing it on Monday. You have a great weekend as well." Just because the boss hands something to you on Friday at 4:30pm doesn't always mean he needs it done before you leave. It could just mean that he wanted off "his desk" before the weekend --- to make himself feel free and have a relaxing weekend. Don't assume. And if you are going to assume – assume the benefit of the doubt to other.

Conclusion

We all get interrupted and distracted. Interruptions will constantly flow our way. Saying "no" to them is like trying to dodge them in a quick flowing stream. When we spend time and energy dodging something, we are typically spending much energy to stand in the same area place. Instead, take advantage of the interruption. Hop onto the interruptions that are going your way, ride it for a little while until it goes off course, and then hop on the next one, next one, next one -- until you've accomplished your current destination. Treat the interruption as a wave forward to your next adventure.

About the author



Laura is a certified business and personal life coach. Laura offers one-on-one career and life coaching, small group coaching, seminars and workshops. She has been in the software and testing industry for over 20 years. She's worked with such companies as IBM, Ericsson, Staples, Fidelity Investments and Sogeti in various client advocacy and project management roles. The techniques she uses in her business coaching and client advocacy work saved these companies both time and money, which resulted in on-time, quality product delivery with higher client satisfaction.

Laura now uses her client focus, project, quality and people management skills in her personal life coaching career. As a personal life coach, she helps people integrate their goals and dreams into their everyday lives. Laura uses creative and practical tools to help her clients realize what really matters to them. They then follow-through with project and time management techniques to create the reality they really want.

You can learn more about her at www.RoseCoaching.info and contact her at LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info

The Three T's to "saying YES"

- 1) Time
 - a. Take control over your calendar
 - b. Just because it's "happening now" doesn't make it urgent
 - c. Expect the unexpected with sprints and buffers
 - d. Don't prioritize everything, just your top 3 items
- 2) Talent
 - a. Not everyone around you is incompetent
 - b. Greasing the wheels is different than pulling the cart
 - c. Don't feed someone else's monkey
 - d. Be the CEO of your life
- 3) Teaching
 - a. Sometimes people are looking for "next step" directions, not necessarily asking you to do it
 - b. Seeing yourself as the hero just creates more disasters and damsels in distress – teach people to fish.
 - c. You don't have to open the door to every Tom, Dick or Harry. Be selective. Deliberately choose your clients, co-workers, and playmates. There are other teachers out there that may be a better match to the rest.