Learn How to Say
"No" to Yourself

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We all need to say "no" to ourselves several times each day. Whether it's because we're tempted to procrastinate, spend money, waste time, eat something unhealthy, or take an unnecessary risk, learning to tell yourself "no" is necessary.

However, it's not always easy. **If it were easy to stop yourself, we'd all be lean, healthy, and wealthy.** Giving into our urges is often detrimental.

Many of our negative urges are habitual, but many are programmed. For example, we're programmed to enjoy eating calorie-dense foods. There was a time that calories were hard to come by, so this makes sense. Calories are a little easier to find now.

Gaining control over yourself can go a long way toward building a great life!

Use this process to strengthen your control over yourself:

1. **Stop and think.** Imagine the urge to run out and get a cheeseburger strikes you. Or maybe it's the desire to spend more money than you should. Stopping for a moment can make a big difference.

    - **It's important to break your train of thought,** or you'll continue down your current path and do as you've always done.

    - Stop and reorient yourself. Take a look around and name five things you see. Take a deep breath and describe what you smell. What can you hear? What is the temperature of your environment? Describe the feeling of your clothes against your skin.

2. **Notice the urge.** Return to thinking about the action you want to take. How does it feel in your body? It's not just a thought. It triggers a particular physical feeling. Where is it? Focus on that part of your body and notice what happens.

   - **If you're patient, the feeling will fade.**

3. **Consider the long-term perspective.** What will it mean if you follow through? How much does that $300 item cost you over 10 years? What will a bowl of ice cream mean to your waistline and your health? What is the downside of continuing with your urge? Make a list of reasons why you shouldn't do it.

4. **Find a positive alternative.** If you're craving something sweet, maybe a piece of fruit would be a better option. Whatever you have the urge to do, think of a positive alternative that will provide a similar benefit. Consider the long-term implications.

5. **Tell yourself, "I don't."** If offered something we know we shouldn't eat, we might respond with, "I can't eat xyz." It turns out that it is much more effective to say, "I don't eat xyz." **Studies have shown that using, "I don't" is up to 10 times more effective.** "I don't" feels more like a choice. "I can't" feels like a limitation.

   - I don't miss workouts.

   - I don't eat chocolate.

   - I don't smoke.

   - I don't stay up late when I have to go to work the next day.

Imagine how easy life would be if you could tell yourself no and follow through on it.

You'd be healthier, be at your ideal weight, have more money, be well-rested, and avoid many of the issues that can make life so challenging.

Bad habits would be unheard of if you could just say "no" and mean it.

Controlling your behavior is a skill that requires time to master. It's not reasonable to just assume you can take the knowledge and change your life overnight. **However, you can make a huge difference in the quality of your life very quickly.** Avoid underestimating the power of the word, "No."