

Glowing Comments from Leaders about...

**Yes! —How Noes Prepare You
for the Yeses that Shape Your Future**

John Fuhrman

“Enthusiasm is contagious, and Yes! is worth catching.”

—ANNETTE SYKORA, IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRPERSON,
NATIONAL AUTO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
AND OWNER OF SEVERAL DEALERSHIPS

“Say Yes to Yes! John Fuhrman’s lessons and philosophies apply to an individual’s pursuit of a more fulfilling life as adeptly as they do toward the pursuit of sales and marketing excellence. This is truly an inspirational read for all.”

—STAN STARNES, PRESIDENT
SERVICE CONTRACT SALES DIVISION
DENT ZONE COMPANIES

“John’s book, Yes!, is a breath of fresh air in the world of leadership. His advice is touching and insightful, and makes me want to truly focus on mentoring others. My entire dissertation was on mentorship and this book inspired me to more effectively reach out to others in the field.”

—DR. PAULA KENNEDY-DUDLEY
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, SCHOOL OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT WILMINGTON

“John has written another masterpiece in personal growth. Yes! is a fascinating and insightful interpretation of two simple words we use every day. After reading this book, you may never look at yes and no in the same way.”

—CAROLYN KINDLEY-SINGLE
BROKER/FOUNDER/CERTIFIED MENTOR
GREEN PARACHUTE, LLC

“Congratulations on a great read! You remind us of the importance of staying positive; having a plan. I liked the way you interweaved personal experiences to illustrate various points. Thanks for sharing Yes!”

—MICHAEL MCHUGH
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES
GMAC INSURANCE

The Road to Yes Begins When YOU Say Yes!

Dear Reader,

John Fuhrman is where he is in life because he looks at “no” a bit differently than most. His success is definitely not due to avoiding no. It’s the result of realizing no exists, embracing it as an opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve yes! Your results, the yeses and noes, and your subsequent responses to them, have brought you to your current station in life as well.

Unfortunately, most people shy away from no and the potential of failing. While this may provide immediate, short-term comfort, it prevents any possibility of achieving desires beyond the ordinary. The only way we can earn the yeses that truly shape our lives is to be open to the noes and failings that we encounter along the way. Accept them as necessary bumps in the road to where you’re going. Even though it’s paved with no, follow your path in spite of any fear you may have. No is overcome simply by saying yes, over and over again, to your dream, goal, or objective—no matter what challenges come your way.

Had John not been willing to subject himself to the many noes he received in response to his book proposals, along with countless rewrites, he would never have been published—*nine times now!* It wasn’t that he set out wanting to hear no and fail, but rather that he was willing to receive a hundred noes to get one yes. I can assure you he never enjoyed a single no. No way! Every one was met with a certain amount of resistance to the truth, as well as tension, self-doubt, and anger. But that one yes he got from us led to a new career as a popular author and speaker! John will tell you every no was worth more than he ever could have ever imagined.

John soon realized that no indicated the need to make changes, grow, and improve his approach in order to enhance his chances for yes. Had he kept doing the same old things in the same old ways he would have gotten the same old results—noes—rather than the new and exciting yeses he was after.

Had John submitted his initial rough manuscript to us here at Possibility Press, the publisher who finally said yes, there's little chance we would have given it a second glance. As he got no after no, he was told that, while the ideas were there they were poorly organized and written. His success as an author is the direct result of making changes and improvements in response to the noes he was continually receiving from other publishers. This principle is essential for success in every area of life. If at first you're getting no, take heart and press on—you're on the right track to getting yes!

No one does everything exactly right the first time they do something new. Those who eventually get yes are those who risked getting no—making adjustments and improvements as they went. They didn't quit on themselves or anyone else.

Successful people are always open to no and failure. They realize it's the fastest way to improve and get yes. People who choose to do something new typically don't know much at first about how they're going to do it! They learn how as they go, asking for help as needed, and grow—moving forward toward their new objective. They understand that *the answer to how is yes!*

Those who avoid no while convincing themselves, and maybe even others, that they're still “working on it,” will never feel quite ready. Some toil for years trying to create perfection or make their efforts “no-proof.” But that just doesn't work. It simply doesn't enable progress. The only thing that works is going forward in the face of no.

A few years ago, after the remarkable success of John's first book, *Reject Me—I Love It!*, he was asked to speak at a writers' conference. It was a group of authors with manuscripts at various stages of development. Some were finished, while others

hadn't written a single word! One writer, in particular, paid incredibly close attention to everything John said, taking copious notes on every aspect of the session.

Four years later, John ran into him again at another conference. Guess what? He was *still* working on his first book. He said it wasn't ready yet. He was rewriting it for the umpteenth time, never believing it was good enough. When John suggested submitting it to a publisher to test the waters, his answer surprised John. He said there was no way he could survive being told no once, let alone as many times as John had. He wasn't going to submit anything until it was, in his opinion, "no-proof."

Since John's first book was published, eight more have been released, while the no-proof writer is still rewriting his first! Furthermore, John's books have also been published in over a dozen other languages as well. As John says, "Who would've thunk it?" The perfectionist's finished product could potentially be an epic for all time, but we'll probably never get to read it because he believes it's never going to be ready!

John can't change the fact that over a hundred publishers told him no. However, in every single case, each time he sent out a proposal he believed it to be better than the previous one. He was confident the next publisher would be the one who would say yes and accept it. He never intentionally mailed something out expecting to get a no. Neither should you in your endeavors. Negative expectation will only set you up to get exactly that—a no!

Now John's not asking you to enjoy the noes. Nor is he asking you to give less than your all, believing you'll fail. His goal is to move you to action—to see you put forth your current best effort, better it as you proceed, and do whatever's required to get the desired result. The key to getting yes comes in *growing* through the noes—not just going through them. As you shall learn, it's not just a numbers game either. Adopt that idea, get in motion, and keep paving the road to yes so you can achieve whatever it is you desire.

No Isn't a Problem—*It's an Opportunity, and a Badge of Honor and Courage!*

Everyone wants to be accepted and told yes. But if we don't risk getting no, we can't grow personally, our income won't grow as we may want, and our life won't be as great as we'd like it to be. Getting noes isn't about whether people like you or not; it's about being humble and developing your skills. Never take no personally.

No isn't a problem; it's an opportunity to develop your skills and become more of who you'd like to be! No is a chance for you to grow and do more of what you'd like to do. No is a step on the path to be rewarded with more of what you'd like to have—experiences, relationships, more control of your time, increased income—whatever you're seeking.

Have you ever offered anyone a bottle of water or a cup of coffee or tea and they said “No thanks”? Was that devastating? Did it hurt you? Of course not! You probably didn't think anything of it. Right? Have you ever said, “No thanks,” when someone offered you something? Sure! Can you see no in a different light now?

This book shares some of the wisdom John has gained through his own no experiences, as well as those of others who have risked no in their quest for yes. If he hadn't grown through more challenges, and more noes, since his last book, *Leading Leaders to Leadership*, he simply wouldn't have had anything more to share. There would have been no reason for his writing *Yes!* nor us publishing it.

If you don't experience more noes, whether in person, from the media, or over the Internet, you won't grow and achieve the success you want either. Naysayers are a dime a dozen, and they have nothing to offer but sour grapes. They probably aren't very successful and they don't want you to be very successful either! Yes, jealousy still exists.

Getting and growing through no is the *only* way to success! No doubt about it. It's the key. Most people either just don't seem to understand this or they refuse to. They see the

achievements of others alright, but what's visible is only the tip of an iceberg built on countless submerged noes and other challenges overcome.

No opens the doors to new knowledge and experiences you otherwise wouldn't have gained. No prepares you to find and walk confidently with yes. No will take you to places you never imagined and help you achieve more success than you ever felt possible—as long as you persist.

As you move along in your quest for yes, remember these key points:

- Never take no personally or as the ultimate answer.
- The road to yes is paved with no.
- No is for you to grow, preparing you for yes.
- Winners don't quit when they get a no—it only makes them stronger and more determined.

Yes creates a new set of opportunities, while no strengthens you for them. Embrace noes for what they teach, while helping you grow so you can attract and best serve the yeses. Thank the noes, smiling to yourself, for they save you from wasting time on negative situations.

Now get out there and see how many noes you can get; each one presents its own special gifts, pushing you to grow—in exciting ways you probably can't even imagine. Remember, no is an opportunity. Wear it as a badge of honor and courage!

Get ready for the yeses that shape your future. Hear no and keep going and growing, and you'll be heading for yes and the top. Use *Yes!* to play a positive role in helping you create the kind of success you so desire.

YES! to your success,

The Publisher

Acclaimed by Annette Sykora

Past Chair, National Auto Dealers Association and Owner of Several Dealerships

Yes!

**How Noes Prepare
You for the Yeses that
Shape Your Future**

John Fuhrman

*Bestselling Author of *Leading Leaders to Leadership**

A Possibility Press Book

Yes!

John Fuhrman

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ISBN 978-0-938716-71-6

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Published by
Possibility Press
possibilitypress.com

Manufactured in the United States of America

Dedication

To all the people who told me no: Thanks! You've caused me to grow and become better than I ever could have imagined, enabling me to live my dream.

To the dreamers who are becoming greater doers: Face no with courage and conviction, knowing it'll move you closer toward living *your* dream.

Acknowledgment

When I think of all the people and things that influenced my life and the directions it has taken, I can't help but thank them. Where I am now in life is the sum total of everything that has happened to me and what I did as a result. Had I been protected from no and failure, or conditioned to simply accept it, few of the things I am thankful for in life would have happened.

I thank the speaker's bureaus and event planners who have invited me to share my message with their audiences. You've helped keep me going as a writer. Thank you for telling me what you want.

To all the supporters of this project, a special thanks. I wanted this book to be special and you all kept me believing it would be. Thanks also to the editors who polished it up to make it better than I ever hoped it could have been. I will forever be in your debt for helping me send a needed message to those who want to grow.

A special thanks to family and friends who understood, from the beginning, that sacrificing time then would give us the freedom to enjoy more time together now. I look forward to sharing the joys life has brought me, teaching the lessons I've learned.

Finally, thanks to all of you who aren't quite sure if you can live the life you've always dreamed of. You helped spur me on to do this book. For much of my life I've walked in your shoes, shared your doubts, had your fears. But because people were willing to share with me what I hope you'll see in this book, I now live my dreams. I hope I'm an example of what your life can be as well.

Contents

Prologue	Get Any Noes Lately? Welcome to the Club—You’re in Good Company!	12
Part One—This Isn’t Rocket Science		
Chapter 1	B uying Into Yes or Selling Out to No?	20
Chapter 2	U se No to Leverage Your Way to Yes	27
Chapter 3	I t’s Not About You!	34
Chapter 4	L ook at Believing in the Possibilities of Yes	39
Chapter 5	D are to Keep Getting <i>Better</i> than Your Best!	44
Chapter 6	I nvesting in Your Own Growth Takes Time but Offers You the Greatest Return	51
Chapter 7	N ew and Improved?	57
Chapter 8	G ood Enough Is Seldom Enough	61
Part Two—Ways to Win		
Chapter 9	S o What’s So Good About You?	68
Chapter 10	U nderstand, “ <i>They</i> ” Probably Aren’t Thinking About You!	74
Chapter 11	C ommitted to Getting Yes but Conditioned to Accepting No	80
Chapter 12	C ompetitive Participation Creates Ongoing Acceleration	85
Chapter 13	E nthusiasm Is Essential and Contagious	91
Chapter 14	S haring Goals Creates Growth	96
Chapter 15	S o Why Isn’t Everyone Doing Whatever It Takes to Be More Successful?	101
Part Three—Driving Doubters Crazy		
Chapter 16	T otally Committed to Excellence	106
Chapter 17	H all of Fame Habits	112
Chapter 18	R eaching Success on Your Own Terms	117
Chapter 19	<i>U</i> nique—It’s What Makes You, You	124
Part Four—What Are You Waiting For?		
Chapter 20	N OW Is the Only Time You Have to Do Anything!	131
Chapter 21	O ne More Thing...	138
Poem	Y es!—The Poem	143
The Author	W ho Is John Fuhrman?	144

“A mind once stretched by a new idea, can never shrink back to its original dimensions.”

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

—*Prologue*—

Get Any Noes Lately? Welcome to the Club—You’re in Good Company!

Get ready to join the high-level people in your industry who won—by getting noes, failing their way to the top. If you had to pick a group of achievers, you’d be hard pressed to come up with anyone who was never told no and never failed at anything. No and failing are prerequisites to success, especially the massive kind. You’d be hard pressed to name a significant invention, person, contribution, or achievement of any magnitude without discussing the noes and failings that occurred—right up to the moment of yes and succeeding.

In an effort to share with you the importance of going forward in faith—and the absolute necessity of no and failing—I present my favorite top five all-time “failures.”

Don’t You Just Dread Being the Last One Picked?

The odds of making a living playing sports at the highest levels are astronomical. Even those selected in the first few rounds, who are given healthy bonus checks, may never see life on the fields of major league professional sports—particularly baseball. In the major league draft, it’s often been said that the first five rounds of picks include those with potential; the rest

are chosen for the picks to practice with. With each passing round, the odds increase monumentally against ever being on the field of a major league ballpark.

What do you suppose the odds would be if you were chosen after all the teams had picked 50 players? How about 60? That would mean after 50 or 60 complete rounds of choosing, you may not even have been seriously thought of! Now suppose, in the 62nd and final round, on the last pick by the last team, they called your name—and then only as a favor to your father!

In 1988, that pick actually occurred. The father was a friend of then-manager of the Dodgers, Tommy Lasorda, and they chose a catcher who would certainly rise above the odds. So much so, that he would surely be destined to be voted into baseball's highest society—the Hall of Fame. His name? Mike Piazza. And even though he's actually number five on my list, his quote is the best at summing up what no and failing, and yes and succeeding, are all about: "I'm not trying to prove anybody wrong. I'm just trying to prove something to myself."

Forget Realistic—*Believe the Impossible Can Happen!*

It was the summer of 1969 when our world seemed to dramatically shrink. We suddenly saw just how small and fragile it looked when viewed from the moon. After taking "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," astronaut Neil Armstrong placed one foot onto the lunar surface. Many of us who saw it on TV instantly thought of an earlier time.

In April 1961, a certain man had affirmed this would happen. Even though we hadn't yet developed a rocket that could get us there, he said we would do it. Before the technology was developed to make such a trip possible, he insisted we'd achieve it. Without even having any trained and qualified people to make the trip, he had the foresight to insist this would be a reality. Who would say such a thing? Was he a psychic?

No, he was John F. Kennedy, President of the United States. At a time when the country needed to be inspired, he ventured beyond the known. He dared to be unrealistic, to believe in the

impossible. Most importantly, though, he *insisted* it be done. Kennedy didn't predict the moon landing; he simply stated that it would be done by the end of the decade. He never paid attention to the naysayers who said, "It can't be done." That would have been fatal to his mission. How about you?

Kennedy's proclamation made a great impact on me, teaching me the power of positive certainty. There was never a sense of maybe, perhaps, or try in his voice—only clarity, strength, and faith—never waffling or wavering. All of my goals started the same way with "We Will..." or rather "I Will..." How about yours? Are you saying, "No Excuse! I'm Doing It," as Jay Rifenburg does in his bestselling book?

Those who've accomplished something new didn't know exactly how they were going to do it when they began, other than maybe having a basic idea. They went forward with the positive certainty that they'd attain their aspiration, driving themselves to learn how to do it on the way to accomplishing it. They learned a basic truth...

...The Answer to How Is *Yes!*

Knowing why you're here, where you truly belong, and what works best for you can go a long way toward building a successful, satisfying life. Just know that preparing for that success by doing things differently from your family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances—and, perhaps, doing better than they have done—can cause challenges. Not to be concerned. This is common for anyone who ventures out.

When his opportunity to compete in the Olympics finally came, he felt prepared. His training, done mostly on his own, had been different than the traditional approach. Nevertheless, his history of winning performances made him a favorite for victory. However, as so often happens, due to the many dynamics of life, things beyond his control entered the scene and changed the situation.

Due to a scheduling change, he was forced to participate in a race without being able to rest from the previous one. In spite

of this, though, he managed a fourth-place among the world's top runners. Still, the press discounted his accomplishment, blaming his failing to take first place entirely on his having rejected traditional training methods.

To redeem himself, he decided to show them simply by breaking the world's record! He resolved to achieve a mark that had never been accomplished before. This would all take place while he was studying medicine, allowing him to train only 45 minutes a day. Nevertheless, he was convinced that deliberate, steady training would enable him to accomplish his goal. He knew the answer to how was yes!

With friends who ran with him in support of his quest, he entered the competition. After just four quarter-mile laps, he broke the tape and the “insurmountable” mark. The stopwatch read an incredible 3:59.4! Six tenths of a second less than the four-minute mark the world said couldn't be broken! Roger Bannister not only broke the world record; a couple of months later he broke it again by nearly another second. Curiously, as soon as this so-called impossible time had been attained, other runners began breaking the four-minute mile “barrier” as well.

As is typically the case, barriers are creations of the mind, false beliefs. Just say yes and make it so. When asked about his choice of races, Sir Roger Bannister replied, “I found longer races boring. The mile was just perfect.”

Kicked Out of Your Own Country

Sometimes, no matter how good an idea is, few may be open-minded enough to listen. You might have to leave your hometown or your country just to have a chance. As the expression goes, “You're not a prophet in your own land.” You're just good ol' you to them. People close to you may have preconceived notions about you and may well take you for granted. Even though you're growing, they can't see or understand it if they're not. If they know you've changed, they may not like it. It's sad they don't realize we all need to change on the inside to create the change we want on the outside.

Now here's a guy I'd love to have on my sales team. Christopher Columbus had colossal setbacks, kept going and, even after a final huge mistake, still achieved greatness. After failing to get his Italian homeland to sanction a voyage designed to prove the earth was round, he left for Spain. Then after doing some serious convincing to Queen Isabella, he was commissioned to go out and search for a more direct route to the Far East to increase trade. Since there were no maps to guide him, he failed—massively. The result—he found America! Out of all the noes came a giant YES. Columbus never bought into the popular belief that the earth was flat. In taking the risk that he would fall off the end of it, he discovered a whole new world.

Not bad for hearing no but refusing to quit. Christopher Columbus proved that continuing to follow a passionate dream can result in success beyond imagination. He went to what could have been his demise to make his objective a reality. For that, most people might have him as number one. However, the following man set out with a specific purpose, which is why he's my number one choice.

Don't Stick Me with That!

Accidents happen. That's a fact of life. Success can also happen by accident but don't confuse this with luck. So-called accidental success really occurs when you're actively striving to accomplish something, working toward a definite goal. When you're in the arena doing something to the absolute best of your ability, that's when *it* happens.

Art Fry was a member of his church's choir. During the week, he worked for a company called 3M where he had been since he graduated from college. To promote synergy, the company's leaders always encouraged employees to think and step outside their comfort zones.

Art learned about one of their scientists, Spencer Silver, and his failed attempts, four years earlier, at finding a stronger adhesive. Silver had developed a new compound, but it proved to be weaker than what 3M was already producing. You'd think

that a company known for making Scotch Tape® and other great adhesives would have a use for one that could stick to various items, yet easily be lifted off and be reused. But no one knew what to do with it. However, Art had a challenge at church—where he thought the new adhesive might work.

He kept losing his place whenever he used standard bookmarks in the hymnals during services. Frustrated, he took some of Silver's adhesive and applied it to the back of a bookmark. Much to his surprise, he found it would stick to a page and stay put, yet could be easily moved to another page without damaging the first. Incredibly, the bookmark with the four-year-old adhesive retained sufficient stickiness even after several applications and removals.

Then, one day at work, Art used one of his new bookmarks to make a note, sticking it to a report. Other employees saw how it worked, and shortly thereafter Art was inundated with requests for some of his semi-sticky notepaper.

Because of a failed experiment four years earlier, and the quest to solve a non-work-related problem, you've come to know Art's creation by its world-famous name—Post-It® Notes. He “stuck” with his belief, creating one of the handiest little products of all time, now sold in more than a hundred countries. Another no had been turned into a giant YES.

Fry was promoted to corporate scientist, the highest level an employee could receive on the technical side of 3M. In 1985, *Time* magazine said Post-It® Notes was one of the best products of the previous twenty-five years. Revenue from it and its spin-offs exceed \$1 billion annually!

Hearing No and Failing Is Essential to *Hearing Yes and Succeeding*

If you've ever been told no (who hasn't?), you're in good company. Anyone who's accomplished anything of note has been told no somewhere along the line. They took no as a positive, using it to spur them on. Here's just a small list of some of those people and what they've accomplished:

- Bill Gates and Paul Allen, co-founders of Microsoft.
- Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com.
- Sam Walton, founder of WalMart.
- Thomas Edison, inventor of the electric light and 1092 other things.
- Madame Curie, discoverer of radium.
- Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin.
- Robert Fulton, developer of commercially successful steamboats.
- Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the U.S.
- Winston Churchill, a former Prime Minister of Great Britain.
- Ludwig von Beethoven, deaf composer.
- Charles Goodyear, developer of the vulcanization of rubber.
- Mohandas Gandhi, agent of India's freedom.
- William Durant, founder of General Motors.
- Henry Ford, developer of the assembly line.
- Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone.
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., founder of the civil rights movement.
- Thomas Watson, founder of IBM.
- Edison de Castro, founder of Data General.
- Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, founders of Apple Computer.
- Gail Borden, developer of evaporated milk.
- Jonas Salk, developer of the polio vaccine.
- Orville and Wilbur Wright, inventors of the airplane.
- Al Neuharth, creator of *USA Today*.
- Isaac Singer, inventor and promoter of the sewing machine.
- The list goes on and on and on.

These people—and countless others from all walks of life—had one thing in common that I hope will become more a part of you. In spite of being told no over and over again, they kept going. Committed to their quest, it just didn't matter what any-

one else might have thought, said, or done to put them or what they were doing down. It just didn't matter if anyone tried to dissuade them. No only spurred them on to yes.

Hearing no and failing is essential to hearing yes and succeeding in any endeavor of any consequence. That you've heard no and have had some setbacks, yet you're steadfast in sticking to your aim, means you're moving forward toward something you're passionate about! It's something for which you're willing to risk repeatedly hearing no, until you get to the yeses that shape your future.

“The only person who never makes a mistake is the one who never does anything.”

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The only thing separating you from your dreams and goals is whether you continue going for yes, or let no take control and stop you in your quest. It's hard to imagine a tiny two-letter word stopping anyone, isn't it? Come on now!

The proof is in the list. Whether you use my top five or your own favorites, the proof is right in front of you. Those who make it in life hear no and grow through it to yes. Just as in the dictionary, no and failure come before success. So, what are the key ingredients to yes? Consider this simple list:

- One part dream, goal, or objective.
- One part risk.
- One part effort.
- One part no.
- One part failing.
- Repeat as often as necessary to get yes.

The result? *Success!*

Now take a look at where you are in all areas of your life. Since you know the key ingredients for yes, simply identify which ones are missing from your life, add them in, and success is inevitable! That's just how it works.

“A great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.”

—WALTER GAGEHOT

1

Buying Into Yes or Selling Out to No?

Could you tell me how to do your job or business? Sure. However, knowing how to do a job or build and sustain a business has little to do with how successful the individual will be. The world is full of knowledgeable failures who know what to do, yet never totally apply themselves!

As a trainer and speaker, I’ve come across many people who are on the fast track to success. They’re in a wide variety of fields and businesses, men and women from all over the world. Yet, I keep finding one common ingredient in each of them that seems to drive them to the top.

Long before they understood all the details of their chosen field, they went forward in faith with what they did know and were on their way. Even before they were taught and learned the nuances of their chosen jobs and businesses, something was pushing them to the top. Every one of them, without exception, said yes to themselves and knew *why* they were doing

what they were doing. They had a purpose—a “WHY?” that was so important to them that they weren’t concerned about the naysayers or noes they would get along the way. They saw no obstacles to achieving their objective.

They did everything with a result in mind. They knew why they were doing something rather than just knowing how to do it. You may be asking what the difference is since both can get the job done. But that’s only part of the picture.

Do You Settle Just for What Comes Your Way?

Have you ever entered your home after a hard day at work and asked yourself what you did that day? You knew you went to work, did something that filled the hours of the day, then came home. Yet you have almost no memory of the details. Have you ever had a day like that? For some, it’s like that almost every day.

You know them well. “So, so” is their battle cry. They often speak in terms of “what ifs” and “so whats.” They work how they live—paycheck-to-paycheck—on the edge of financial disaster. Unfortunately, it doesn’t even *seem* to bother them. They’ve somehow convinced themselves that they have security. But do they honestly look or feel secure? Or did they buy into a security illusion? What do you think?

People like that have fallen into what I call “settling in to settling for.” Rather than risk losing the so-called security of a paycheck, they simply take whatever is given to them, rationalizing that they have plenty, are doing the best they can, or at least have enough to get by. When forced to do without, they tell themselves they didn’t really need or want it anyway.

Some people might feel a little uncomfortable reading that. Still others may wonder how anyone could tolerate the ordinariness of that attitude, while creating a humdrum life. The sad thing is, 95 percent of working people make one of those decisions daily. They’ve seen what the majority has been doing, selling out to the illusion that they, too, must fall in line like everyone else.

They fail to observe that not venturing out and doing something different has led most people to bored complacency and feelings of being stuck. But must they remain in the stagnant frame of mind that's led to their stagnant circumstances? They sense discontent, but may not be confident enough that they can actually make a positive change that'll make a difference—they're that sure of failing. They're privately aware of their potential and unused ability, but refuse to cultivate it. Their fears magnify the risk, giving them an excuse to shy away from the possibilities.

This avoidance pattern controls their way of being, boxing them in to a life of routine repetition. Almost afraid of their own shadow, discouragement and depression often set in. This limited view of themselves might have been imposed on them as children by overcritical or over protective adults. Sadly, this attitude may be perpetuated by small-thinking people who don't want others to get ahead of them.

What Ifs Can Work Wonders

Suppose someone comes along, offering you an exciting alternative to the life you're living? Perhaps they show you a way to change it for the better, financially or personally, or better yet, both. Can you imagine yourself wondering, "What if this works? What if I could grow and become more than I am today? What if I could live the life I've always wanted"?

Or would you choose to maintain the status quo, justifying where you are, not accepting an offer to change and grow by saying, "I'm already where I want to be in life. My life's okay. I don't need to be any better than I am right now. This is as good as things are ever going to be for me"? People who offer that kind of response have given up on themselves having a better life, and what they once envisioned. They're so caught up in their little world of "can't do," "don't want change," or "who cares, anyway?" that they miss the boat. I wonder if they've ever even considered helping those they care about, or making their lives better?

All the signs are beckoning but they miss them with their miserable shut-your-eyes-to-the-truth thinking. Misery attracts misery, and the downward spiral continues. They never see the dawn of a beautiful new day, until they wake up and notice what those who are winning are all about—and see how they can transcend their own situation.

Since those first three questions in the opening paragraph of this section can never be answered in present tense, many choose not to become the first in their sphere of influence to do something new. However, history is loaded with countless people who could have accomplished more by doing certain new things. Just listen to the if-only-I-had regretful questions that start with “*What if...?*” only to end in a negative prediction or a woe-is-me afterthought.

Consider these examples:

- *What if* franchising had been declared illegal by the United States Congress?
- *What if* the stock market never goes above 3,000, 6,000, 12,000, 15,000, 20,000?
- *What if* I had invested in land in the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 2000s?

There are many others, some of which may even have affected you. If you regret missing an opportunity, let go of thinking about what you missed and leave the past behind where it belongs. The opportunity *you* need to say yes to that can shape your future could well be right in front of you, complete with the noes! If you thought there wouldn't be any noes associated with the opportunity to move ahead, think again! Remember, getting yes starts when *you* say yes!

Not much good can happen for you unless you're open to it. If you believe nothing works except what you're doing, that's all you can ever hope to attain. Using that line to prove they're not cut out for greater success makes people hide behind the so-called security of their job, happy with it or not. It's simply a false belief. Fortunately, it can be changed.

When an opportunity presents itself, people who accept their lot in life and are used to following the crowd, often feel as if they have no choice but to turn it down. They believe risktakers are destined to lose. Perhaps they've conditioned themselves to focus on negative results. Seldom focusing on the positive, the news media usually creates dramatic headlines out of failures and setbacks. By the time people reach adulthood, it's easier to believe in negatives than positives—noes rather than yeses.

Test it out for yourself. The next time you see someone you haven't seen in a while, notice, first, the clues their appearance offers: are they slogging along looking down, or standing tall, radiating enthusiasm? Sincerely ask how things are going. If they seem excited about life, stop and think about your initial reaction. Are you asking yourself, "What are they hiding?"

Or are they moaning and groaning about the economy, how tough and unfair things are at work, and how life just isn't going their way? Can you relate to that? Have you ever said, "I know what you mean"? Have you ever looked askance at happy, successful people?

What if you could change your life by changing your outlook? *What if* success is made up more of attitude rather than aptitude? *What if* yeses come after noes? *What if* all you had to do was ask "What if...?" to any life-enhancing idea you can think of? What if you make the decision to take the steps required to take full advantage of an idea, and go on your way toward accomplishing your dream or objective?

Many who've been harboring a negative focus and perspective and have never asked themselves about the possibilities for improvement, at first find this hard to believe. Others give it a brief try, only to drop the ball, quitting at the first no. That's the problem—they *tried*. They didn't honestly *do* what they said they were going to do. Doing is the only thing that makes things happen. Trying doesn't work. They didn't stay with it. Their life has been a series of quitting episodes—quitting on themselves, their families, and others. They let a little two-letter word, no, stop them. Imagine that!

Yet there are people all over the world who are living the life they want. They started their journey, often with much less going for them than you or I, essentially with one simple question: What if I really could change my life for the better by not letting no stop me?

Avoid the Anything’s-Possible Trap—Press On!

Wouldn’t it be great to win the lottery? Can you see yourself being more successful?

Have you ever been asked those questions? More importantly, have you ever asked them of yourself? What answers did you come up with? Many people who never seem to move ahead, halfheartedly say, shrugging their shoulders with resignation, “Anything’s possible.” For them it’s just words they’ve heard before from others who are in the same boat. They passively take whatever comes their way, afraid to face no and gain a better life.

The problem is, that attitude leaves the future strictly to luck—up in the air, as they say. No action is required on their behalf, since they believe it wouldn’t do any good anyway. Do you believe whatever good or bad luck comes your way largely determines the life you lead? If so, be of good cheer. If you’re not where you want to be, you could be about to change your own luck. Sound good?

“Success is connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.”

—CONRAD HILTON

Imagine standing at the edge of an enormous field where it is well-known that a rare coin worth \$100,000 is out there somewhere. You look at the vast expanse and decide you’d have to be extremely lucky to find *anything* in a field this big, and dismiss the idea of looking for it.

Or perhaps you’re a collector who sees the coin as the crowning touch to your collection. You make a grid of the field and focus, one at a time, on small sections, moving onto

the next one only after you've completely searched every inch of the one beneath your feet. Your focus is on finding the coin—*no matter what*.

Given a choice, who would you say stands the better chance of success? Who is luck going to favor? No doubt, you can see a marked difference in the attitude that could either stifle or perpetuate success, and how the lack of clarity could negatively affect the outcome. If so, perhaps you need to change your thinking about how taking consistent action can stack the odds in your favor.

If you live life noncommittally, the waves of change and other's agendas dash you as they will. It's as if you're a fragile tree in the wind, breaking when the turbulence of change overpowers you. Many feel like they're on an endless treadmill. But rather than continuing with the grind, they need to focus on what they really want.

Visualize your objective clearly and believe "this is doable as long as I keep going." Refuse the idea that success is luck or a mere chance happening. See yourself never giving up. Seek out tools and people who can help you achieve your goal.

You no longer allow the things that used to distract you get in your way. You no longer make excuses either. As you buy into yes and your ability to achieve it, your determination and motivation increase. When you get a no, or when things don't go exactly according to plan, you learn, adjust, and go at it again, rather than surrendering in defeat. You see far too many who let no snatch their dream, and you're committed to not letting no determine your future. You have one life to live and you're going to live it—with vigor and enthusiasm. No doesn't stop you anymore, and you're certain you'll grow into attracting the yeses that shape your future.

You're committed to always going the extra mile—no matter what it takes—rather than doing the bare minimum. You've bought into your potential for yes, rather than selling out to no. That simple change can take you from making a living, to living a life of more adventure and accomplishment.