

## **'NO,' is a complete sentence.**

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor  
Wednesday, 29 August 2012 15:02

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I have a quote for you that I just LOVE!

“Don’t let anybody make you do something you do not want to do. Don’t allow someone to utter **‘yes’** for you while you’re still undecided (say “I’ll think about it”). And do not allow anyone to ever tell you that “ **No**” is not enough. It is.

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Saying no is a right we all have. Use it.”

- Anne Lamott

Don’t you just love that quote?

I know I do, because sometimes we need to learn how to say “NO” and then leave it there.

I used to be in the habit of saying ‘yes’ to people and to things that I really didn’t want to do. I

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would say yes because of either the fear of retaliation, rejection or revenge.

Some people have a way of trying to make you feel guilty; as if you are obligated to do things for them or with them and if you don't you had better watch out if you know what's best for you.

We see it in relationships all the time; personal, business, Corporate America, politics and society. There are people out here who will take advantage of these relationships to get you to say 'yes' all the time, even when a 'NO' is required or justified.

Isn't it a bit cowardice, but masked as strategic, to say 'yes' to somebody or something because you fear what they will do to you? Yeah, maybe it does help with temporary self-preservation, but doesn't that make you a victim and them your long-term bully?

Let's face it!

Do you remember the movie 'Life' with Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence?

Ray Gibson (Murphy) and Claude Banks (Lawrence) are two guys from New York who were sent to prison for a crime they didn't commit in 1932 and are polar opposites. Ray is a small-time hustler and petty thief, and Claude has just been accepted for a job as a bank teller, trying to make something of himself. After having gone to prison, there is a memorable scene between Ray and Claude and another inmate named Goldmouth. In that scene, it was lunchtime and Goldmouth asks Claude for his cornbread. The scene was funny for sure, but it was the message that Ray delivered that was the most meaningful.

Check the exchange below:

**Goldmouth:** *Hey! You gon' eat yo' cornbread?*

**Claude Banks:** *You talkin' to \*me\*?*

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**Rayford Gibson:** *Yeah, I think he's talkin' to you.*

**Claude:** *Uh, no. Not at all; I want you to have it. Uh, Willie, you mind passin' this down to-*

**Ray:** *Hey, no, don't pass your cornbread to him. That's your cornbread.*

**Claude:** *Ray, I'm a grown man, okay, I'm not gonna eat this cornbread, if he wants the cornbread, he can have the cornbread!*

**Ray:** *No no, if he wants some cornbread, let him go up to the front and get his own portion of cornbread, that's your cornbread.*

**Ray:** *Hey, man he gonna eat his cornbread, all right? [to Goldmouth]*

**Claude:** *Ray, look, I don't need you to take up for me, I'm all right, I'm a grown man, I can handle this.*

**Ray:** *If you let him have your cornbread, you're gonna be ironin' his drawers and clippin' his toenails.*

Whoa!

Many of us don't even realize that we are setting ourselves up for the okey-doke by saying 'yes' to any and everything; not even thinking about the future consequences. Claude was trying to be nice by saying 'yes', but Ray knew what the consequences of saying 'yes' would do to him. Ray jumped in and said 'NO' and ended up having to fight Goldmouth.

Although Goldmouth beat his butt pretty good, it was Ray's response after the beating that I find the most relevant and fascinating. In a tremendous amount of pain, Ray looks at Claude and says, "He ain't gettin' my cornbread, Claude!"

In other words, he was willing to say 'NO' and have a conviction about something, even if it hurts. I have very little respect for the majority of 'yes' people. They have no backbone or conviction about themselves and tend to come across as weak, people pleasers, who will never be leaders; only followers.

It takes guts to say 'NO' and mean it. Anyone who knows me, knows that 'NO' is a healthy part of my vocabulary. And I don't say 'NO' just to say it; there is normally thought put into it or a conviction behind it. Some people say 'NO' because they are haters or because they just want to be a difficult dissenter. Those folks are spineless as well.

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Don't be afraid to do you and be you. Don't be afraid to make a decision and stick to it. And most importantly, incorporate 'NO' into your vocabulary, you might just feel a little bit more empowered once you do.

Besides, 'NO' is a complete sentence.

Jeffrey L. Boney is Associate Editor for the Houston Forward Times newspaper, a Next Generation Project Fellow and a dynamic, international speaker. Jeffrey is the Founder and CEO of the Texas Business Alliance and is an experienced entrepreneur and business development strategist. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at [jboney1@texasbusinessalliance.org](mailto:jboney1@texasbusinessalliance.org)

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