



# PETRA PROCESS

HOW TO SAY 'NO'



## HOW TO SAY 'NO'

### LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

A few months ago, while stopping for a burrito before heading to my airport gate, I realized I needed a "Yes" intervention.

The gal behind the counter asked, "Rice?"

I said, "Yeah, sure."

"Black beans?"

"Okay."

"Chicken?"

"Sounds good."

"Lettuce, tomatoes and onions?"

"Yea, why not."

"Pico?"

"Sure."

"Jalapenos, cilantro, black olives and sour cream?"

"Yes, please."

The burrito lady looked down at the pile that was my burrito. She took a deep breath and attempted to roll. She was on the last rotation when...the tortilla gave up. If only I would have said no to the sour cream and the jalapenos.

It was then I had an epiphany: If I didn't learn how to say 'no' in other areas of my life, work mostly, I would burst at the seams, just like my tortilla.

"No" is one syllable with two letters, but despite its size, many, including me, are scared of it for three main reasons. 1) We don't want to disappoint, 2) we don't want to miss out an opportunity and, 3) we don't want to seem selfish.



The truth is, when you don't say no, you're doing those three things by default. Let's break it down:

**\*Disappoint-** If you're a chronic yesser, you can't whole-heartedly honor your existing commitments. You've become approachable but not reliable. You can't focus on the yesses you actually care about like your daughter's book report you agreed to help her with (or the spicy corn pico de gallo you truly wanted in your burrito) because you also agreed to speak at your friend's event (or to extra sour cream). When you're stretched to thin, you disappoint everyone.

**\*Miss out-** Let's say you actually muster up the resolve to just say no to your friend's guest speaker plea. You may miss out on meeting new business contacts or catered finger food, but isn't that better than missing out on quality time with your daughter?

*But Andy, I could do both. I don't have to say no.*

It's about quality. Sure you may be able to do it all, but you can't do it all well, all the time. You have to prioritize and create a work/life balance. When you do say yes, you want it to mean you'll be able to dedicate time, presence and focus to your commitment.

**\*Selfish-** Overachievers are programmed to be team players who are there to help out. So, when you say no, it feels like you're letting down the team or handing off work to someone else.

Here's another way to think about it: when you say no to that speaking opportunity, you're giving someone else the opportunity to say yes. Better yet, you can even suggest a colleague who would deliver a great presentation and has been waiting for the occasion to gain speaking experience. Similarly, you can decline the sour cream so the next person in line, who loves sour cream, can get a second helping.

After my burrito epiphany, I challenged myself to say no three times over the next 30 days. They had to be substantial nos, not just burrito-line nos.

To chart my course, and realize my priorities, I created a list. Instead of a traditional one-column to-do list, I formed a three-column start, stop, continue list. This way, I'd know what type of opportunities to say yes to, based on what activities or behaviors I'd decided to start or continue.

Long story short, I met my goal. I said no three times.

Guess what? The world didn't stop spinning. Contrarily, my world became more balanced. I was able to focus on the important, not just the urgent. I was able to say yes to those opportunities that were in line with my priorities, and everyone that I interacted with were better for it.

My advice for leaders, and my children, heading into 2013... "Just say no."

# THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

**The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.**

## **Looking to change your business life - forever?**

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

*Andy Bailey is lead entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra and serves as the Entrepreneur Organization's global membership director. Visit his blog at [www.petracoach.com](http://www.petracoach.com) for more business and leadership insight.*

### **PETRA COACH**

342 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 203, Franklin, TN 37067 | 615.601.0542  
[www.petracoach.com](http://www.petracoach.com) | [www.facebook.com/petracoach](https://www.facebook.com/petracoach)

