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"Go for it now. The future is promised to no one."

» Wayne Dyer



Yes, That's a Problem

A frustrated middle-manager recently shared comments that highlighted problems with certain types of "Yes Men" and "Yes Women."

When most folks hear those descriptions, they think of people who always jump to agree with whatever statement the boss floats by them.

In this case, the manager she referenced is a different kind of "Yes Man." He's a super guy.

He's upbeat, sincere, and supportive.

You really couldn't ask to work with or for a nicer person.

He does have a recurring habit, however, that creates problems for their team.

This manager is not adept at all at saying, "No."

Anytime someone comes to him with a request, suggestion, or idea he tends to give a quick, "Sure!", or "That's a great idea! We need to do that."

Her half-joking theory is that he is a salesperson at heart and salespeople are always thinking, "Yes!" There may be something to that.



If a Tree Falls...

There were things I did less of in 2020. Walking is not one of them. My regular route is a sidewalk along a creek near our neighborhood.

Sadly, invasive vines have taken over trees on at least a half mile of that walk. A large percentage of the trees have become completely encased. Many are clearly in stress, and some are already dead.

From a distance, they look green. When you get closer, however, you often see what amounts to a tree skeleton supporting nonindigenous vines.

The city's lawn maintenance crews don't maintain the trees along the creek. (The alligators may have something to do with that.)

I complained about the situation (the vines, not the alligators) on a walk with my wife, and she suggested I call the city.

As I began to do that, I reflected on how all we ever hear is how tight government budgets are. It's not likely they'd do anything.

So, I'd whine, feel like I did something, and then continue to watch the vines kill those nice trees along the creek.

Positive people tend to think that anything they are asked to do or accomplish is doable. Confidence in your abilities is a positive, right?

He may believe that agreeing to all requests is inspirational. In practice, however, the opposite often plays out.

When leaders imply commitment to things they are not actually committed to, and therefore not likely to happen, credibility is lost.

Team members may still like that leader. They simply learn to discount many of the things he or she commits to making happen.

Now, I'm not suggesting that "No" should be the immediate answer to requests or ideas brought to a leader.

If that's the case, folks tend to stop bringing them ideas.

In practice, however, saying "Yes" to everything means being committed to few things.

I suggested to my friend that she be patient with that manager and privately hint to him now and then that it's okay to acknowledge a suggestion without instantly committing to it.

I joked that if he has trouble saying "No," maybe he can learn, "Not now," or "Maybe later."

Good intentions are nice.

Encouragement is fantastic.

Habitually overcommitting, however, is not.

Always strive to be positive and encouraging to others.

In uncertain times, however, it is more important than ever that your team can be certain you say what you mean and mean what you say.

Frustrated one day, I grabbed a hand lopper from my garage and took it on my walk. Every now and then (when no one was around), I'd step into the weeds and cut vines at their base.

Over the next couple of weeks, I smiled as I began seeing vines in the treetops shriveling and tree leaves breaking out.

I reflected on how long it would take to do a half mile of clearing. Then, I realized, hey...a half mile starts with a few feet. If I can't finish, well...I can't finish. But the results on those initial few trees inspired me.

I was soon loading our truck with tools and taking an hour every week or so to fight for "my trees."

I eventually realized that if I wore similar looking clothes to the local yard crews, I didn't look like the crazy jogger with gardening tools.

My wife was concerned I'd "get caught." I suggested that would be like getting caught picking up trash in a park. I think I'm on solid ground here.

It's become a project that motivates me. It seemed far too big for one person, until it didn't. Some weeks, I get a lot done. Some weeks, I don't.

Lots of worthwhile projects seem too big until you decide that they aren't.

Most of us have personal or professional challenges that might currently seem insurmountable.

Maybe they are. Maybe they aren't.

Start with small steps if necessary...but start. Even if you come up short of your most audacious goals, you'll find inspirational victories along the journey.

"Replace fear with gratitude and the whole world changes."

» Terri Guillemets

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