

On saying “no”

One of the hardest words to say in the English language is “no.” It’s as hard to say as it is to hear ... sometimes harder. Given my druthers, I’d say yes all the time. Most people would. It makes us feel good when we please others. But you and I both know that’s not realistic — it’s not always the right thing to do. Somebody has to periodically say no, and I got elected.

When you come to me with a request, an idea, or something else you feel is important, you usually have the luxury of focusing strictly on your issue. I, on the other hand, am stuck with a much bigger picture to look at and evaluate. I have to ask questions like: Can we afford it? How will it affect the work to be done and our priorities? How will it impact other people? Will it be consistent with what I’ve done with others? What if everybody had the same request? and so on. And what may seem like one simple issue to you may be one of many competing requests or other good ideas I’ve received that day. You have no way of knowing that ... but I sure do. And I feel bad when I do say no and you walk away disappointed, angry, or both.

So please keep this in mind: I will say yes whenever I can. It certainly won’t be every time, but I’ll do my best to strike a balance between yeas and nays. And I sure would appreciate it if you’d give me the benefit of the doubt and assume I’m motivated by what’s best for *everyone*, because I am. That includes saying no to someone else at times when their request would be unfair to *you*.

Don’t like the word “no”?

Try walking awhile in *my* shoes.