

SPARK 086

(Matrix Code: **SPARK086.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: Saying YES is a lie unless you are also fully able to say NO.

NOTES: The childhood defense strategy of being “nice” or being “invisible” may have permitted you to survive, but you are no longer a child, and merely surviving does no honor to the glorious gift of having a human life to live. Pretending to be invisible in adulthood has dire consequences. If you represent yourself as “harmless” then it is also unlikely that you can produce clear decisions, take leadership actions, create unprecedented opportunities, or communicate honestly about what you feel and what you want or don’t want. Being “nice” puts you into the role of a permanent victim. It is true that Western culture needs hoards of powerless “nice” victims to enact its well-structured roles, live out predictable lives, and consume what you are supposed to consume. But *you* do not have to be one of those victims. You could make another choice.

You could choose to step fully into the center of authority for your own life. From this center there are no excuses *for anything*. Circumstances provide you no shelter from choosing amongst endless possibilities. Every option is available and every choice is yours to make. The choices are simple: yes or no. “Yes? Or no?” Taking back the authority for your life is one thing. Being able to choose between “yes” and “no” is another thing entirely. This is because in order to choose “yes” you must also have the real option of choosing “no,” and in order to choose “no” you must first be rooted in your feelings, specifically the feeling of anger.

Modern culture teaches you that there are “positive” feelings and there are “negative” feelings. The culture says that “positive” feelings like joy and happiness are “good feelings,” and “negative” feelings like fear, sadness and anger are “bad feelings.” The system of classifying feelings as positive or negative and good or bad is so ubiquitous that pointing it out seems at first absurd. Only when you look with fresh eyes can you see that the mental map of good / bad, positive / negative feelings could be the greatest deception promulgated by modern Western culture. Without much effort you can discover that beneath the cultural myth feelings are actually neither good nor bad, neither positive nor negative. Feelings are feelings, a vast neutral resource of energy and intelligence essential for leading a satisfying mature adult life.

You may think that you can already say “no.” But consider that an intellectual “no” not backed by the immediately-available consciously-directed 100% maximum archetypal feeling of anger is like a knight without a sword trying to enter the dragon’s lair to rescue a maiden: not very effective. If mere thinking decides the “no” then when a better reason is offered the chameleon-like mind adopts new logic and suddenly you have bought yourself an unneeded vacuum cleaner, made a questionable investment, or gone out on a date with someone you don’t really want to know better.

Any “yes” that is not sponsored by an alert and activated arsenal of nuclear rage poised to deliver a “no” if necessary is a false “yes.” Any “yes” is a lie if you do not have the true ability to also choose “no.” The proof will be if you can hold your “no” in challenging circumstances such as when everyone else at the meeting agrees to something else, when your children have an opposing desire, when your spouse or parents threaten an emotional outburst, or when your “no” would reveal the corruption of your colleague, your boss, your company or your country. It is in those times that your “no” will be put to the true test.

EXPERIMENTS:

You receive little training in how to represent a “no” that carries consequences. Your children out-think you, your parents or neighbors invade your privacy, your destiny outruns you, and extraordinary love slips through your fingers like fog. Effective “no” saying is a responsible skill that does not succeed through threats of destruction or violence. Your experiment is to further develop your mature “no” saying skills. Prepare yourself in three steps.

SPARK086.01 Ask individual friends or colleagues to give you feedback and coaching about how you say “no.” This only takes a couple of minutes each time. Have them give you a command such as, “Raise your right hand,” “Sit there and be quiet,” or, “Give me your wallet.” Whatever they tell you, your job is to say, “no.” Each time you say “no” ask them to give you feedback about what happened and coaching about what to change to say a better “no” next time. Their feedback should include your tone of voice, where you put your attention, the quality of your eye contact, and how your communication lands in their body. Did they really perceive your “no” or not? No matter how many times you practice you will keep getting valuable feedback and coaching because it is impossible to say “no” perfectly.

SPARK086.02 Reserve a time when you can be alone in your bedroom. Tell others that you will be doing some loud rage work and you will be fine; you will be done in a few minutes. Then lie down on your bed, close your eyes and hook into your rocket fuel. Squeeze your toes and fists into tight balls until your rage comes up your arms, legs and spine into your voice and start shouting “NO!” for no reason. Do not hurt yourself AND let your body experiment with fully expressing maximum archetypal rage. Let your body move. Do not mix any other feelings like fear or sadness in with the anger. Separate your feelings from each other and express only pure anger. If you notice pictures or memories coming into your mind’s eye you may wish to use additional words, such as, “Stop that you (blankity-blank)! That is not okay with me! It is over! This will never happen again! This is none of your business! This is my space, my body, and my life! Stay out!” Shouting these words is fine in this practice exercise. Just be sure that the words come from your body rather than from your mind. Go and go until the flood stops by itself, up to three minutes at a time, three times a week, for three months. Going through this three-month process will change your relationship to the feeling of anger forever.

SPARK086.03 Now try it in real life. Once a day say “no” to someone about something. You do not need to shout. Just have the shout ready. Whether it is to the religious witnesses knocking at your door, to your older child scaring your younger

child, to your neighbor who wants to borrow more money, or to your partner who fills your intimate moments with gossip about somebody who is not there, say “no.” Be steadfast in your decision. “The answer is no.” Face consequences with your sword of clarity in hand. Feel the anger out of which your boundary flows, *and*, do not be subsumed by the anger. Ride anger like a surfer. Get to your destination and then get off the wave. Let the wave of feelings crash harmlessly against the shore. Stay in contact with your partner and do not get hit by their recoil. Also practice saying “no” in other forms. For example, walk out of a movie you do not want to see and ask for your money back. Leave the house when you know an abusive alcoholic will be coming home. Negotiate a cheaper price for your car repair or your health insurance. Ask for what you want.