

# Life Notes

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## **Commitments: Knowing when to say “yes” and when to say “no”**

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Before I hired a life coach I had a difficult time saying “no” to requests people made of me. Even if I wasn’t interested in or didn’t have time to take on extra obligations I would feel guilty if I said “no.” When I said “yes” and didn’t want to, I’d be angry, frustrated and feel cornered.

Coaching helped me identify my values, a set of principles at the core of who I am. When we live in alignment with our values we are satisfied and happy. In instances when we are out of sync with our values there is discontent and disconnect. We don’t like being forced to do something we don’t value and, consequently, don’t do it well.

Values are not morals or beliefs. They are principles, guideposts we are born with and have shaped through life experience. Clues to recognizing your values are found in knowing what gives you joy and in identifying who you are being when you are at your best.

For example, if you know, “I’m at my best when I’m with family;” or “I’m happiest outdoors;” or “When I’m being productive; organized; or creative...” you probably value family; or being in touch with nature; accomplishment...organization...or creativity. Being with family and engaged in activities with family helps that value flourish. If you are separated from family or don’t have healthy family relationships you are in disconnect with that value and discontent shows up in your life. Similarly, if you value a strong connection with nature, a hunting or fishing hobby or work outdoors allows you to honor that value. You would be restless in a desk job or begrudge attending too many indoor events. If forced to work indoors, you may not bring your best to the job.

What does this have to do with saying no? Well, when you are clear on what you value, you can say yes to the things that honor your values and no to things that don’t. It is that easy! You don’t feel guilty because you are clear about doing what is most important to you. In this day of many obligations, others will respect you for knowing what you can and cannot say yes to. Here’s an example from my own experience. The second year of serving on a committee I was asked to be the chairperson. I truthfully responded, “What I see in this committee is a need to do menial tasks. While I know those tasks have to get done, I value opportunity to use my creativity, and my ability to look at the bigger picture. If the committee wants to broaden its vision and go in a direction of growth, I’d be happy to serve on it, otherwise, I’d like to put my energy elsewhere.” WOW! I felt so great for standing in my own truth! There was no need for guilt. By being honest I gave them an answer to their immediate request. They knew what to count on me for in the

future as well as what I was not interested in helping with.

I invite you to take an assessment of what brings you joy. What inspires you to be your best? Create a platform in your mind of those things that you need to be happy—really happy at your core. When you are asked in upcoming weeks if you will do this, or volunteer for that, check in with yourself. Does the thought of doing it fire you up? Does it feel like a ball and chain? Be clear with yourself before the call comes. If a request honors your values, say “Yes.” Otherwise, say “No.” Clarity around your values impacts all corners of your life. Living in sync with who you are feels great. You decide what that takes. It’s your life!

It’s nice chatting with you. I’ll be back next month, but if you’d like to learn more about life coaching or discovering a more compelling life, visit my website at [www.lifesongcoaching.com](http://www.lifesongcoaching.com), or give me a call at 218-327-2691. We’ll make a plan!



*Life Notes* is a monthly submission to the Floodwood, MN, **Northern Independent**, and a newsletter to Life Song Coaching clients & potential clients. Contact Bonnie Henriksen, CPCC, at the above web address to request future copies of *Life Notes*.