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EXCEPTIONAL LAWYERS DELIVERING EXPERT SERVICES - SECOND QUARTER 2013

3 Ways to Say No - by Emily Schwartz



As a busy attorney, you already have a lot on your plate. The problem is you keep finding more tasks heaped onto your to-do list before you've finished the ones that are already there! This is especially true if you have difficulty saying "no." Helping out is great, and if we had unlimited time and resources, we could surely assist everyone around us! However, your schedule capacity is limited and there simply aren't enough hours in the day to be everything to everyone. When a client or someone in your office asks you for help, ask yourself these three questions:

1. ***"Am I the right person to help?"*** - Just because you have the ability to help people, doesn't mean you should every time. If you help once, you've instantly become the one who will help next time too, even if their needs align much more closely with someone else's job description. It feels good to be the hero, but if you're not the right person for the task, find the person who is!
2. ***"Can I help this person help themselves?"*** - In the short term, it's easier and takes less time to complete a task for someone. However, in the long term, it makes more sense to teach them how to do it themselves. This concept is easy in theory, but when you're swamped with

work, it's difficult to justify the extra time required to teach rather than do. Think of it as an investment that will pay off later. Not only will you have helped this person in a far more meaningful way, but you won't be "on call" the next time this task arises!

3. **"Do I have time to help this person?"** - Ultimately, we can only assist a limited number of people in the 24 hours we have available each day. Even though we know our schedule is full, sometimes we say "yes" anyway because we don't want to let the other person down. Again, in the short term this is fine, but in the long term we just end up making promises we can't fulfill. It's far better to be honest with people upfront and allow them time to find another resource, rather than overcommitting yourself. Say something like, "I want so badly to help you, but I know I won't be able to give this the time and attention it deserves right now."

Remember, learning to say "no" isn't about turning people away, it's about reserving enough time to help the people you already told "Yes."

Emily Schwartz is a national time management consultant and the author of [The Time Diet: Digestible Time Management](#). Check out her blog at www.TheTimeDiet.org

E S Q



Why Tell People "Why?" - by Deborah Johnson

A few years ago, I worked on a criminal case in which a veterinarian was accused of punching a small dog, resulting in the dog's eye popping out. The client kept saying to everyone, "I couldn't have punched the dog. I couldn't have punched the dog." When I finally asked the all-important question "why" he said, "Have you ever seen a Chihuahua skull?" "No," I said. He then brought in an actual skull: translucent, about the size of a baseball, fragile like paper Mache, with huge eye sockets. He was a large guy with big, beefy hands. Then he proceeded to ball up his fist and held it next to that tiny skull. He poignantly said, "If I had hit that dog, it would be dead." Bingo! Nothing but net. The jury found him not guilty. Yet, without that subtle but significant "why" it might have gone very differently for him.

Not giving our listener the "why" happens more than you think in conversations and presentations. We get in such a hurry to move along, multi-task, and "make it happen," that we sometimes cut to the bottom line too fast. This leaves our listener out in the cold. They say to themselves, "How did you get to that conclusion; what does that mean to me; how come I'm not getting what I want; where is this going; or what am I supposed to do?" My husband does home repair and remodeling. On a daily basis his customers ask for all sorts of possible and impossible things – like a water heater someplace on the 2nd floor. In an instant my husband can evaluate the situation and come up with an answer. Sometimes the answer is "No we can't do that." That kind of terse answer would get him a sour look or a huff or even a loud complaint from his customer. Luckily he's great at backtracking in his mind and saying, "We can't do that because a water heater is too big to get up through the landing on your stairway." Suddenly the customer nods and smiles. Same bottom line, different reaction.

Parents are experts at instantly getting to the bottom line. "Hey dad, can I go to the drive-in Friday night?" In a nanosecond the reply is "No!" When what he was actually thinking was "No, because I love you very much. I don't know who you're going with. I don't know who will be driving you home very late at night." Same bottom line, different reaction. So the "why" of why bother telling people your "why" is simple. By taking just a minute to slow down, back up, think about it, and give your listener that critical "why" you accomplish three important things:

1. You give your listener context to understand how you arrived at a given conclusion or decision
2. You build a sense of trust and enrich your relationships
3. You actually save time because you don't have to backtrack and clean up potential bad feelings, misunderstandings, or errors

The best way to embed this into your speaking habits is to practice every day. Why? Because every time you practice a new behavior you build up new neural pathways in your brain. The more you practice, the

easier it is to access your new behavior. Soon, you won't even have to think about it, you will be in the habit of giving your listener the "why." This in turn will automatically make your communication stronger and help you achieve the results you want.

Deborah is a six-time EMMY Award-winning writer and producer. Her Masters Degree in Cognitive Psychology and Television Production from the University of Washington, combined with a rich history of experience, gives her unique insights into what highly diverse audiences perceive and how to communicate to them effectively. She regularly works with attorneys to prepare witnesses for deposition or trial. Additionally, she prepares a wide variety of professionals for local, national and international presentations, speeches, and media interviews.



Tips on How to Network Successfully - by Frank Lopo

Treat networking like a game.

Networking is a time-honored tradition that most people apply every day without knowing it. View it as making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, even as making friends. Networking is based on the premise that we're all humans and need each other. This is as true in business as it is in other areas of your life. You may need to ask me for ideas or referrals about getting a job, but I'll gladly reciprocate because I know that at some point, I may need to call on you for something. At that point, whether the help is for me or someone else, I'll expect you to reciprocate. It's that simple. You lob the ball over the net, and it comes back to you.

Networking for a can be fun. Consider it today's answer to the lost art of conversation and its cousin, letter writing. It's all about communicating—making phone calls, conducting information interviews in person or writing letters—to learn if your contacts can refer you to anyone who might want to need your product or service.

The first step is to know what you want to do. Before you pick up the phone to begin networking, take a moment to collect your thoughts. Ask yourself, what do I want? If it's help, be specific. Do you need ideas, names or introductions? Make a list of the items that will help you stay focused during your conversation. Most people really want to help you, but first, they must understand what you want. Then they can determine how best to help you.

Realize that you, too, have something to offer.

When you're just starting out in a career or business venture, it's easy to be intimidated by the concept of networking. After all, this may be new to you and your knowledge of business may be limited, and your contacts are likely to be already established professionally. What do you have to offer that they might value and why would they make time for you?

It's simple. Most seasoned business people understand the concept of networking. They know that what goes around comes around. Everyone has had to start somewhere. We all remember the folks, who took time to counsel, guide and direct us on our first forays into the business world. It's a debt that's never really repaid, unless it's through helping someone else just starting a career.

Honor the networking code.

Another way to say this is "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." If you want to have your phone calls returned, return phone calls. If you want help with your business, you must be willing to help others.

To be a successful networker, you also must take suggestions. If someone provides a lead, idea or referral name, follow up on it, especially if the person has agreed to "pave the way" for you by making an introductory call. You aren't obligated to accept business from a referral, but you are expected to follow up. You're also expected to report back to your original contact to say thanks. During that call, you can recount your progress and ask for additional leads.

Make networking a priority.

If you're in the throes of a building your business or recharging your pipeline, your first priority should be networking. Create a list of people you know and ask them for ideas, referrals and contacts. Generate a buzz about you and your abilities, and before you know it, people will be calling you, for networking ideas.

Have a plan; evaluate your progress and your networking. If you have attended a particular event or group and your results are marginal reevaluate, why is this not working? , why is this working and how can I duplicate, what is working? Who is my ideal client? Where can I find these ideal clients, who else are my ideal clients working with? If your business is important you better know the answers to these questions. Every contact you make while working is a potential jewel in your networking crown.

Keep track of your contacts—and keep up with them.

Add their names to your business holiday card list. Call contacts occasionally to see how they're doing with no agenda other than keeping in touch. Let them know what you're up to and do a little self-promotion. This isn't the time to complain or gossip. Maybe there's something they need that you can help them with. Visualize yourself building a large bank of networking good will and making regular deposits.

Don't wait until you're desperate to network.

Networking is a lot like flossing your teeth. For it to do you any good, you have to do it regularly. Keep your network alive and well so that if and when there's a change in the wind, you're ready for it. It takes time to rev up your network's engine if it's been cold or idle for too long. You want to keep it humming so you can quickly shift into high gear. Today's market is volatile and people are changing often; jobs, business. You may need your network sooner rather than later.

Look for opportunities others might miss.

Networking is a contact sport. Networking isn't just about finding people who can help you. Sometimes the most valuable networking you can do is within your grasps. Find smaller events or volunteer for a charity. Other people might consider this a real groaner, but it's a great opportunity to meet a different group of people, or perhaps a network contact is offering a lunch and learn to a local organization. Not only can you learn from this presentation, but you'll be providing him or her with support and building a bond for the future. You'll also be adding new contacts to your network.

Ask permission to use a name.

Suppose you visited a contact to conduct an information interview—a short, friendly question-and-answer session designed to help you learn more about a profession or company. Your contact gives you the names of several referrals. Before you leave, ask permission to use your contact's name as the original source. He or she may want to contact the referrals first, which will make your calls proceed more smoothly. But the main reason for asking permission is courtesy. When you mention names, you're capitalizing on your contact's rank and reputation within the business world, so you want to make sure you have his or her knowledge and approval. Print out a one page document telling someone what you do, how to send you referrals, what is a great referral with all your contact information. This is an effective reference tool.

Never underestimate the power of a thank-you note.

If a busy business person takes time to meet you and assist with your business, acknowledge the help you receive with a handwritten note. This lets him or her know that you understand and appreciate his or her effort and contribution. It also allows you to provide a short progress report and feedback about the referrals. Last but not least, it paves the way for future contact.

Remember that you're never too old or successful to network.

Don't think that business people or others in authority positions are uninterested or unreachable. Also most people want to help you grow your business, one thing most of us forget to do is ask. They may be isolated and appreciate the chance to impart wisdom or learn something new from another professional. And when you reach a pinnacle of your own career, remember to keep your network fresh and alive. It is fun, plus you never know when it may come in handy.

The Goal of ESQ - by Frank Lopo

ESQ is about peers helping peers grapple, wrestle and come out on top with sound solutions to serious and significant business obstacles and, most importantly, new business opportunities. To provide a quality referral partner in areas of law that is non-competitive. Our membership **community** has experience with a wide variety of issues such as:

- Business development
- Cultivate a group of de facto advisors in different fields of law
- Working with other referral Attorneys
- Risk-taking
- Finding the most effective personnel for your organization
- Strategic planning
- Get different perspectives on current legal issues
- Implementing new technologies

This can only be accomplished in a couple of ways: First, show up for the monthly meeting ready to engage and be engaged. Bring your questions regarding current issues, ideas of how we can bring more value to on another. Second, set up meetings with each individual member outside the meeting to make a deeper connection on how to provide referrals and how you would like to get referrals. Or develop and identify solid referral partners that you could introduce the other member to, that are already in your network.

The one constant I hear from attorneys and other professionals is I refer a bunch of business to so and so and I never get anything back. A couple of things to define, first, what is a "bunch of business" . . . 1 client a year, 2 clients a week? The other question is how do you know so and so is not sending you back referrals? In my experience about 30% of the time at the initial consult the prospective client for whatever reason has a struggle remembering how they got our information, eventually they do remember, my thinking is once they trust us they are open to share.

So the goal with ESQ is simple this is an Attorney Networking group with the purpose of helping one another grow our business through referrals. And the best way to do that is to share our experience with one another; this requires simple participation from all of us. And the other goal is ESQ is providing you value, if you feel like you are not getting value please speak up in the meeting and ask your fellow members to help, offer suggestions, engage.

I am excited by the results so far, and assume folks are getting value or they would not continue to attend each month. Please give me some feedback on your ESQ experience so far, this could be a great story for the next newsletter.

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