



**This Is Your Life Podcast**  
Season 6, Episode 4  
Published: November 30, 2015

Michael Hyatt

**Michele Cushatt:** Hi, and welcome to *This Is Your Life* with Michael Hyatt, where our goal is to help you win at work and succeed at life. My name is Michele Cushatt. I'm in the studio today with Michael Hyatt. Hey there, Michael.

**Michael Hyatt:** Hey, Michele. Good morning.

**Michele:** Good morning. How are you?

**Michael:** Or afternoon or whatever time this is.

**Michele:** Yeah. One of my biggest struggles in life, whether it's work or family or relationships, is finding the courage to say a certain two-letter word: *No*. I have such a hard time.

**Michael:** *No* is a hard word.

**Michele:** It's a very hard word to say. You would think that because it's so short it would just roll off our tongues.

**Michael:** I know. It is a complete sentence, however.

**Michele:** It is a complete sentence, but it's very hard. I think there's a part of me that doesn't want to let anybody down. I want to be a *yes* person. I want to be able to fulfill every request, but it's not possible. We all struggle with the word *no*, at least the vast majority of us. It's not easy. Have you ever had difficulty? I say this laughing because I know you. Have you ever struggled with saying no?

**Michael:** Yeah, I'm a recovering people pleaser.

**Michele:** Right there with you. I think we could probably form a support group.

**Michael:** I hate to disappoint anybody, so if somebody asks me for my help, my heart is to say yes. Now that's half of the equation. The other half of the equation is fear of missing out,

FOMO. So somebody invites me to do something and it's like, "Oh, I don't really have the time. I don't have the space to do that in my calendar, but man, I hate to miss out. What if something important happens?"

**Michele:** What if something big happens and you're not there?

**Michael:** What if I never get invited to speak there again?

**Michele:** See, that's a big one. I think if I don't say yes, then I may never get a request again.

**Michael:** So FOMO and the desire to please people are the two motivations that really drive that, I think, for most people.

**Michele:** Now I've also seen, though, over... I don't know how many years we've been working together now, but several, probably seven years off and on. I've seen you develop a very good ability to be able to set good boundaries and say no, and you're able to do it without needing to do a one-hour explanation of why, and you don't seem to feel as guilty about it, at least not on the outside. So I assume you've developed a process that you use to help you say no.

**Michael:** Definitely a process, and I think a shift in mindset. I woke up one morning with my calendar completely overcommitted and realized, "You know what? I'm saying no all the time; I'm just saying no to the wrong people. By saying yes to everybody else, I'm saying no to myself. I'm saying no to my family. I'm saying no to the important but not urgent projects."

The important projects never beg for your time. They don't feel like you have to do them now. The urgent projects are right in your face whether they're important or not, so it's easy to say yes to those. We're always saying no to something.

**Michele:** Something, because we have to. I mean, there's a limited amount of time in each day, so it's not even possible to say yes to everything. Well, today you're going to give us eight strategies for learning how to say no, basically to say no without feeling guilty, and create more margin in our calendar. So let's dive right into it. Go ahead and give us that first strategy.

**Michael:** The first one is to acknowledge our resources are finite. I think this is hard for us, because we think we can keep accepting invitations, requests, and that somehow we have this unlimited amount of time, but the truth is I have 168 hours in a week just like you do, just like the president of the United States does, just like any world leader or famous CEO of some big company who seems to get a lot done. They have the same amount of time all of us have.

For most of us who already have a packed calendar, it's always a trade-off. In other words, we can't say yes to something else without cheating something else. It might be our sleep. I used to do that routinely early in my career.

**Michele:** I did too.

**Michael:** I thought, "Well, I'll just get up earlier" or "I'll just stay up later" or "I'll work through my lunch hour and I won't take a lunch. I'll lose weight, and it'll all be good." But it never is.

**Michele:** It doesn't work that way.

**Michael:** It doesn't work that way, no.

**Michele:** Okay, so acknowledge that our resources are finite. It sounds almost obvious or automatic but very hard for us to do.

**Michael:** Well, it's hard for us to do because usually the people who are making the request aren't consciously thinking, "Look, I know your resources are limited, and I'm asking you to make a trade-off because your calendar is already full. I'm asking you to take something else you've already said yes to, maybe yourself, maybe your family, maybe that important project, and I'm asking you to replace it with this thing I'm now requesting."

They don't go through that process, and it's not fair to ask them to do that. That's *our* work that *we* have to do, but at the same time, I think that helps me to say no, to realize that, "Look, I can't expect them to manage my calendar. I can't expect them to manage my time." That's something I have to do and my team has to do, but I have to realize that those resources are indeed limited and when they're gone, they're gone. When they're exhausted, they're exhausted.

**Michele:** Absolutely, and you can't recover them without margin to be able to recover it. Okay, let's move on to the second strategy.

**Michael:** The second one is to determine who needs access to you and who doesn't. A lot of people act as if everybody needs the same access, so if you get a text message or an email... It doesn't matter who it's from. If it's from your spouse or your child or your coworker or somebody who's merely an acquaintance on social media, that somehow...

**Michele:** That they should all have the same...

**Michael:** Yeah, that they should have the same access. I mean, that's just unreasonable on its face. It doesn't make sense.

**Michele:** The heart behind it... I want to be very accessible to people, and my heart wants to do that because I care about people, but it's not realistic.

**Michael:** There are certain people out there who make themselves available, put themselves out there, and kind of create the illusion or, even worse, the expectation that they're accessible. I'm sure, by the way, I inadvertently do that even on my blog by the fact that I'm on social media. People feel like they have a certain familiarity with me and access to me, and then they're surprised when they can't get to me. That's just the nature of things.

I have 260,000-plus followers on Twitter, and I can't give access to all of those people like I give access to my family or to my team at Intentional Leadership. It's just two different things. You have to strategically make a determination what the priorities are. For me, for example, that means my family first. They're going to have primary access. They can always get to me, and I will stop what I'm doing if it's an emergency. That's reasonable. Secondly, my team at Intentional Leadership.

Beyond that team and a few extended people, good friends, I don't really want those people sending me text messages, and I tend to ignore them if they do, because I just can't. It only encourages behavior that is not sustainable for me. Same thing with email: determining who has access, who needs my direct email address. Not very many people. There are probably 30 or 40 people in the world who have access to that, because I can't go through 500 messages a day, which is what I get.

Same thing on Twitter. I get hundreds and hundreds of replies every day. Now what I *do* try to do is read through the social media ones and reply occasionally, and we'll get into that in another strategy. You just have to decide who needs access, and you have to make the hard decision who's not going to have access or who's going to have limited access, and you can't feel guilty about that. It's by necessity.

If you're going to give yourself to the things that are important, the things that really truly matter over the long term, and ultimately so you get to the end of your life and don't look back with regrets, you're going to have to limit this access on the front end. It's going to be some tough choices. It might even make some people upset, but the truth is people who don't get this and get upset... To me, that only validates the decision I've made.

**Michele:** That's an excellent point. I recently had somebody who I only knew via social media who was in Denver and wanted to have coffee with me, which is a kind request. I was very

honored that she wanted to have coffee, but in order to have coffee with her I'd have to give up a date with my spouse. The irony is I actually felt guilty about saying no when I *should* feel guilty about even considering giving up the date with my spouse.

I wonder what the value is at this point of writing down the people you give access to, like actually jotting it down so it's very tangible in your head what that circle is or what those priorities are.

**Michael:** I don't think I've ever been that specific about it, but I have been very deliberate about who I hand out my personal email address to. The problem is that here and there in a weak moment I'll give out my direct address, and inadvertently... By the way, this is sometimes me just protecting myself from me.

This morning, for example, I got a text message from somebody I had played golf with months, maybe years ago. I'd given them my cell phone, so now all of a sudden they sent me a text this morning. I couldn't even remember who the person was until he jogged my memory. He's making a request. The problem is if you can get to me, I'll probably say yes, so I've built this up because I have this propensity to say yes.

**Michele:** Almost an impulse, which I get. I have that impulse. I just want to say yes.

**Michael:** So I want to create a pause...

**Michele:** I think that's a very good way to say it.

**Michael:** So I can really be thoughtful. If I can have somebody run interference for me, that's helpful. Again, we'll get into that in another strategy. To your point, I think having a list of people who are sort of your inner circle, the people you're going to give direct access to, probably could be very helpful.

**Michele:** Yeah, it creates that pause, which we'll talk about more in a little bit. Okay, let's move on to the next strategy. So far we've talked about acknowledge that your resources are finite, and second, determine who needs access to you and who doesn't. What's the third strategy?

**Michael:** Well, this is really practical, and this is something I've done. I have two email addresses. I have a private email address, and only that inner circle I'm talking about can get to me at that address. That's where my family communicates with me. That's where my staff communicates with me. That's where, frankly, people who are in my Inner Circle Mastermind can communicate with me.

That's my private, closely held, top secret email address, and that's the one I don't like to give out. The truth is I end up having to change that every couple of years because somebody replies all and it gets to a bunch of people who didn't have access before. So having a private email address is very helpful.

Then I have a public email address. For example, if you go to my blog, there is a public email address that is [michael@michaelhyatt.com](mailto:michael@michaelhyatt.com). That doesn't come directly to me. That's going to be intercepted by one of my assistants, and they're going to either reply on my behalf or if it really does require my attention, then they'll bring it to me.

**Michele:** They just help vet that out for you.

**Michael:** Yeah.

**Michele:** Again, the point is it's not that you don't have the heart to say yes, but it's not even physically possible for you to respond to 500 emails a day.

**Michael:** What would happen is they would all just languish in the inbox because I couldn't get to them, or if I *did* get to them I literally couldn't do anything else. This is a way for them to get the help they're requesting, because usually the requests are requests we've had before and somebody else can help point them in the right direction. It doesn't have to be me. And if it needs my attention, they'll bring it to my attention.

**Michele:** Which is actually a win for everyone, because then the people who are writing are getting a quicker response or even a response, which they may not even get if you didn't have your team. They're getting a quicker response, getting connected with the resources they want. Then those things that only you can respond to, you're able to see them because somebody helps weed them out for you.

**Michael:** That's right. In addition to the two email addresses, I have two telephone numbers. I don't have landlines anymore. I don't know of too many people who do.

**Michele:** I don't have one either.

**Michael:** Too bad for the telephone companies. Everything is cell or it's digital. My cell phone I treat the same way I do my personal email address. Only a handful of people have access to that phone number, but in addition to that, I have a Google Voice number, which is free, and the Google Voice number is the public number. When I go somewhere and they ask me for my telephone number, that's the one I give to them. Again, that does the same thing for me at a telephone level and a text message level that the two email...

**Michele:** Oh, it does texts as well?

**Michael:** Yeah, it does texts as well. If somebody tries to text that public one, it'll come in and somebody else will deal with it. Google ends up sending it as an email, and my assistant gets it and can decide what to do with it.

**Michele:** All right, so take practical steps to limit your accessibility. This may be different for different people, but think through how you can be intentional about creating the right level of accessibility for you, depending on where you are. What's the fourth strategy?

**Michael:** This is a game changer. This happened to me when I was an executive at Thomas Nelson before I became the CEO. I realized, "You know what? I keep getting the same requests over and over again." The language might be slightly different, but I said, "I'll bet if I track this, there's a finite number of requests that I get."

I remember years ago (this was probably 35 years ago; I was young in my career) I visited Focus on the Family when it was still in Los Angeles, and I saw that Dr. Dobson had all of these requests identified (I don't remember how many they had identified), and they had a way to respond to them, which we'll get to in another strategy. I put those two together, and I thought, "Okay, there has to be a finite number of requests."

For the people who are listening to this I'll bet it's true too. Maybe somebody wants certain information that's somewhere on your webpage, or if you're a speaker they want to know what your speaking fees are or your availability. You can group the requests by topic, which I do, and then identify what those requests look like.

We're going to talk about what to do with those in other strategies, but for now it's just important in this step to realize that the requests are finite. They probably don't require you to personally answer them, but if you could think of a way to respond to those, there's a finite list you could dispatch quickly if you identified them. The important thing in this particular strategy is to identify those requests.

**Michele:** That particular strategy I learned from you a couple of years ago, and it was a game changer for me. We'll talk about that more in a minute. Today we're talking about how to learn to say no without feeling guilty so you can create more margin in your day and do what only you can do. We've talked through four of the eight strategies for doing that. We're going to have four more for you in just a moment, but stay with us. We'll be right back.

*Has this ever happened to you? You write a list of goals with the best of intentions. You're excited and motivated for a couple of weeks, and then life gets in the way. You get distracted or discouraged. You stop moving toward what really inspires you. If you want to achieve what matters most, traditional goal setting will only get you so far. You need a proven plan.*

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**Michele:** Today we're giving you a guide to a guilt-free *no*. If you're anything like me, saying no is one of the hardest words to say, because our heart and our intention is to be *yes* people, to give away as much as possible and really serve the people in our audience and our friends and relationships, but it's not possible to say yes to everything, so we need to learn how to say that no. Today Michael is giving you eight strategies for saying a guilt-free *no* so you can free up more margin to live your life the best you can.

So far we've gone through four of those. The first is to acknowledge your resources are finite. It all starts right there. Second, determine who needs access to you and who doesn't. You can be very intentional about choosing who you give access to yourself to. Third, take practical steps to limit your accessibility. You cannot be there for every person. Fourth, make a list of common requests. Let's go ahead and move on to the fifth strategy, Michael. What is it?

**Michael:** Let's say you have the list of common requests we talked about in strategy four. Now what you're going to do is use email templates in order to say no with grace.

**Michele:** This is a gold mine. I just have to say you taught me how to do this. It has saved so much time just in my daily productivity for this one simple thing. I mean, the whole podcast is worth it for this right here.

**Michael:** It is. It has been a huge game changer for me, because when those requests come in, the common ones... Like when I was at Thomas Nelson, one of the common ones was, "I'm thinking about writing a book. What advice would you give to me as a first-time author?"

**Michele:** I hear that. I wasn't CEO of Thomas Nelson, but I hear that quite often as well.

**Michael:** What I would do in the old days before I started using templates is, you know, I might just kind of blow it off. "I don't have time to respond." Or I would give kind of a halfhearted response like, "Subscribe to *Publishers Weekly*" or "Read this book" or whatever I could think of at the moment.

I thought, "No, here's what I want to do. If I could craft to that request the best response I could, a really thoughtful, helpful response, what would that look like?" So I write that template to be the most helpful I can be.

**Michele:** Including blanks. I've seen some of these that you do. Including blanks and contact information for whoever they may want to contact with.

**Michael:** It's like if I really had the time to answer that request in a thoughtful way, here's how I would do it. Here's the cool thing: you're only going to do it one time. You're going to write the template, and then you're going to use that template every time you get that request in the future. You may want to slightly modify it, you may want to personalize it, but it's going to look to the person who's receiving it like you've given them a very generous, very thoughtful answer.

Or sometimes I would get speaking requests, and now I hardly take any speaking requests, maybe four or five a year, so we say no a ton. I thought, "Okay, so how could I say no to that kind of request, and how can I point them to some other helpful resources?" So I thought through that one.

Here's another one, and you mentioned this earlier before the break. I get this request all the time, where people say, "Hey, I live in Nashville where you live" or "I'm coming through Nashville; I'd love to have coffee and pick your brain," which I've learned is code for, "I want a consulting session, but I don't want to pay for it."

**Michele:** That is so true.

**Michael:** Usually it comes from somebody who's an acquaintance. Maybe I know them on social media, and they feel like because they follow me I owe them this time, when to me

they're, I hate to say it, but they're an acquaintance. They're a real person and they have value in the eyes of God and all that, but to me they're just an acquaintance.

**Michele:** They're allowed to ask, but you can't say yes to all of those.

**Michael:** So how do you say no to that? It's so awkward, because it seems like such a miniscule request on their part, so you think, "I just feel terrible." I would more often than not say yes to those, because I don't want to be perceived as a jerk or somebody who thinks they're too hot to spend time with these people.

What I did was I crafted a response that said something like, "Man, thanks for the request. I really appreciate it, but in order to be faithful to my existing commitments, I have to say no to commitments like this. I would enjoy nothing better than sitting down over coffee and talking about whatever you want to talk about, but I'm just unable to do that."

That request frames it perfectly and, frankly, models for them how they need to be thinking about *their* life, because this is a zero-sum game. You can't say yes to that coffee. My weeks are packed. I can't say yes to having coffee with somebody I don't know without stealing from something else.

It might be my morning workout. It might be my quiet time. It might be my date with my wife. It might be time with my children. It's a zero-sum game, so I can't say yes there without saying no somewhere else. Lysa TerKeurst talks about this in her book *The Best Yes*.

**Michele:** Great book. We love Lysa. She's a good friend. She has to make these decisions all the time as well.

**Michael:** She frames it in that you want to give your best yes. You don't want to say yes to somebody who's an acquaintance, who's a one-off, somebody you probably won't ever see again. It might be really helpful to them, but it wouldn't be helpful to your family or to your health. You want to give it your best yes, and that requires saying no to unfortunately the lesser things in your scale of priorities. These templates help that.

**Michele:** It helps immensely. I have used several. You know, getting requests for book endorsements, the invitation to coffee, the speaking requests, the writing information... I mean, there are so many ways you can do this. Just set up an email signature. You can label it according to the request, and it is so easy.

**Michael:** Yeah, it is. Let me just give you a couple more, because this'll stimulate people's thinking. One is we get requests for donations all the time. It may be a local school. It may be

somebody who has some special project or whatever. I mean, all worthy causes. Again, you have to admit that your resources are limited, including your finances.

I am certainly in a good spot financially, better than ever before, but I don't have unlimited resources. I can't give to everything. Gail and I have decided we're going to be very strategic, so we really only give, in addition to our local church, to two additional charities, because we want to be all in. In other words, we want to consolidate our resources and really give to those.

**Michele:** Like create a true partnership between you and that organization, whereas if you had 100 or 150, there wouldn't be that relationship.

**Michael:** Give \$100 here or \$100 there. I'd rather give a few thousand to something I really believe in and be involved with. So we do the same thing. You know, "Thanks for your request. This sounds like a worthy charity or whatever, but right now Gail and I are committed to two charities. We do consider this once a year. We'd be glad to put this on file and consider it when we do our analysis and our evaluation at the end of the year."

**Michele:** That's great. It's a no, and yet it leaves you open to the possibility of consideration. Like we talked about earlier, it puts a pause on it, just a little bit, so you can have some space to process and think through.

**Michael:** So the email templates thing can really help you. You mentioned something just in terms of operationally how you do this. In fact, let's save that for the next strategy. I want to go into that with a little more detail.

**Michele:** All right, let's go ahead. So use email templates to say no with grace. Then what is the sixth strategy?

**Michael:** Sorry, before we get to that, what I would also do is write out the answers to these templates. It's going to be a project that might take you a couple of weeks in your spare time, but you're writing these emails anyway.

**Michele:** Yes, and it's once. You're doing it once and saving tons of time down the road.

**Michael:** What I did was for several weeks, every time I got one of these requests that was on my list, I did the thoughtful thing. I responded to that person, but I saved that as the email template. So then I populated that list over time. I didn't get it all done at once, but I got it done over time kind of in the warp and woof of my normal activities. Okay, so now strategy six.

**Michele:** Got it. Now move on to number six.

**Michael:** Adopt a process for responding to those requests. A couple of things here. These templates can actually be put into your email program as email signatures, where you have standard text that you use at the end of your email message. It might be as simple as, "Sent from my iPhone" or it might be, "Thanks, Michele Cushatt," and then your title or your webpage or all that. Those are email signatures.

There's no limit on how much text you can put in there, so you can actually name those things like "Request for coffee," and then that can be your template that you use there, or you could put, "Request for speaking consideration," and there's your response. All of those email templates can live literally as email signatures in your email program.

Now if you want to get more sophisticated, what we do today, because I have a team that helps me, is use a customer service program called Rhino Support. There are many others out there that are great, Zendesk and a few others. They usually have a provision for email templates or boilerplate text, and you can use that too. Not to get too geeky, but you could use a macro processor, where you can type a few keys abbreviation and it expands.

**Michele:** It just pops up.

**Michael:** Yeah. I've found for most people the email signature thing is a great way to do it.

**Michele:** It's easy for people like me who aren't super technical. All I have to do is click on that signature and it's set. Then sometimes what I do is I make it just slightly personal with a first name, and maybe if it's somebody I do know a little bit I can personalize it, but the mass majority of the text is already established.

**Michael:** That's right. And that doesn't make it disingenuous. It makes it generous, because you're giving that person your best thinking, your best resources, honest-to-goodness help, or at least a reasonable response, a reasonable decline that they can understand. They feel honored in the process because you got back with them.

For example, recently I sent out requests for endorsement of my new book. I had a few people who took the initiative, including Brene Brown, whom I adore... She took the initiative to get back to me through her assistant and just said, "No." Basically it was a version of in order to be faithful to her existing commitments...

**Michele:** Sounds familiar.

**Michael:** Yeah, I was like, “Hey, don’t use that on me.” But I totally understood that, and I felt honored, even though she said no.

**Michele:** She at least responded.

**Michael:** She responded. I said, “I totally get it. I don’t say yes to everything either. I totally understand.” What I don’t like and where I feel dishonored is the people who won’t even take the time to respond.

**Michele:** I agree.

**Michael:** Those are people who could probably profit from email templates.

**Michele:** Totally. I’m one of those people where for a while, after going through the last year and health issues and having four kids still living at home, some days I can’t even get to email. It’s just not even possible. I don’t want to not respond, so the templates make it possible for me to make a touch, make a connection, without it requiring an hour of time.

**Michael:** Now here’s another kind of template that’s different from email templates, but this also handles a lot of the requests you get. I have a link on the top navigation of my website that says, “Work with me.” Because people come there, and some might want to work with me. Maybe they think I could coach them or I could consult them or they want to hire me as a speaker or whatever. So I said, “Okay, let’s make this easy.”

When people said, “Can I pick your brain?” I used to say some version of, “No.” Now I say, “Wait a second. Actually you can. Here’s how you can pick my brain. There are thousands of blog posts I’ve written. You can search in the ‘Search’ bar, because I’ve probably written on it somewhere before. Then I have my podcast. That’s another way you can pick my brain.”

**Michele:** We want people to listen to the podcast.

**Michael:** Yes. Then there’s Platform University. I do them from least expensive to most expensive. Platform University is only \$30 a month at the time we’re recording this. I think the price is going to go up. That’s a way to get my best platform information. Or my course, Best Year Ever, is a great way to get my coaching, albeit not personalized, on goal-setting and achievement. I just give this from least expensive to most expensive.

**Michele:** Different options they can use.

**Michael:** But a lot of free stuff. So that’s another thing you might think about doing if you’re listening to this.

**Michele:** For several people, they hadn't even considered those options, so having it outlined in an email that they can look at and save and go through actually makes it very convenient for them.

**Michael:** I'll tell you where I got on to this. I realized there were people who wanted to have coffee with me talking about building their platform who had not read my book. Now think about this. They weren't willing to invest the 10 or 12 hours to read the book. What they really wanted me to do was invest an hour of my time telling them what was in the book so they didn't have to read it.

**Michele:** Which doesn't seem quite fair.

**Michael:** It doesn't seem quite fair, yeah. If you really want that information... So now what I say is, "Have you read the book?" That's the basic prerequisite, because I'm not going to get together and give you the CliffsNotes version in an hour when you can read it for yourself and get way more value out of it anyway.

**Michele:** Very smart. So the fifth strategy was to use email templates to say no with grace. Sixth is adopt a process for responding to those requests. What is the seventh strategy?

**Michael:** The seventh strategy is to delegate the whole process, if you can (not everybody will be able to), to people you trust.

**Michele:** So like an assistant or some member of your team.

**Michael:** Yep. When I left Thomas Nelson to begin this journey as an entrepreneur, first as a solopreneur, then I hired an assistant, and now I'm a full-blown entrepreneur with a team, but in the days when I didn't have an assistant, I handled all of those email templates. Then I hired an assistant.

I hired Tricia for five hours a week, and all she did initially was this very work, because she was smart, she was personable, and I trusted her to take those requests... These people are precious to me, and I want to make sure they're handled well. I knew I could trust her to respond in a way that was graceful and helpful. I don't want somebody who just mindlessly cuts and pastes the text.

**Michele:** Exactly. That's so important. I've had people do that before, and it doesn't represent me very well.

**Michael:** “Dear human being...” You want, “Dear Sarah,” or “Dear Bill,” and then something warm. So delegate it to people you can trust. I have a team. I have two assistants right now who run our customer support and run all the email that comes into my public account at [michael@michaelhyatt.com](mailto:michael@michaelhyatt.com).

They’re kind of the first line of... I was going to say *defense*, but that sounds a little bit negative. They’re the first line of helping. The stuff that gets through to me from that account is only the stuff that is an unusual request that they can’t address, and they’ll forward that to me. It’s important to have those people who are partnered with you.

**Michele:** Yes, it really does have to be the right people who understand your heart, your approach, so they can really mirror that in the way they deal with people.

**Michael:** The other thing that’s cool about it is it’s much easier, as it turns out, for *them* to say no than for *me* to say no.

**Michele:** You can say that again. My assistant can say no far easier than I can.

**Michael:** It is easier for them, because usually they don’t lose context in the middle of the heat of a request. Suzie, who’s my primary assistant, understands my calendar. She knows how jammed it is. She can even say no to me.

**Michele:** You have to love that.

**Michael:** And I’ve empowered her to do that, because when I’m managing my calendar, I get myself in trouble. Then I hate my life and I hate my schedule and I’m just overcommitted. She’s able to say no to somebody so that I never see it and have to deal with the emotional pull of saying no and feeling guilty about that and all the rest.

**Michele:** But for those who can’t or don’t have an assistant or somebody to delegate at this moment, the email templates really function as an assistant in a lot of ways. That’s a really good in-between step if you aren’t quite at that place.

**Michael:** Here’s the cool thing. It’s an enormously powerful training device. Once you bring somebody in, you say, “Okay, look. Here are the 18 typical requests I get. Here’s the way I respond to them, and this is where we’re going to start.”

**Michele:** It makes the learning curve so much shorter.

**Michael:** It sure does, and it’s cheaper for you too, because you’re not having to do all the training of the assistant.

**Michele:** All right, so after you delegate to people you trust, what is that final strategy to learning to say a guilt-free *no*?

**Michael:** Accept the fact that you're going to be misunderstood.

**Michele:** Oh, do we have to include this one?

**Michael:** Yes.

**Michele:** It is true.

**Michael:** There are going to be people who just don't get it. I mean I've gotten... Not much thankfully, but I've gotten some hate mail. There was a gentleman who visited my church who was an acquaintance. I had lunch with him actually. It was a total waste of time. He came with no agenda. He talked about I don't even remember what, just blathered on and on for an hour. It wasted an hour of my time and didn't get him any help.

Then he came to town again, and he wanted me to spend time with him. I said to Suzie, "No, I'm not going to do that." Well, he got really upset and kind of went off on social media. He had about 12 followers so it didn't really matter, but he went off on social media and just talked about, you know, I guess I'm too important now to spend time with him. You just have to accept that there are people...

**Michele:** It's just going to happen.

**Michael:** Yeah. I heard somebody recently saying that like 10 or 12 percent of the population is mentally ill. Tragic but a fact. So just the odds of getting people who are not going to be mentally quite right, who might get upset with you... You just have to accept that.

**Michele:** It happens. Even well-intentioned people can get their feelings hurt. Part of maturity is allowing people to have their emotion without adopting it on yourself. That's okay. But you still have to be committed to your own... I'm probably more committed to this now than ever before because I'm more aware of my limited resources. It's worth the struggle. It's even worth disappointing people on occasion to make sure you have the right boundaries to live within, both for your relationships and your work and your health.

**Michael:** I'll tell you what I've discovered, Michele. For most people, we go through all this anxiety. "They're going to be so disappointed." The truth is they're not.

**Michele:** They're really not.

**Michael:** They just kind of go on.

**Michele:** A really good *no* actually makes everybody feel safe.

**Michael:** It does.

**Michele:** I didn't realize that for a long time, but when we are really good about knowing our yeses and knowing our noes, people understand that we... It's like we have a sense of who we are, and they feel even more comfortable around us.

**Michael:** And then we can move on. When I got that no from Brene Brown to endorse my book, I thought about it for literally five seconds. I was like, "Oh, that's too bad," and then I'm on to the next thing.

**Michele:** It's just life.

**Michael:** She protected her calendar. Good for her. She honored me by having her assistant respond to me, and I'm still a huge fan. I read everything of Brene's. I love her. I promote her whenever I can.

**Michele:** We're both huge fans.

**Michael:** It just doesn't matter. So that fear we're going to disappoint somebody or hurt their feelings is largely unfounded.

**Michele:** True. They're having to say their own noes as well, and *they* want grace, so most people are very understanding, but don't be surprised when there's a random or occasional person who gets upset when you say no. You can't change your strategy based on that one person.

**Michael:** It's especially true if you're involved in social media and you're kind of out there, because people feel like, by virtue of the fact they have access to you on social media or through your blog, that somehow... I don't fully understand this, but they somehow feel that they have a relationship and you owe them a deeper relationship. Now if you actually confronted them on that, they would go, "Oh no, that's crazy." I get that, but there's just something about social media that makes people think that.

**Michele:** It's so true. I find it all the time as well. Well, I have really enjoyed today's episode, talking about eight strategies to be able to say a guilt-free *no* and create more margin in your life. We have enjoyed you being with us today. If you've enjoyed the episode, you can find the

entire transcript, as well as the show notes, at [michaelhyatt.com](http://michaelhyatt.com). In addition, if you'd rather watch the video, you can find that at his website as well.

Before you go, we have one request for you. If you could take just a few moments to head over to iTunes and rate the podcast, it's huge for us. I just can't even overstate it. It's huge. It helps us get a little bit higher rankings so that people can actually find this material. I know there are more than just me out there who need to learn how to say a guilt-free *no*. So take the time to do that for us. We'll be very grateful. Any final thoughts today, Michael?

**Michael:** Yeah, I think it's important for people who are listening to this or watching this to remember what's at stake, because their sanity, their margin, and what matters most to them is what's at stake. If you say yes to everybody, if you don't get a system to say no, you're putting at risk everything you hold dear, everything you consider important, and you're going to get to the end of your life with a lot of regrets. You will have said yes to everything but the things that truly matter.

**Michele:** Well said, Michael. Thank you. Thank you again for being with us today. Until next time remember: your life, your one and only life, is a gift. Now go make it count.