

Excessive busy-ness is the most common complaint I hear from clients. Is it possible to manage our workload in a way that leaves us fulfilled but not burned out? Let's scratch the surface of that question by shining a light on our *motivations* and suggesting some *methods* to deal with it.

### Motivation

Our first problem is that we often wear our busy-ness as a badge of honor. Important people are expected to be busy; we want to be important; so we don't want to admit (to ourselves or others) that we're not busy. We fill our plates to keep our importance badge.

Secondly, we feed on empathy. When others sense the weight of our burdens they might cut us some slack or stroke our egos with appreciation for our heroic efforts.

A third motivational problem is that some of us are die-hard people-pleasers. We are servants who want to help others. Whether it's motivated in actual care for others or pride in our own servant reputation, it makes "no" a hard word to speak.

Unless we find internal motivations that are stronger than these, we'll continue wallowing in busy-ness with no hope of relief.



### Methods

So what do we do about it? Here are a few ideas that can help us keep our unhealthy motivations in check and make good choices to manage our load:

- 1. Start with a clear understanding of our own values.** What's most important to you? Crystal clarity and intentionality about our purpose in life makes it easier to recognize and say "no" to distracting demands.
- 2. Recognize that every "yes" implies multiple "no's".** The hour I spend helping one person is an hour I can't spend helping others. I may feel immediate satisfaction from saying "yes". But the cost is future disappointment when I let things fall through the cracks or don't follow through as well as expected. The other person is better served when my "no" leads them to get someone else to do it than by me saying "yes" and doing it poorly.
- 3. Learn helpful ways to say "no".**
  - Suggest alternatives to get the job done.
  - Break the request down into parts and only accept the part that you are best equipped to handle. Let others do some of the legwork.
  - Tell them when you can realistically get it done without undue stress. If that doesn't meet their timing, let them seek help elsewhere.
  - Tap into their values related to other things you're working on. If they care about the other things, they might be less inclined to distract you from those.

Foundational to all of this is setting aside our own egos and exercising self-discipline to act according to what's best in the big picture. Allowing whatever (or whoever) is in front of us at the moment to set our priorities assures we will never get control over our own life and workload.

There are more motivations and more methods to help. Share yours at [www.enLumenLS.com/say-no](http://www.enLumenLS.com/say-no).