



When to Say No and When to Say Yes

And Where to Draw the Line

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Group poll - Who do you have the most difficulty saying no to?

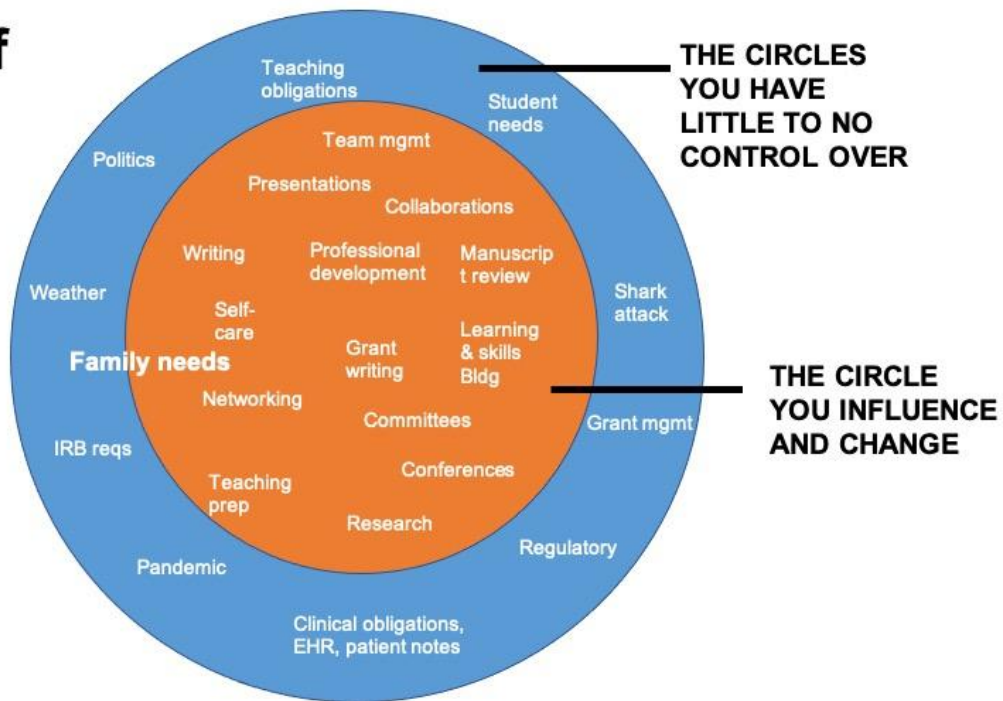
- Colleagues / collaborators / peers
- Students
- Dept or division leadership (e.g. service, committees, conferences, teaching)
- Mentors / supervisors
- Other



What we will cover today

1. **Career sustainability** - saying No, to say Yes to your life
2. **Career productivity** - saying No to stay true to your goals
3. **Determining when to say Yes and No** - have a plan
4. **Considerations for academic careers** - It's not always clear cut
5. **Saying No with grace** - tips and strategies

Locus Of Control





“The single most important people, political and personal skill a junior faculty can develop is the ability to say no and stand by it, after gauging whether refusing a request is or is not a good option.”

David D. Perlmutter

Promotion and Tenure Confidential

Career sustainability - saying No, to say Yes to your life



You can't expand time





You can't expand time

- One task has to displace another
- The displaced task may be more important to you
- You can't tell how long things take
- Additional tasks may encroach on personal/family time

Perhaps I could multitask?

- The myth of multitasking
- Multitasking versus switching tasks
- Knowing how you best - time and energy management



Career productivity - saying No to stay true to your goals

When to say no

- Easier to say no to things you don't want to do
- Harder to say no when there are many exciting opportunities or you are just starting
- Focus
- Accept with intention



Focus, focus, focus, except when you should diversify



So how do we accept with intention? I.e. When can I say Yes?





“The difference between successful new faculty and those who struggle is how they spend their time”



Research shows successful new faculty:

- Spend at least 30 minutes a day on scholarly writing
- Integrate their research into their teaching
- Manage course preparation time and avoid over-preparing for classes
- Spend time each week discussing research and teaching with colleagues



Should you ever say Yes?

- Does the request fit into your long- and near-term goals?
- Create 1, 3, and 5 year career goals and review and update every year, can use the goal hierarchy to help
- Use an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to map out your goals and track your progress



When do you even seek additional chores?

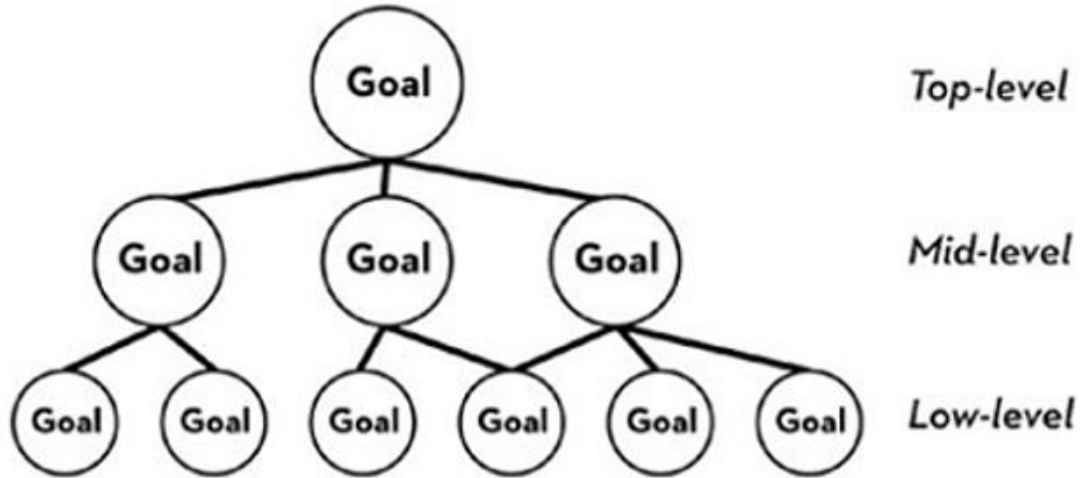
- **Service on grant review panels:** To gain experience in reviewing grants
- **Service on selected internal committees:** To create strategic networks
- **Giving seminars outside of institution:** To demonstrate your national visibility

Set your goals and use them to guide you





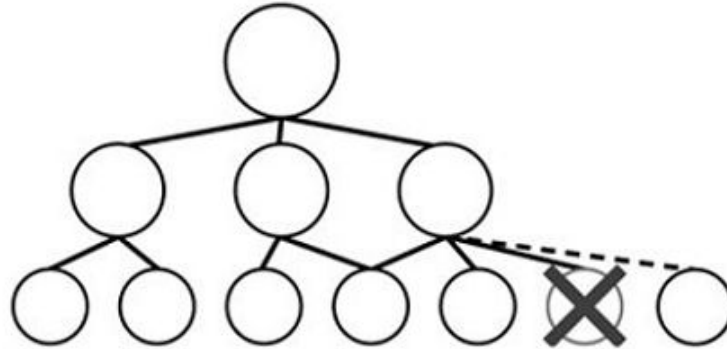
Goal setting using a goal hierarchy



Source: Angela Duckworth's "Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance"



Well constructed goal hierarchies

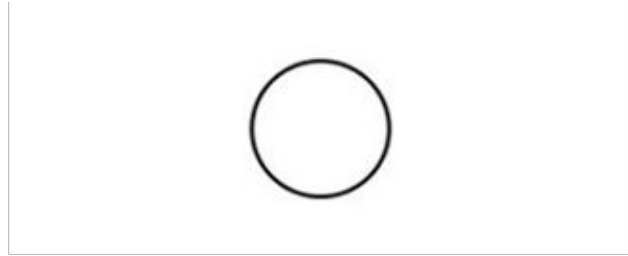


- Top level-goals are sacred
- Low-level goals are swapped out as they are found not to work or there is a better way to do something



Goal hierarchies that don't work

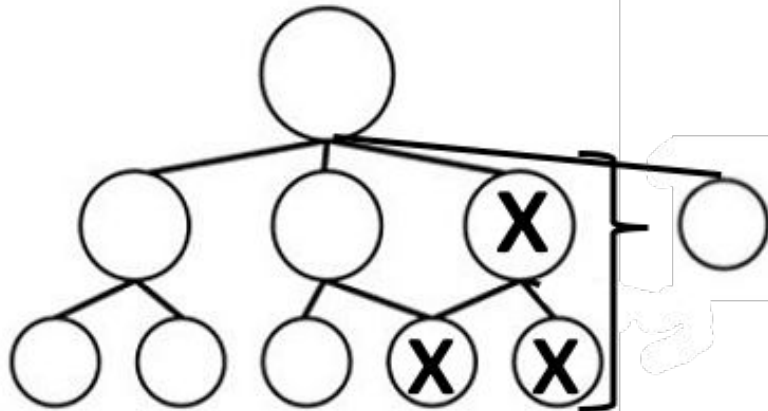
No lower-level goals



Mid-level goals without a top-level goal



More goal hierarchies that don't work



Task inputs take you further away

Or a task that simply takes you away from your goal



Determining when to say Yes and No - creating a plan

1. Use your goals to set your priorities
2. Create list of criteria specific to you

Examples:

- Will this committee achieve its stated goals?
- Does this project truly include community voices?
- Am I being compensated for my time?
- Will this event help me raise my visibility?
- Will this count towards promotion?
- Will it bring me into contact with influential partners?



Determining when to say Yes and No - creating a plan

Other examples:

- Serve on a taskforce to define college values
- Getting involved in a research project
- Reviewing papers and grants

Individual Development Plans (IDP) also keep you on track

Individual Development Plan Milestone Map

Scholar name:

Names of mentors:

Program start date:

Complete form with information and indicate whether milestone is **p = planned** or **d = date** or **x = completed**

Insert extra rows as needed

Completed

In progress

To Do



Milestone	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3			Year 4
	July-Dec 2019	Jan-June 2020	July-Dec 2020	Jan-June 2021	July-Dec 2021	Jan-June 2022	July-Dec 2022	Jan-June 2023
Research project implementation: "Proteome-level predictors of improved response to PARP inhibitor therapy in ovarian cancer"								
Set-up laboratory	X							
Hire Researcher 5	P	X						
Hire Researcher 2			X					
Pursue Graduate Faculty appointment in department x		P	X					
Pursue Graduate Faculty appointment in department x		P	X					
Pursue Graduate Faculty appointment in department x		P	X					
Aim 1 -					P			
Obtain cancer cell lines & establish cell cultures		X						
Metabolically label cells			X					
Extract and digest protein				X				
Immunoadfinity enrich xx peptides				X				
Mass spec data analysis					P			
Aim 2 -					P			
Determine growth inhibition and cell viability/toxicity					P			
Establish cell lines					P			
Assess formation in relation to treatment						P		
Extract and digest protein; stable xx peptides; fractionate peptides						P		
Mass spec data analysis						P		
Aim 3 -						P		
Determine growth inhibition and cell viability/toxicity						P		
Treat cells and harvest						P		
Extract and digest protein; stable xx peptides; fractionate peptides						P		
Mass spec data analysis						P		

SAMPLE - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION



Considerations for academic careers - It's not always clear cut

You've got your goal hierarchy, your IDP, and your list of criteria to evaluate opportunities. You should be all set, right?

Well...



Do your homework before saying yes or no

- Is it really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?
- Are you the best fit for the task or just an easy target?
- What should you take out of your current responsibilities to accommodate the new one?
- What is the cost-benefit analysis of doing that?



Do your homework before saying yes or no

- Find out about time and energy commitment
- Learn about the duration of the new task
- Get feedback from colleagues who have been recently promoted
- Consult with members of the promotion and tenure committee
- Use your mentors to help vet opportunities and run interference
- Use your research advisor, unit or department head advice as a reason to decline

Saying No with grace - tips and strategies





How to say no to a request for collaboration?

“I am honored to have been asked. Please give me a couple of days to explore how the new project fits in my work portfolio and what I already have on my plate”

A couple of days later: “As you see from my project management chart, I am in the middle of so many things that need close attention. I will be doing your project a disservice if I commit to it knowing well I will not be able to do a good job”



What if it's your boss who is asking? Why worry about saying no?

- Your respect for authority
- Your trust in your boss's wisdom in selecting you for the task
- Fear of retaliation
- Wanting to be a team player
- Wanting to avoid appearing as lazy or incompetent



How to say no to your boss

- Acknowledge the authority of your boss in making final decisions about the matter
- Provide a brief reminder of your short-term career development plans (e.g., promotion and tenure)
- Share what you learned about time and energy commitment to accomplish the task (short and long term)



How to say no to your boss

- Remind the boss with what you already have on your plate
- **Collaborate** on identifying which task(s) should be displaced to accommodate the new one
- **Collaborate** on identifying the pros and cons of such displacement (both for your career and the boss's needs)



Ten ways to say No

1. That sounds like a really great opportunity, but I just cannot take on any additional commitments at this time.
2. I am not comfortable with that _____ (situation, task, group of people involved).
3. I feel overwhelmed by service right now, so I am going to have to decline your generous invitation.
4. I am in the middle of _____, _____, and _____ and, if I hope to get tenure, I am unable to take on any additional service.
5. I am not the best person for this. Why don't you ask _____?



Ten ways to say No cont...

6. If you can find a way to eliminate one of my existing service obligations, I will consider your request.
7. I would rather say no to your request than do a halfhearted job on the committee.
8. Right now, I need to focus on my research agenda and publication. When I have tenure, I hope to be able to say yes to requests like this one.
9. I cannot serve on your committee right now. But why don't you ask me again next year?
10. No. (Look the asker in the eye and sit in silence.)



Say Yes to career development

- New technology
- Research skills
- Leadership, management: to lead your research team
- Presentations and communications skills:
- Strategic networking: to meet collaborators and increase your national visibility

Questions?



Thank you for saying YES to attending this seminar!

