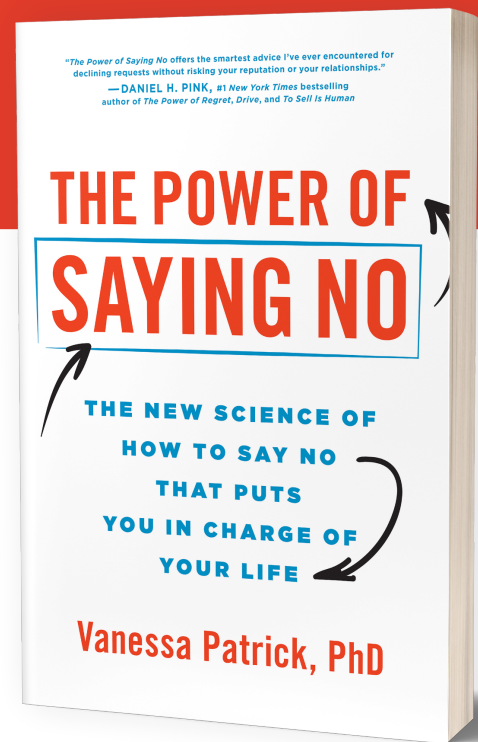


## Discussion Guide:

*The Power of Saying No*  
By Vanessa Patrick, PhD.

Includes printable worksheet for meeting participants  
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## BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The author, Vanessa Patrick, begins the book with a personal anecdote in which she found herself in a situation on her 24th birthday in which she felt trapped and was not empowered to say no. Have you been in a situation like that? How did it feel? What did you learn from the experience?
2. Why do we say yes when we want to say no? What does the author identify as some of the key reasons?
3. The author writes “No is a socially dispreferred response”. What does she mean by that statement?
4. The author writes “Society favors the asker”. Do you agree? Why or Why not?
5. The author discusses “stadium proposal moments” and “the spotlight effect” in the book? Have you ever experienced a stadium proposal moment? What did it feel like? How did you react? What did you learn from the experience?
6. The book is based on research on empowered refusal. What are the central research findings that the book is based on?

7. The book identifies three competencies – the A.R.T. (Awareness, Rules not Decisions, Totality of Self) of empowered refusal – discuss the three competencies of empowered refusal?
8. What does an empowered no sound like? Can you give an example? What would be good way to say no (versus a less effective way)? What would that sound like? Let's practice. Can you identify a person who you find it difficult to say no to? Why?
9. Why does the author propose that empowered refusal works?
10. An important aspect of communication is self-talk. Can you think about how you would use empowered refusal to say no to yourself?
11. Can you think about how you would use the cost-benefit analysis to decipher asks that come your way? What are some pass the salt asks? Do you have "email-tweet-post" bullshit job asks that you can quickly recognize and walk away from? How will you handle the "bake your famous lasagna" asks when they come your way?
12. The book is sprinkled with common traps people fall into. What are the traps you are most susceptible to. Relate these traps to your scores on the "concern for relationships" and "concern for reputation" scales. (*Hint: discuss the acquaintance trap and the house of cards trap*)
13. What rules (personal policies) will you put in place to navigate the asks that come your way?
14. Do you understand the difference between personal policies and boundaries? Do you have any personal policies that currently work for you? Can you give examples of your personal policies and why they work for you? Are they some personal polices that you would like to set up to deal with the pain points you experience?
15. Should you use excuses? What does the author suggest?

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16. The author describes saying no as “a full body activity”. What does she say is the role of non-verbal cues in making your refusal more effective?
17. What if we use empowered refusal techniques and we still get pushback from people? Any advice for how to handle that?
18. The author discusses how people can be marigolds or walnut trees.
19. Who are the marigolds in your life? Why are they marigolds for you?
20. Do you have walnut trees in your life? Why are they a walnut tree to you? How will you use the strategies in the book to manage your interactions with this walnut tree?
21. How do you spot a walnut tree in action?
22. The author invites you in chapter 8 to “create a set of “rooms of your own” that represent what you value, what would your rooms be? Could you, at this point in your life, legitimately fill your rooms with tangible proof that you have lived in accordance with those values?” How can you use the metaphor of “rooms of your own” to give voice to your own values and design a life with self-discipline and singularity of purpose?
23. How did you feel after reading the final chapter of the book? Do you agree that No is a gendered issue? Do you feel that learning to say no effectively can have a ripple effect on other aspects of your life like confidence and self-promotion?
24. At the end of the book, the author suggests that we need to listen and respect the no that others tell us. Will that be easy for you to do? Why? Why not?
25. What is the most important point the author makes in this book? What are the top three things you took away from the book?
26. Do you think we need to teach children how to say no or socialize them to be cooperative and say yes? Are male and female children socialized differently in your view? How

## Spark Impact in Just One Hour

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will you teach your child/children the principles of empowered refusal? Do you think that younger generations (Gen Z's for instance) find it easier to say no than older generations? Discuss your thoughts and experiences.

27. What will you change now as a result of reading this book? How did the book impact you? Do you think you'll remember it in a few months or years?
28. What was your favorite part of the book? Did you reread any passages or highlight any passages? If so, which ones? What are some passages that you underlined/highlighted or that particularly affected you?
29. Have you practiced any of the tips and tricks in the book? Can you give examples of what worked and why?
30. If you could ask the author anything, what would it be?

***Contact us to learn more or tell us about how this Discussion Guide sparked impact for you and your team!***

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