

**JUST SAY NO:
A MINI COURSE FOR YOUR
CREATIVE BUSINESS
(AND SANITY)**

With Tara Swiger

Table of Contents

Just Say No	3
Podcast Notes	5
Worksheet	8+9*

*If you want to print just the worksheet, print these two pages!

JUST SAY NO: WHY YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS YOU TO SAY NO

I'm about to drop a bomb on you. *Ready?*

**You have a limited amount of time and energy.
Everyone does.**

I work with a lot of makers who are either recovering from or living with a chronic illness. I also work with mothers, many of whom have 3 or more kids (and/or who homeschool those kids).

All while building their handmade businesses.

Every one of my clients, students, and Captains struggles with limited time and energy - either because they are just not able to stay vertical, or they spend hours each week at the doctor's office, or they spend hours each week with childcare, education, and general taking-care-of-life.

Every situation is unique and every single situation gets my sympathy and support in the way they need it most. But they all have the same thing in common. So do you.

You - whether you home-school 5 children or you have Chronic Fatigue or you are a healthy, childless 24 year old - you have limitations on your time or energy.

Fighting against these limitations will leave you frustrated, angry, and burnt out. Trying to hold yourself to a standard of what you see "other people" do will make you crazy. (Not to mention, awesome isn't always what it seems.)

You'll really begin to build a business that you truly love when you not only acknowledge the limitations of space and time, but when you truly start working within them. When you explore your own world, what works for you, and what doesn't. When you get crystal clear on your definition of success ... and then you go towards it with a realistic plan, based on your REAL LIFE.

That's the first half of it: Getting real, getting clear, and making a plan of what YOU want to do.

The second half is Saying No to everything that isn't in line with that.

Saying no to everything you don't have the energy for.

Saying no to everything that isn't in line with your definition of success.

Saying no to every show, shop, and buyer that isn't the right fit for your work

Saying no to every "opportunity" that doesn't fit in with your plan for profitability, or your bigger goals.

Why?

So that you can spend your limited time and energy on the things that matter to your business. So you can take consistent, MEANINGFUL action towards your dreams. So that you can create a business you'll love, without getting worn out, frustrated or burnt out.

So that you can say YES to a business (life) you do want - the opportunities you want to take, the work you want to do and the people who will most love your work.

What do you need to say no to?

SAYING NO FOR FUN AND PROFIT: PODCAST NOTES

(Please note: This isn't a word-for-word transcript, but rather a copy of my notes. Listen to the entire podcast here: <http://taraswiger.com/podcast9>.)

For a few months now, the Starship Captains (members of my year-long program) have been asking for a class on How to Say No. I joked with them that the class would be too short, because my answer is so simple: Just Say No. But they insisted, so I decided to hold a pop-up class in three parts. The first lesson is on the blog, at TaraSwiger.com, the second is today, here, on the podcast, and so that you can apply this to your own business - there's a worksheet that goes along with it. It will be sent in my weekly email lesson. Just go [here](#) to get it and more free mini-courses.

This mini-class is going to cover:

Why you need "no".

When you need to say no.

How to say no.

You have limited and time and energy. You can't do everything, and in order to have time, energy, and focus to do what you really WANT to do, you need to start saying no.

For the makers I work with, this means:

Saying no to giving away what you do for free.

Saying no to making things for anyone un-craft-worthy who says "Can you make me one?"

Saying no to "Can I have that in zebra print/puke green/in different words," when you know it won't represent your best work.

Saying no to "opportunities to spread the word" that are really just an excuse for unpaid work.

Saying no to spending work-time on non-work-related favors.

Saying no to requests for donated products.

Saying no to family things you don't want to participate in.

When I asked about it on Facebook, listeners answered:

Christiane said she has a hard time saying no to requests for help.

Penny struggles to say no to family, when she needs to be working.

How to make it easier to say no:

1. Keep in mind your YES. What is your NO making space for?

Get clear (over and over) on what you want to say YES to in your life. What is it you want out of your business? Your life? Your relationships? Your day? When you have a clear vision, it becomes easier to see what fits into that vision and what doesn't.

To get that business (life), you gotta say No to anything that doesn't fit into that vision. It'll be easier to say NO if you remember what YES it's making room for.

2. Set boundaries + quotas -

If you find yourself needing to say no or limit yourself in one area, figure out how many you really WANT to or are CAPABLE of doing, then limit it to only that many. Use this to explain it other people: *I only have space in my calendar for 3 clients, so I won't be able to take on more than that.* (The benefit to being clear about this on your site, is that it communicates the value of what you do.)

3. Do the Opportunity Cost math:

If you say Yes to this opportunity, what *won't* you be doing? If it cuts into your production time: How many products would you have completed in this time? If it keeps you from working on another project, what would that project have brought into your life? In other words: Put a dollar amount on the cost of doing this. You already know you don't want to do it ... so get clear on what it'll cost you and keep it in mind as you say No.

How to *actually* say no:

1. Ask for more time. Get in the habit of replying to requests with: I'll have to think it over and get back to you. (Be sure you always get back and don't just blow them off!) This is especially important if you're being asked face-to-face; you'll feel more pressure to say yes, but resist making a snap decision. If they press, say "I don't want to agree to anything I'll have to back out of later, so I'm going to take the time and will get back to you on DATE."

If someone continues to push, say: "I'm feeling pressured to make a decision, so without more time to think about it, I'm going to have to say No."

(If you get consistent with requesting time [whether you say yes or no] and you let them know that a pressured decision will lead to a No, the people in your life will become accustomed to it and will push back less and less.)

2. Keep it professional - this is about the business, not you or the other person.

ex. Aubrey: "I'm doing this in my business, so I don't have the time to make your thing. If you'd like to buy one..."

3. Make a counter-offer. If you want to maintain a relationship with this person, or you would like to do something similar in the future, make that clear! You can offer an alternative to their suggestion.

Ex, A client had one of her customers request something that she thought was ugly (and didn't want to do), so I counseled her to counter with: I don't know that will look best, what if instead I {Suggestion of what will look good}.

4. Don't over-explain. Remember that you don't owe an explanation to anyone, and that you are allowed to make decisions for your own life. So just leave it at a simple, "No", if that'll do.

WORKSHEET: JUST SAY NO FOR FUN + PROFIT

What do you want to say no to?

Pick one thing from your list, and answer the following questions about it:

What stops you from saying no?

What is the YES this NO will give you time or energy for?

What are your parameters for the future? How many can you do? How many do you want to do?

What is the Opportunity Cost of saying Yes?

How could you ask for more time?

How could you keep it professional?

What could you counter with?

What's the shortest way you could say no, without any explanation?

Now - go practice this in the mirror until you feel ready!

Got a big list of things you wanna say no to? Answer these questions for each and every thing!

Checklist before you say yes or no:

- ✓ Have I had non-pressured time to think about it?
(If not, ask for it!)
- ✓ What am I getting out of this?
- ✓ How am I going to fit this into my schedule?
- ✓ What am I saying *no* to, in order to say *yes* to this?
- ✓ What's the Opportunity Cost? How do I feel about that?
- ✓ What are my boundaries for this? Does this respect them?

I hope you've enjoyed the Just Say No mini-course. This ran on my [blog](#), [podcast](#), and [email list](#), the week of June 16, 2014. It was created in response to the many crafters, makers + writers who struggle to spend their time on what matters most to them: building their business, making their art, and sharing it with the world. Specifically, Starship Captains asked me (a few times!) to teach a class on it. If you'd like to get classes tailored to your exact business situation, you can join the Starship [here](#).

If you enjoy it, please share it by pointing friends to the sign-up page: <http://eepurl.com/dLPMA>

[Or tweet it \(click to tweet\):](#)

Just finished @TaraSwiger's free course on saying no for your business's health (and happiness!)
Get it here: eepurl.com/dLPMA

About the Author

Tara Swiger is an author, maker and Starship Captain. She leads creatives on explorations into the heart of their businesses. Her specialty is helping you find *your own* path to happiness; she has helped hundreds of makers define success on their own terms and make a map that gets them there.

Tara has been featured in her local press and international magazines such as *Crafty* and *Inside Crochet*, along with industry-specific publications, *Crafts Report* and *Yarn Market News*. She has taught workshops and classes nationwide, including teaching small business owners about marketing at a [major craft trade industry event](#) and working with non-profits to provide education to traditional artists in rural Appalachia. Her book, [Market Yourself](#), was published by Cooperative Press in 2012.

You can begin your exploration into your own business with her free e-course here:
<http://eepurl.com/dLPMA>