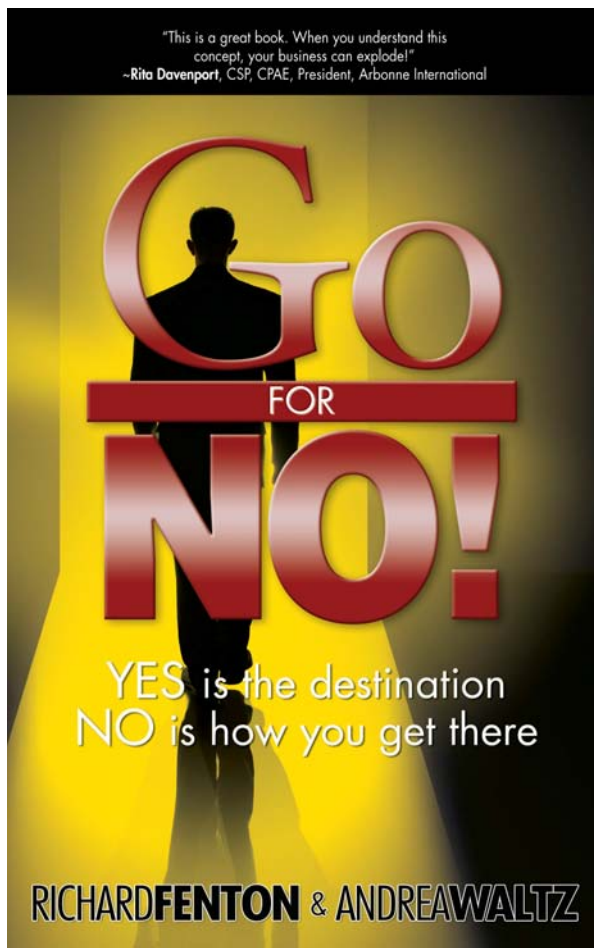


In partnership with Networking Times: Chapters 10-12 from "Go for No!"
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Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, but "NO" Can Never Hurt Me!

That's the lesson twenty-eight year old copier salesman Eric James Bratton is about to learn. And he's going to learn it from the most unlikely of mentors - *himself!*

Imagine going to bed one night, then to awaken the next morning in a strange house with no idea of how you got there. Only this house doesn't belong to just anyone – it belongs to *you...* a wildly successful *future version* of the person you might one day become, providing you are willing to start doing *one simple thing*.

Before the weekend is over Eric will learn...

- *What it takes to outperform 92% of the world's salespeople*
- *That failing and being a "failure" are two very different things*
- *Why it's important to celebrate success and failure*
- *The five failure levels and how to progress through them*
- *How to get past failures quickly and then move on*
- *That the most empowering word in the world is not yes... it's NO!*
- *And much, much more!*

These lessons are destined to change the way he thinks, the way he sells, and the way he lives *forever*. And they'll do the same for you!

Chapter Ten...

Dinner at Rainwater's

"I can't believe how the skyline has changed in only ten years," I commented as we exited the freeway toward downtown San Diego.

"And the traffic!" he chimed in.

We pulled up to valet parking at *Rainwater's on Kettner*, a well-known restaurant near the gaslamp district which I had always wanted to visit but never had the opportunity or the means. After we were seated Eric chose a nice bottle of Stag's Leap Cabernet which we sipped while waiting for our steaks to arrive.

"I read *our* book today," I started with a laugh.

"Oh yeah, which one?"

"*Fail Your Way to Success*," I responded.

"And what did you think?"

"Honestly? I liked it."

He smiled and looked truly pleased as the waiter placed our steaks in front of us.

"Did you discover any clues, anything that might explain why this is happening?"

"Perhaps. From what I can tell, virtually everything in our lives has been identical. We were both born on the same day to the same parents, and we have an older brother named Carl. We grew up in the same neighborhood, went to the same schools and had the same teachers. We worked the same jobs during high school and we both sold suits at Dubin's Clothing for Men during college. But then something happened..."

"What do you mean, *something* happened?" he asked.

"All the experiences you wrote about in your book were identical to mine, that is, right up until the job at the clothing store," I responded. "It's at that point that things changed somehow."

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“What changed?”

“Well, in the book you mentioned an encounter you had with the district manager, a guy named Harold. Do you remember?”

“Do I remember? How could I forget? That’s the day that changed my life!” he exclaimed.

“That’s the problem. That day never happened to me.”

“What do you mean? How can a day *not* happen?”

“Of course that day *happened*, it just didn’t happen the same way for me as it did for you.”

“You mean to say you don’t remember the conversation with Harold that day?” he asked incredulously.

“Honestly, I couldn’t begin to tell you a single thing Harold said,” I replied.

“Wow! Then maybe that’s where we need to start!”

GO *for* NO!

Chapter Eleven...

Then How Did You Know He Was Done?

“I remember it like it was yesterday,” the other Eric began. “I, or *we*, had only been working at Dubin’s for about a month when the district manager, Harold, was scheduled to do a store visit and I really wanted to impress him. As you may remember we weren’t doing very well sales-wise,” he recounted, “and quite honestly I was worried that if my personal sales didn’t improve that they were going to let me go. This is right after Elaine and I got married, and the last thing I needed was to suddenly be without a job.”

“I remember it well,” I said in agreement.

“Harold showed up about nine-thirty in the morning and everybody said their hellos, coffee and donuts and all that, and at ten o’clock we opened the doors. I was the first salesman in that morning so I had first ups. Sound familiar so far?”

I nodded.

“Then,” he continued, “in walks this finely-dressed gentleman who announces that he wants to buy an entire wardrobe of clothing! And, within thirty minutes, I have my biggest sale ever. I was certain that Harold would be impressed.”

“I remember that too,” I said.

“After the customer left, Harold finally sauntered over and said, ‘*Nice sale kid.*’ My chest puffed out with pride. ‘Eleven hundred dollars!’ I proclaimed. But Harold just stood there and didn’t seem overly impressed. Finally he said, ‘*I’m just curious, but what did that customer say no to?*’ ‘What do you mean?’ I shot back. ‘That guy just bought a suit, sport coat, three shirts, six ties, shoes, socks, a belt and underwear! What do you mean, what did he say *no* to?’

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“Harold waited calmly for me to stop being defensive, then he said, ‘We’ve already established what he said yes to. What I want to know now is, what did he say no to?’

“I thought for a long time, mentally reviewing the sale in my mind, then sheepishly I replied, ‘Nothing. That customer didn’t say *no* to anything.’ ‘So,’ Harold asked, ‘then how did you know he was done?’

“His question hit me like a punch because I suddenly realized the customer hadn’t ended the sale, I had! Why? For only one reason I could think of... the customer had hit *my* mental spending limit. I realized that I had never spent over a thousand bucks on a shopping trip ever, so when anyone went over my mental spending limit, *hey... they were done!*”

“I pretty much remember that,” I said, “but it didn’t have that much impact on me. That’s what changed your life?”

“Yes. That and what Harold said next. He said, ‘*The salesperson never decides when the sale is over, the customer does.*’ Then he looked me in the eye and said, ‘*Eric, your fear of hearing the word ‘no’ is the only thing standing between you and greatness.*’

“It was amazing. I had gone into work that morning hoping to keep my job, and I went home that night just two letters away from greatness.”

Two letters from greatness, I heard myself repeating.

N and O.

No.

Chapter Twelve...

The Failure / Success Model

“You see, before that moment with Harold,” my alter ego continued, “I had been operating with the wrong model of success and failure. I thought that...”

He stopped mid-sentence and signaled the waiter to clear the plates and at the same time borrowed his pen.

“I thought that I was here, in the middle, with success on one end and failure on the other,” he said drawing on the back of the restaurant menu:

SUCCESS ← ← ← ME → → → FAILURE

“I had always thought my mission was to do everything within my power to move *toward* success... and to move away from failure. But that moment with Harold opened my eyes. I realized that the correct model looked like this,” he said, attacking the menu once again with the pen:

ME → → → FAILURE → → → SUCCESS

“I realized that failure was the halfway mark on the road to success, not a destination to be avoided but rather a stepping stone to get what I really wanted in life. Most people get to the sign marked ‘failure’ and they figure they’re heading in the wrong direction, turn around and head back home. They think that success must be back the other way, but it’s not! It’s straight ahead!

“I read somewhere that great leaders never use the word failure. Instead, they use words like mistake, glitch or setback. This is silly and counterproductive. The word *fail* may have four letters in it, but it’s not a *four-letter word!* When people use cute

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substitutes they treat it as if it were. ‘*We tried but we hit a glitch!*’ they say. Give me a break! Just say you failed! Big deal! Is that so hard? No wonder everyone on the planet thinks failing is something to be avoided at all costs. We sugarcoat it and dance around it and talk about it as if it were death! The best way to desensitize yourself to a word is to use it, and the best way to desensitize yourself to an action is to do it!”

I sat there watching this man extolling the virtues of failing as if he were a zealot on a crusade, a man who until just minutes ago I thought was very much like me. But we were very different indeed.

“It’s the same thing with the word *no*,” he continued. “As kids we weren’t phased at all when we heard the word *no*, were we? Every Saturday morning in grocery stores all across America you can hear kids passing right through failure and taking *no* in stride on their way to success...”

Billy: *Can I have a cookie, mommy?*

Mom: *No.*

Billy: *I want a cookie!*

Mom: *No.*

Billy: *Please can I have a cookie?*

Mom: *No.*

Billy: *Please?*

Mom: *I said no!*

Billy: *Pretty please with sugar on top?*

Mom: *No, no, no!*

Billy: *Why can’t I have a cookie?*

Mom: *Because I said so.*

Billy: *But why?*

Mom: *Listen to me, young man. I am not going to say this again. The answer is N-O!*

Ten seconds later...

Billy: *Mommy, I want a cookie!*

GO *for* NO!

Mom: *Oh, for heaven's sake, just one!*

“Have you ever witnessed this?” he asked.

“All the time,” I said laughing hysterically.

“Sure you do, we all do! The thing is, not only does Billy get his cookie, but what has he learned in the process?”

“That if he pushes long enough and hard enough and doesn't quit, there's a *yes* at the end of the cookie trail,” I replied.

“Exactly! Now I'm not saying that adults should act like spoiled brats to get what they want, but there is an important lesson to be learned here. Somewhere along the line that natural sense of tenacity we had as children got drummed out of us. Billy knows not to take the rejection personally, but as adults we forget that. That's what Harold helped me remember.