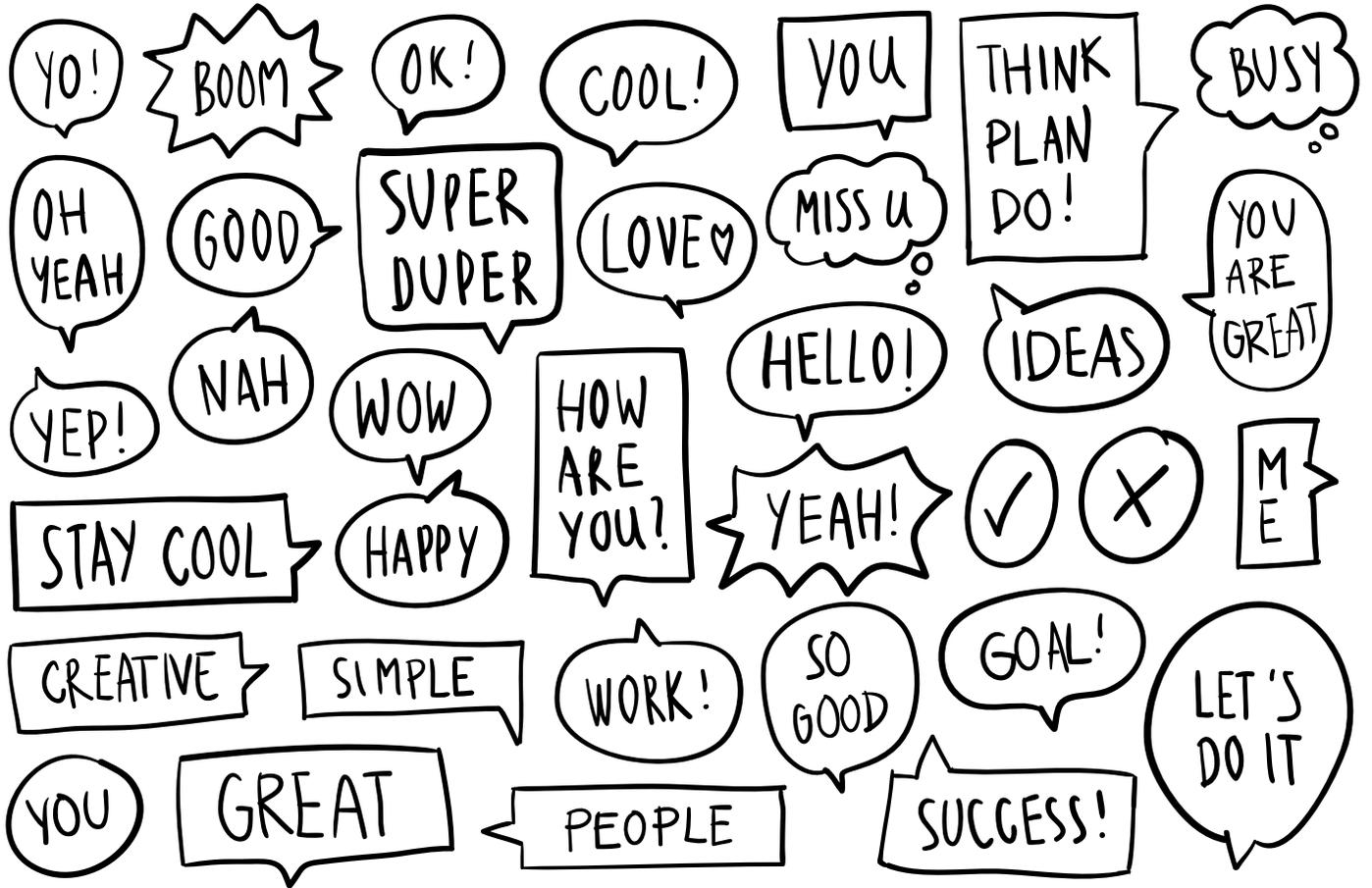




Five Words to Change Your Life

These are the five words that you need to know to help you cope with every relationship in your life; whether personal or professional.



Small words carry powerful impact.

We do not live in isolation, always interacting with and relying on others. To make those relationships healthier, a sage counselor advised me that one must know when — and how — to use four simple words:

- Yes
- No
- Ouch
- Next

Accepting gifts, compliments, and assistance with grace — and reciprocating such actions — requires liberal use of the word, “Yes.” Since no two people run parallel all the time, it’s essential to speak up in order to prevent resentment, boundary violation, and be true to our morals. We therefore understand the appropriate, but not excessive, application of, “No.” Despite good intent, others are

only human and will push too far, inflicting pain. In such circumstances, we utter, “Ouch.” Finally, when nothing more can be done; the relationship is tattered and torn; the dialog consisting only of heated exchanges of “No” and “Ouch,” it’s time to move on: “Next.”

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Part of its clout is that although this system works brilliantly with people-relationships, it is as efficient in relationship with one’s own habits. Upon analyzing any behavior, question one is, “Is this behavior serving me well?” If “Yes,” soldier on. If “No”, more

analysis is in order. Does the behavior merely need to be tweaked to alleviate the pain (“Ouch”) or is it time to bid it farewell (“Next”)?

It's a very simple process with extremely simple queries. But as they say, "The devil lies in the execution." (Well, they don't say exactly that, but I'm sure you caught the comparison.)

As explanation, a major reason we so often cement ourselves to unhealthy habits is embarrassment to admit that occasionally we do not know how to control our own behaviors. We stubbornly insist that if we are simply "stronger" and apply more will power, we can muscle our way through anything. Some-times that does work. Yet, oft times putting our head down and plowing for-ward results in basically and repeatedly slamming our noggin into an immovable wall.

Enter word number five: "Yet."

Instead of beating ourselves up and feeling weak and inferior for our shortcomings, triggering guilt, shame, and further defeat, suffix the statement with the word, "Yet." For example, it's not that "I cannot control my late night eating;" rather it's "I cannot control my late night eating YET." Instead of "I don't take good enough care of myself," it's "I don't take good enough care of myself YET." Replace "I don't know how to avoid stressing out," with "I don't know how to stay calm in these situations YET."

"Yet" implies learning and that growth is taking place (which is true). "Yet" reminds me I still have time to change and I have not given up. "Yet" prompts me to continue on my path, seeking knowledge to enhance my skills and to put the puzzle in place to achieve my goals. "Yet" empowers; it is an ellipsis instead of a period. It is a reminder that there is still more to come.

I am not naïve. I know in every future there lies a day when no more is to come. However, until that moment (and who knows, maybe even after), we con-tinue to be works in progress.

Besides that day is not here...yet.