



Two little letters...

What is your history with the word **NO**?

Maybe it's a memory of your mother telling you to stop pulling your sister's hair...Or, maybe it's your current experience of repeatedly telling your grandchild to stop kicking your dog...**NO!** Two little letters is all...but with potential to be quite a powerful word!

One way to look at the word is that it carries a negative connotation. Duh, you say! If I hear NO enough times, I might quit striving to do my best. Instead, I end up arranging my life so that I won't hear people say NO to me...I don't step out of the circle...I don't dis-please Mom and Dad, my boss, my spouse, my teenage daughter. But taking no risks is risky...To quote a line by Andy Crouch that I've used before in this blog and often in my conversations:

True flourishing is always found on the far side of risk ...

But there's another way to look at this word NO; in a positive light. When do I NEED to say no? Sometimes NO is good...

Someone has said,

There is no innocent YES...

What is meant by this is that my YES carries with it consequences – not always good ones. Saying YES will always mean I'm saying NO to something else; something that may actually be more important than what I'm saying NO to. Learning to say NO...to myself, to my kids...It can be risky...saying NO to a business opportunity. Saying NO to MORE. For me, saying NO to the 5th and 6th (or is it the 2nd and 3rd ☺) cookie...Well, I guess that's not risky...

Just this week, I said YES to too many things and ended the week utterly exhausted...I didn't know at the start of the week that I'd said YES to too much. I didn't know then the importance of saying NO this week. Only after the fact, with the benefit of hindsight, did I know how important it would have been to say NO to at least one or two things. There is no innocent YES. I was so exhausted I ended up in bed at 8:30 Friday night...Learning (and it is a learned behavior) to say NO takes time and effort, just like going to the gym.

Speaking for myself, I need to build the muscle called NO.

IF I do, I think I'll be glad I did...So will you!