

Level Up

GUIDE

THE POWER
OF NO
W/JOHN BARRETT



SESSION SUMMARY:

In this leadership lesson, you'll discover the strategic power of saying no. Instead of viewing no as rejection, learn to see it as Navigating Opportunities—being intentional with your time, energy, and priorities. Every yes has a cost, so you must ensure your commitments align with your highest-value activities. You'll learn how to filter requests through your purpose, avoid making decisions out of guilt, and create space before responding so you can make wiser choices. If you want to lead more effectively and focus on what matters most, this lesson is for you.

GROUP QUESTIONS:

- When someone asks for your time or involvement, whether it is a coworker or a friend, how do you currently decide whether to say yes or no?
- John describes no as 'Navigating Opportunities.' As someone early in your career and adult life, how does reframing no that way change how you think about using it?
- Can you think of a time when saying yes to too many things, maybe extra projects at work, social obligations, or volunteer commitments, caused you to miss out on something more important? What did that experience teach you?
- What are your highest-value activities right now in this season of life, and how well are your current commitments actually supporting them?
- John says that for every yes, you are automatically saying no to something else. How does that idea of opportunity cost challenge the way you manage your schedule when you are already juggling a career, relationships, and personal growth?
- Why do you think guilt is such a powerful force in pushing people toward saying yes when they should say no? How have you personally experienced this, especially in a workplace or community setting where you want to prove yourself?
- John suggests delaying your response as a practical tool. What are some go-to phrases you could use to buy yourself time before committing to something, without feeling awkward or unprofessional?
- How can a team create a culture where everyone feels safe and supported in saying no to lower-priority requests?

APPLICATION:

This week, identify one standing commitment or recurring request, at work, in your social circle, that does not align with your highest-value activities right now. Practice saying no to it, or at a minimum, delay your next response and run it through the filter of purpose before agreeing. Notice how protecting that time affects your focus, your energy, and your sense of progress in the things that matter most to you in this season.