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For some "no" acts as a starting place and for others it acts as a stopping place. What does hearing "no" do to you?

A college professor gave his students the assignment of going out into the world and bringing back ten *earned* "no" responses within a one week time span. Earned in the sense that in each instance, you would be required to ask a series of follow up questions after the initial "no" before the interaction would be officially complete. The follow up questions were for the purpose of getting the students out of the habit of *accepting* "no" so easily.

One student went into a restaurant with the task of getting a free dessert. After the meal he said, "Excuse me, Miss, I would like to order the chocolate cake and I would like to have it for free." She gave him a look as if he were speaking gibberish and said "No, I can't do that." His first follow-up question was, "Would you be kind enough to check with your manager and find out if there are any special offers that include a free dessert?" "Sure" she said, "I'll be right back." When she returned, she brought the manager with her. His second follow-up statement was "Good evening. I've had a very good experience here and I am definitely going to tell everyone I know about the food and the service. Since this is my first time at this establishment, I thought I would ask for a complimentary dessert so that when I tell all of my friends about it, I can share with them the *full* experience of dining here." The manager gladly brought him a dessert of his choice, on the house.

So often we get stopped by the first "no", whether it's coming from someone else, or we're saying "no" to ourselves. Either way, most people say "no" out of habit, out of fear and out of limited thinking, and most people accept "no" for the same reasons. Ask a few questions after that first "no" to really earn it. The point is not to get a "yes", but to garner a response other than just a simple "no". If the "no" is still there, then at least you will have earned it.

The next time you come across a "no" response, ask yourself the question, "Have I earned this?"