

FROM  
BURNOUT  
TO  
BALANCE

HOW TO SAY NO WITHOUT GUILT

EMMANUELLA  
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# Dedication

This book is dedicated to all Africans, the youth, and anyone on their journey to discover and thrive in their God-ordained purpose in life.

## Note of Appreciation

Dedicated to the Holy Spirit, from whom true inspiration resides.

To my supportive family, who cheer me on to fulfill my purpose, I cherish you.

I'm thankful to all followers and clients of Page Writer Ghana. Your commendations and constructive criticisms have helped me this far. Let's keep growing together!

God bless you!

This book was supposed to be a blog article, but I just couldn't stop typing, so here we are!

**Note:** This reflects my personal experiences and viewpoint; therefore, it is subjective.

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# Introduction

As a baby, Ella was cursed by a wicked woman at birth: a “talent” to do everything she was told to do. On her mother’s deathbed, she made a promise never to reveal this to anyone to prevent her from being used.

At first, everyone liked and admired her.

As she grew into a teenager, however, she realised that it was a curse rather than a blessing. Even when people were being sarcastic, she would carry out their orders against her will.

When she went to the market to get some foodstuffs for the house, she tried to avoid certain people because they used it against her.

She was made to steal in the full glare of society until one day, she decided to take action. Want to know how this ends? Watch the trailer, and maybe the full movie if you like.

Watch Trailer: [The 2004 movie, “Ella Enchanted”](#)

Here are some lessons from this piece.

- The “curse” of people-pleasing delays purpose.
- Saying “no” sometimes is hard. However, it’s not selfish. It is necessary.
- Making an impact requires a conviction strong enough to outweigh the weight of other people’s expectations.
- It may not be your fault until you realise you need to rise up and take action. Rewrite your story. Be intentional.

Cheers to a journey of freedom and purpose like none you’ve ever read!

Let the conversation begin. Enjoy!

## GET IN TOUCH

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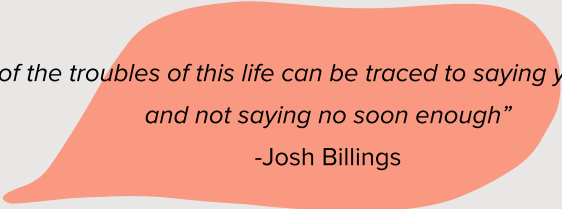
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## CHAPTER ONE

# The Yes Trap



*“Half of the troubles of this life can be traced to saying yes too quickly  
and not saying no soon enough”*

-Josh Billings

One of the most common ways we often get entangled in always saying “yes” is when we’re new to certain situations or environments and want to make a good first impression of being hardworking or smart, especially when we start a role as a new employee or business owner.

We want to make everything possible to be on everyone’s good side. Well, it’s a recipe for disaster!

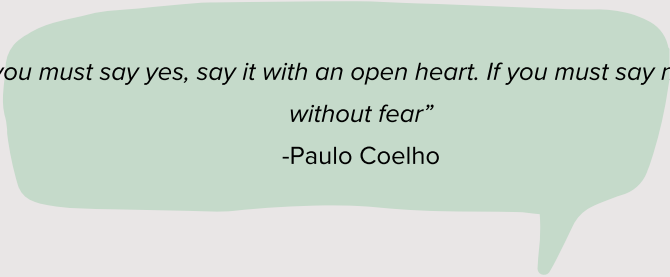
Be yourself right from the beginning, and that will let others respect your values/principles. All the same, if you need to make some sacrifices, this should be balanced. Drastically minimise burnout and stay fulfilled!

In any case, if you started on the wrong foot, get your confidence perked up as you learn to break away from this cycle. Get ready for what's coming. You may be seen as difficult, strict or rude in the beginning, but with time, people will respect you for your values.

Stay with me. You're already on your way to reclaim your respect or let's say, "glory".

## CHAPTER TWO

# No as a Doorway to Purpose



*"If you must say yes, say it with an open heart. If you must say no, say it without fear"*

-Paulo Coelho

Discovering your purpose in life is discovering your uniqueness as a person and how you can use your uniqueness to make your world a better place. This is probably one of the most important questions you could ever ask yourself. Everyone has a purpose. It's a journey, not a destination.

Your purpose in life is the reason you exist. It's what gives you fulfilment.

I know you're a good person, and you probably want others to see that. You mean well, but you try to be as excited about waking up every day as others seem when you step out. You work hard and do what's necessary to keep going, but you don't feel truly fulfilled deep down.

You probably put on a smiley face, and many people may admire you because it looks like you've made it, but deep down, you don't have that fulfilment, that satisfaction.

Maybe you have discovered your purpose, and know what to do, but you're scared to take the first step, or you don't know where to start from or how to start. This is because to start living, you'd have to stop saying "yes" to some people, though it may incur their displeasure, and then your good image will go down the drain, you might be cut off some benefits, etc.

You cannot focus on what matters most in your life if you don't know what it is. If you don't know your purpose or are not sure, don't skip this article. If you have, then this is why you may be stuck.

Read More: [How to Ignite Your Purpose in Life: 12 Sensational Ingredients You Were Not Told](#)

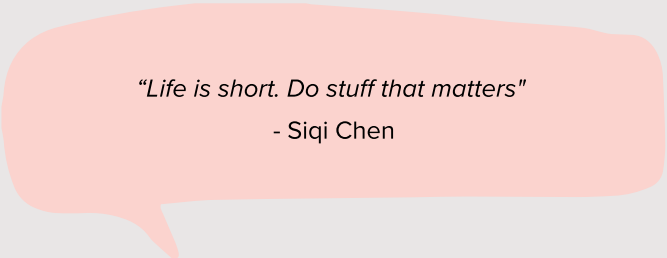
If this is you, then you've got to kick-start yours now!

If you already have, let's dive right into it.



## CHAPTER THREE

# You Can't Do It All — And You Don't Have To



*"Life is short. Do stuff that matters"*

- Siqi Chen

I used to often hear people say, *"explore, try to participate in everything because you never know what might come out of it"*.

While that could be true to an extent, let me play devil's advocate here.

Saying "yes" may be beneficial in the beginning, but in the long run, it may lead to burnout, misplaced priorities, and neglecting/delaying your purpose in life.

You have to be wise about choosing what they are, take responsibility for the outcomes, and decide to learn from them. They make you learn more about your strengths and weaknesses, and as they say, nothing learned is wasted.

Read More: [Know your Personality Traits, Take a Free Personality Test Now](#)

If you're a multi-talented person, you'll find that you struggle a lot with this, and that's okay because no one is perfect. However, note these.

Read More: [To Specialise or Generalise?](#)

You and I will not live forever; we don't have the luxury of time.

We can't do everything, be everything, learn everything, and experience everything.

- Stand on the shoulders of those who have made some costly mistakes, and jump into the next great step.

*"What an elder sees sitting down, a child cannot see even if he climbs an iroko tree."*

-African Proverb

- If you absolutely need to say "yes" and are unavailable, consider delegating.
- Recommend another great person/service.

You won't have a problem with this if you're excellent at what you do. Your clients will rather decide to reprioritise their needs to meet your schedule.

No one can steal your purpose, so no one can do it as well as you do.

Sacrifices will have to be made for what matters most in our lives in the long run, because it's the little steps of consistency we take today that ultimately influence our future habits.

And if you've discovered your passion, you'd know how much intensity you put into it, so much that it locks you in, in a world where nothing around you matters, and you're able to focus and do your thing.

Every other thing in that moment is a distraction.

Focus on what matters to you the most in your life.

Not because they're bad; they're just not what makes you tick every day.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Boundaries Are Not Selfish---They're Sacred

*"If someone throws a fit because you set boundaries, it's just more evidence the boundary is needed"*

— Unknown

Burn out and wither, and you'll be replaced!

You may have walked in whole, but you may leave with mental health issues, and you may have to deal with them on your own.

This is the hidden cost of being too available.

As you continually say "yes" to stuff that pulls you away from your purpose, you're automatically putting your life on hold. Saying "yes" to toxic relationships means pushing good people out of your life and encouraging an unhealthy environment where you die slowly.

Saying "yes" to browsing the internet for hours without profitable returns for hours daily, just to kill time, means denying yourself of reading a good book, having a great conversation with a partner, friend or relative, or even spending time with God.

Saying “yes” to luxurious spending sprees because you have the money now will have a major impact on comfortable living in the future. Don’t forget that you also need a rich mindset to sustain wealth so that you don’t eat your seed instead of your fruit.

These things should be intentional.

Read More: [5 Proven Ways to Overcome Bad Habits](#)

Saying “yes” to everything is saying “yes” to death, one you don’t deserve....

Even Jesus was about His Father’s business, which mattered most in His life.

*“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

Matthew 10:16

Purpose determines where you go, what you do, what and who you listen to, who you associate with, and how you carry yourself all the time.

*“No” is a complete sentence”*

– Anne Lamott

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Distractions Aren't Always Bad

*"Don't confuse activity with productivity. Many people are simply busy being busy"*

-Robin Sharma

Many times, distractions connote negativity. However, that is not always the case. Let's go through some scenarios of positive distractions that continue to prove useful to me.

### Scenario 1

One time, I cracked an egg straight into the dustbin instead of the frying pan...because I got an idea all of a sudden.

### Scenario 2

Again, I found myself with a bucket in my room, instead of at the tap, fetching water outside...

Then, in a second, I forgot what I was supposed to be doing... because a vivid video of me and my childhood friends playing together flashed in my mind when I chanced on a photo of us.

### Scenario 3

Even now, I just paused my research to watch a video on Facebook and ...I'm still wondering why one of my clients hasn't called since yesterday.....

Give me 5 minutes. Let me call him back and return to this book.....

I had to run an errand for my mum, but I completely forgot until I got home. As a Writer, these are some of the things that I face daily. I don't know about you!

## So What Do I Do?

Turn the stove off in such moments when I'm cooking, or reduce the intensity of the heat from the burner.

Make use of my notepad on my phone, or record the idea.

Park while driving to record the idea, or ask my sister in the front passenger seat to do that for me.

If, for some reason, I still can't remember what I was supposed to do, I call someone to ask them what they said earlier, if I have to.

Today is not the day for the time management talk, though it is a contributing factor in prioritising your to-do list and making the most of your day. Sometimes, a pinch of chaos is the missing ingredient to making your soup tasty. You get the drift, right?

Read Further: [Prioritise Your Life: 5 Time Management Tips to Focus on What Really Matters](#)

Focus on what really matters to you: YOUR PURPOSE!

If you don't know your purpose in life, you wouldn't even know what the distractions are

# Let's Take This Exercise

Write down all the things that come naturally to you, especially while doing your routine work.

Then write out the things you believe you can do to create a balance.

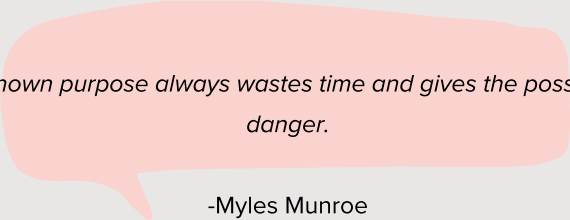
Before you know it, you may even start a business.

Tasks	To Create Balance	Do This



## CHAPTER SIX

# Create a Purpose Filter – The Big Picture



*An unknown purpose always wastes time and gives the possibility of danger.*

-Myles Munroe

Let me share a few of my experiences with you. See, I've been an MC before... I know, right? If you know me personally, you'd probably be shocked because PowerPoint presentations are usually my thing....

### Scenario 1 – MCing

I was recently asked to become an MC (I would've used "Mistress of Ceremonies", but it doesn't sound good in my ears, so...) at a friend's church programme. Before he could continue speaking on the call that day, I said no, in my mind. However, I thought I to give it a try. At least if it got embarrassing at some point, the day would still end, and hopefully, I wouldn't know anyone else. I said "yes".

I could feel within my bones that this wasn't for me at all. I felt bored; how much more the audience? It felt more like mass, and not worship

My friend then took over the next session, and I thought, thank goodness!

Experience bagged and dusted.

Read More: [5 Crazy Sabotaging Myths about Introverts That Need to be Debunked](#)

## Scenario 2 - Debator

I've been on a debate team before in my church, just because they agreed I would write the content, and I loved it, until everyone backed out when it was time to debate. OMG!

The topic was "Age Matters in Marriage: For or Against the Motion". My team spoke against the motion.

How on earth did I get on that team? 😂

I conducted some interesting research and came up with some interesting points. However, we resolved that we'd need a skilled debater to articulate them better. Everyone agreed, until the day before.

Well, I said "yes" to the experience.

....and we lost gracefully.....2 points apart....

Not that bad, right?

### **Scenario 3 – Path Finding Game**

A few of us were called to the front of the church for a demonstration. It was a pathfinding game, so I was blindfolded. I was the only one still lost in the maze after about 30 minutes; the others were done. My bishop had to dismiss me so he could continue preaching 😊

For a few minutes, I felt like vanishing into thin air like Enoch in the good book.

I was fine again in no time.

### **Scenario 5 – Athlete**

I competed in a 100-meter race in Senior High School in my 1<sup>st</sup> year....

I thought I already had long legs, so I didn't need much preparation.

I thought wrong; I came in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, to my surprise.

### **Scenario 6 – Modelling**

I used to model often while watching shows like America's Next Top Model, imagining being on the runway, taking pictures, changing costumes, being on billboards, and being a brand ambassador someday.

I spent more time than I should have, but it was fun!

## Scenario 7

I learnt how to make a brooch. It's purple, with a large, beautiful crystal-like button in the centre of it and a pin attached at the back of it. I tried my best, but it looked like the comb of a hen struck by lightning. I still have it today 😂

### Here's the conclusion of the Matter

What am I saying? These things matter. They are all great... and none of these experiences are a waste at all. Maybe if I was intentional about them, I would've excelled beyond my wildest imagination.

By all means, try, if you want to, but don't be so thirsty that you drink from every cup handed to you.

- Focus more on what matters most in your life...spend more time on that, and have fun with the others. Stop saying “yes” to what you know is not for you.
- Once you're moving in the wrong direction, you will never get to your destination. If you do, it'll take you more time, resources, some more scars and perhaps less impact.
- Once you find the right path, keep moving. It doesn't matter if it's late or not. It's never too late to touch a soul.

*"If you can't fly, then run; if you can't run, then walk; if you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward"*

-Martin Luther King Jr

Guess what, hire me as your MC and your event will be as boring as  
..... (fill in the blank space).

As a brand ambassador for African print textiles, I would absolutely  
take it up!

As for that path-finding thing, I have better vision in my mind  
Running as an exercise, why not, but as for that 100-meter race, never  
again.

I'll buy a brooch any day!

These things matter, but I discovered they're not the main thing, for  
me, at least not now.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# How to Say No Without Guilt

*The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything.*

-Warren Buffet

Do Not Overcommit—Be Intentional

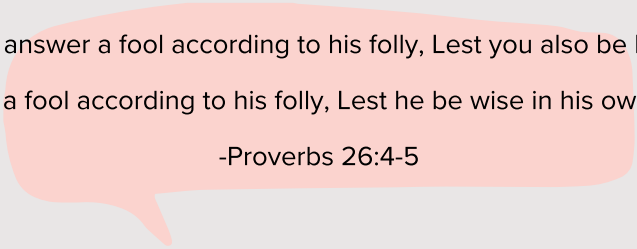
Not Every Statement Deserves a Response.

You don't have to respond to everything in speaking, and if you do need to speak but are not sure of what you think at that moment, especially in dicey situations, say you'll get back to them.

However, do get back. Don't take forever to respond.

Some situations deserve a clear stance, a "yes" or "no" answer. Others deserve parables, facial expressions and sounds like, *hmm*, *erhn*.

Use parables if you have to, words of wisdom.



“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.  
Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.”

-Proverbs 26:4-5

Answer a fool according to his folly or do not answer a fool according to his folly; use wisdom!

To receive understanding like King Solomon, ask God, like the good book spells out, and get wisdom as a bonus (1 Kings 3:9).

Yes, you can say no, respectfully but firmly. It is possible!

Read More: [10 Honest Strategies on How to say no without saying “NO!”](#)

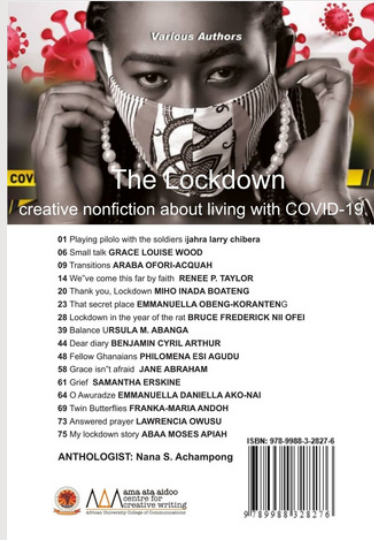
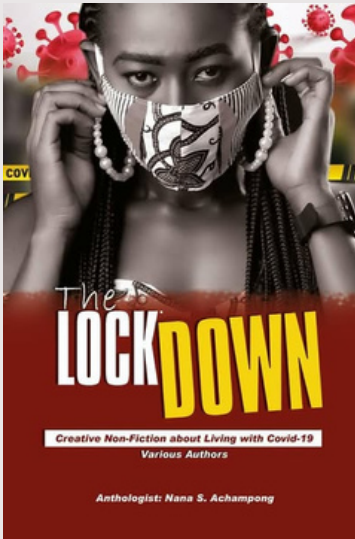
- 1.Thanks, but I'll pass. I really don't feel like it today.
- 2.This is not really my thing. Maybe I'll try it some other time.
- 3.Sorry, I have an appointment to catch. Let's try this some other time.
- 4.I'd love to, but my weekend is already booked.
- 5.That's so thoughtful of you, but I'm fine.
- 6.Very kind of you, but I'd prefer.....Thanks.
- 7.I like it with...../without.....
- 8.Hmm, looks yummy, but not today (remember the worst thing you ever tasted)
- 9.Do not respond right away. Take enough time (use your discretion) to think about it thoroughly. Say something like, "I'll get back to you on this," or "I'll think about this," or "I'm not in the right frame of mind. Can we discuss this much later?" Do get back, and this time, with all the confidence you respond and actually mean it.
- 10.Simply say "NO", thanks, without giving any explanation. (Know when to say it like this.)



# Conclusion

1. You don't have eternity on earth to waste time trying everything.
2. Discover your purpose.
3. Take responsibility for the outcome of your choices.
4. Work on your soft skills.
5. Start now. Start from wherever you wish to, but by all means keep moving forward. The regret most successful people have is that they didn't start early enough.
6. People-pleasing shows a lack of purpose and confidence. A purpose-driven life makes you fulfilled, gives you confidence, and promotes an environment where you are respected by the values you hold dear in the long run.
7. Distractions aren't always bad.
8. Work smart, not just hard.
9. For your own sake and that of others you'll impact, always strive to be a better version of yourself.
10. Purpose determines direction. Direction determines association, and association determines actions.
11. Be accountable to God and your inner circle.

# Also by the Author



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- [This is Why Some People Are Overly Critical About You](#)
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- [12 Subtle Things the Ghanaian Society Teaches that No One Talks About](#)
- [2 Valid Reasons Why No One Cares to Listen to You](#)
- [How to Avoid Toxic People: Mental Health](#)

# References

- Appetite for Wealth: Taste for Fulfilment
- Dealing with Difficult People (Harvard Review Press)
- Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ
- The Holy Bible (New King James Version)

# About the Book

It has become a common practice that instead of saying “no” the right way, we say “yes” and simply disappoint, which mars our reputation.

We must be bold enough to insist on our values and choose purpose over fear or intimidation.

Sharing some personal experiences, and in simple words, Emmanuella discusses purpose, why, when, and how to say “no,” and boundaries to help you to be able to optimise your life by prioritising what matters most and choosing opportunities wisely so you won't have to say “yes” to everything.

## About the Author

Emmanuella Obeng-Koranteng is a Project Management Professional, a co-author and a personal development Blogger.

She is an ordinary woman with an extraordinary growth mindset, passionate about creative writing (non-fiction), continuous learning, purpose and authenticity.



She is the founder and CEO of Page Writer Ghana. Her mission is to inspire many to identify and pursue their life's purpose and to be the people God has called them to be.

Emmanuella holds a first degree in Geography and Rural Development from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST) and a second degree in MPhil Environmental Science from the University of Ghana, Legon.