Bruce A. Thomas
Leadership & Development

THE POWER OF NO

WORKBOOK

Make Room for What Matters Most



Welcome: Your No Makes Room for Yes

A guide to stronger boundaries, clearer priorities, and intentional leadership

WHY THIS MATTERS

Saying yes to every request can crowd out your priorities. A thoughtful no can protect your time, energy, commitments, and relationships.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Work through each exercise at your own pace. Click into the light-colored response areas, type your answers, and save a copy of the PDF. Revisit your action plan after seven days.

A LEADERSHIP LENS

Healthy boundaries are not a rejection of people. They help you communicate expectations, make thoughtful tradeoffs, and honor important commitments.

MY INTENTION

What would become possible if I protected more time for what matters?

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1 Notice Where Yes Is Costing You

Start with awareness rather than judgment.

What requests, tasks, or commitments do I need to say no to?

Where do I feel overextended or taken for granted?

What important things am I saying no to when I say yes to others?

What is one boundary I would like to strengthen?

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2 Understand the Yes Trap

Explore the beliefs and emotions that influence your decisions.

When I say yes, I often hope others will see me as...

When I consider saying no, I worry that...

What do I gain by saying yes? What does it cost me?

What belief about saying no would I like to change?

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3 Know Your Priorities

Clarity makes respectful boundaries easier to communicate.

What matters most to me in this season of life or leadership?

What would I like to spend more time on?

What would I like to spend less time on?

What are my three most important priorities right now?

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4 Practice the Language of No

Be clear, respectful, and honest. You do not need a lengthy defense.

A SIMPLE NO

"Thank you for thinking of me, but I cannot commit to that."

A PRIORITY-BASED NO

"I am focused on an existing commitment and cannot take on more right now."

BUY TIME

"Let me review my priorities and get back to you by tomorrow."

OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE

"I cannot lead this, but I can share a resource or help identify another option."

A WORKPLACE TRADEOFF

"I can take this on. Which current priority should move to make room?"

Write a respectful no for a situation you are currently facing.

How will I respond if someone pushes back?

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5 Build Your Saying-No Plan

Choose three situations and define what you will say or do.

ACTION 1

When this situation happens:

I will say or do:

ACTION 2

When this situation happens:

I will say or do:

ACTION 3

When this situation happens:

I will say or do:

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6 Your Seven-Day Boundary Challenge

Small, consistent actions help new habits stick.

Day 1 Notice one automatic yes.

Day 2 Pause before agreeing to a request.

Day 3 Practice one respectful no.

Day 4 Name a priority before making a commitment.

Day 5 Renegotiate or delegate one task appropriately.

Day 6 Protect a block of time for what matters.

Day 7 Reflect on what changed and what comes next.

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7 Reflect, Commit, and Keep Growing

Turn insight into a sustainable leadership practice.

What did I learn about myself from this workbook?

What improved when I communicated a clear boundary?

What will I continue practicing over the next 30 days?

CONTINUE YOUR GROWTH

Stronger boundaries are one part of intentional leadership.
Explore executive coaching, leadership development, and workshops designed to help you lead with confidence, clarity, and purpose.

Visit bathomasleadership.com | Email bruce@bathomasleadership.com

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About Me

Bruce A. Thomas

Leadership Development Expert & Executive Coach

I believe that great leadership begins with intentional choices: how we manage our time, honor our commitments, and invest in the people and priorities that matter most.

As the founder of **Bruce A. Thomas Leadership & Development**, I help executives, emerging leaders, teams, and organizations grow through coaching, leadership development, and practical learning experiences.

My perspective is shaped by **42 years of public service**, including 22 years in the U.S. Air Force and 21 years as a federal civilian leader. I retired as Director of Security & Emergency Services with the Defense Logistics Agency.

I am an **ICF Professional Certified Coach (PCC)**, a Maxwell Leadership Certified Team member, and a Dale Carnegie-certified leadership trainer. My work focuses on self-awareness, communication, relationships, and purposeful action.



Let's Grow Together!

If this workbook helped you recognize where a stronger boundary could improve your life or leadership, I invite you to explore how coaching and leadership development can help you take your next step.

bathomasleadership.com

bruce@bathomasleadership.com | 703-350-9710

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