

## EKTIMIS.com Quote of the Month

**Date** December, 2010

**“It is always better to say “No” than it is to say “Yes,” if you have no desire or intention to follow through; the former fosters integrity and respect, while the latter undermines them.”**

Virtually everyone is confronted with a question or an inquiry that requires a “Yes” or “No” reply everyday. Think back to the past 24 hours and reflect on such questions and inquiries in your case. In most of these (cases), your response usually determines the next course of action for the inquirer. For example, if you were ordering a sandwich from a fast food restaurant, and you were asked, “Would you like sliced tomatoes with that?” your reply would lead the cashier to take the appropriate action in preparing your sandwich.

However, there are situations when a “Yes” or “No” reply from you communicates a follow-up action by you to the inquirer. In other words, your reply sets an expectation of subsequent action on your part—action that the inquirer will take to heart or depend on thereafter. And, this is when the issues of integrity and respect come into play.

For example, if a friend asked you, “Would you be willing to pick me up and give me a ride to work tomorrow morning?” and you said, “Yes,” your reply would set an expectation in the mind of your friend that you would show up in the morning to pick him or her up for work. Your failure to do so may result in your friend being reprimanded for being late or missing work all together. But, the consequences don’t end there; your failure may also lead to a loss of respect and integrity on your part—in the eyes of your friend.

The degree of loss or gain of respect will depend on two factors: the specific situation (along with the magnitude of potential consequences), and the person asking the question or making the inquiry. The inquirer may be your child, your husband or wife, your parent, your best friend, a significant other, a subordinate (at work), your boss, or a customer! When confronted with a “Yes” or “No” inquiry that requires a follow-up action, it is always best to say “No,” if you have no desire or intention to follow through—the consequences of saying “Yes” may be far greater than you realize!

(Comments are welcome at [ektimis.com](http://ektimis.com) or at my Blog: <http://thetoptenlawsofrespect.wordpress.com>)

### About the Author



Niyi Taiwo is the founder of EKTIMIS and the lead editor for the [EKTIMIS eLibrary articles](#). He is a speaker and the author of several books, including the [EKTIMIS Top Ten Laws series](#). He is a continuous improvement expert with over 21 years of industry experience – operational, management and consulting. He has been studying the topic of respect since 2004. He holds an undergraduate degree from WPI and a master’s degree from RPI. He is an organizational improvement and diversity consultant, a certified Lean Expert and an ASQ-certified Six Sigma Black Belt.