

Excerpts from 'Personal Development in 7 Words' by James Burgess

Here is a sample from the Ebook 'Personal Development in 7 Words' which in its complete form has 50 pages.

We hope these excerpts encourage you to purchase the complete Ebook which you can do by returning to http://www.7words.co.uk/ebooks/ebn_personaldevelopment

One way to understand what's going on is to use the following 7 Words model because, even though life is complex and difficult to understand, there are some primary concepts that are always true and meaningful to us all. The seven words that describe these are simple, and they are learned very early in life and can be made to apply to all aspects of life experience.

No is about excluding from your life anything which is not you and yours—claiming space and if necessary defending your territory. Sometimes that means refusing requests and even being a little selfish when you need to be.

Hello is to do with expanding your horizons and welcoming the new—new people and new ideas. It's about being open to consider another way of seeing things and having curiosity about what is not working well.

Thank You is to do with enjoying what there is, for what it's worth, and is experienced as a heart-feeling. It's the antidote to taking things for granted.

Goodbye recognises the need for endings—that there are sometimes big changes in life and therefore occasional major discontinuity. Key moments of change are Goodbye moments from which there's no going back. They need to be handled with great awareness, just because there **is** no going back.

Please has two facets: a clear sense of what you want and an attitude of supplication—how to realize your vision. Any type of relationship is a cooperative adventure where two or more people co-create a shared future. Without cooperation it simply can't happen.

Sorry concerns being fully adult and somewhat humble in the awareness of the negative impact you can have upon others. We may not even realize what we have been doing until someone reacts—and we need to be able to respond with a sense of awareness that the fault **may** lie with us.

Yes is about going with the flow and allowing yourself to be moved by the tides of change without resistance. At times this may mean overcoming our reactive reluctance, and then actively looking for points of agreement rather than imperfections in another's behaviour.

You will find that improvements will show in the way you relate to all other people and situations by following these basic ideas; so they will also show in how you relate to the world through career and vocation—and they will show in how it feels to be alive at this time, trying to be all you are, without compromise. The 7 words can be used to get clear about what's happening in any situation—and what can be done in a different way so that things move on towards the fulfilment of our dreams.

No

At first sight the No word might be thought daunting. It's usually the wrong answer—not what we want to hear—the response that stops us in our tracks. Or equally, the word we would rather not have to say to someone else because it's not what they want either. It may mean bother. It indicates refusals, rejection, absence and denial...also resistance, disagreement and opposition—and a string of other things that are often directly contrary to our sense of what we want.

And yet how could we learn without it? Without constraint, what is freedom? Without scarcity, what is abundance? Without selfhood, there would be no relationship. These aspects of human experience actually derive from the fact of limitation—as do compassion, patience, rationality and discipline—because they wouldn't be needed in a world without it. Learning and growing are punctuated again and again by No. We are stopped from taking a wrong direction, we rethink and reorient ourselves and then continue, having become a little wiser perhaps.

In particular, the physical body demonstrates increasingly clearly as we get older, that it has the 'right' and power to say No. It has always refused the abuses but rarely been heard, and now its voice is getting louder in complaint against our lack of adequate exercise, dietary excesses and living in an inappropriate environment. All the aches and pains, stiffness, tiredness and debilitation that we associate with ageing are signs that tell of the body's refusal.

No's keywords: firstly **boundaries** indicate the need to formulate a definition about inside and outside, without which nothing can be meaningfully fixed as this or that, me or not me, mine or not mine. **Identity** derives from this. Fuzzy boundaries mean a fuzzy identity. Equally an indistinct identity makes **choice** difficult—and yet choice is the one condition of free will. Our will is free except for the option of choicelessness, which is the one constraint—and it is felt more and more as we create an identity with increasingly greater clarity. Through these choices we express the **truth** of who and what we are. This applies to individuals, to groups, to corporations and nations.

Boundaries

We mark boundaries to establish where we 'draw the line'. If challenged, this is where we make our stand—to confront and engage. This is where we tell outsiders not to intrude further without permission because we will protect and defend our safety. Since we may not know if the unfamiliar is harmful or undesirable we tend to 'fail-safe' by rejecting first and asking questions later.

Often it's noticed that one person puts too much pressure upon another and is experienced as invasive. This can be physical, mental or emotional and can quickly lead to distress and offence. Who's to blame? It may be of interest to discuss this question and yet what does it really matter? The real issue is felt personally as '*how can I stop it happening?*' We cannot depend upon our society's justice system to take care of our needs for the maintenance of good boundaries, we ourselves have that responsibility and it requires us to be honest and forthright about our personal power. We need to use whatever strengths we have to defend our position and we need to be both firm and clear in the application of them in support of our statement of negation. One could, as a matter of elegance, be courteous and gentle, offering

words of explanation with the words of refusal, yet these are not significant issues—what is significant is clarity and firmness: *‘I am saying No. I mean No. I will not discuss or negotiate and if necessary I am strong enough to enforce my decision. The answer is No. I hope this does not offend and yet even if I do offend, I still have no intention whatever of changing my decision. No. Am I making myself clear?’* From this it is understood that we are presenting a resolute statement of our position.

If we build our houses on shifting sands we won’t be respected. It’s the same if we build our personalities on wavering boundaries and insubstantial beliefs. To have a clearly defined sense of what is suitable for us and what is not, we have to have a decided code of behaviour and keep to it even against the pushing and pulling of social pressure. This doesn’t mean we always stick to the same decision in all circumstances—it means that we have clear boundaries and we apply them. Perhaps according to mood there is flexibility, especially on weekends and holidays—yet always a bottom line. *‘Under no circumstances whatever will I allow such behaviour against me as long as I have the strength to prevent it’*. Where we draw that line and how often we relax our general policy of boundaries says much about our identity.

Dysfunctions

Not all expressions of the primary words are made consciously and there are ways to look at dysfunctional behaviours and communications using the 7 words. In any scenario or communication we can look for the clues that will let us know which of the 7 primary words is most evident. It will be evident sometimes by its presence and yet also sometimes by its lack. This is an important concept: the absence of a quality is an aspect of that quality. Each primary word will always be expressed according to individual perceptions and the degree of awareness present in the person. A very aware person will mostly operate in a more refined way than a very unaware person, whose behaviour and communication is more likely to be gross. It is useful to have some definition by which this aspect can be approached and the following 4 levels are put forward as a model:

4 Levels of Use

1. **Self-abuse** Attracting experiences that hold us as victims to childhood patterns of being abused.
2. **Abuse** Consciously refuting victim consciousness whilst unconsciously becoming the persecutor instead.
3. **Appropriate Use** Working with awareness of the contours of our neurotic characteristics, trying to heal them.
4. **Sacred Use** Living as a model of virtue, healed and emotionally clear.

	More Gross → More Refined			
	Self-Abuse	Abuse	Normal Use	Sacred Use
<i>No</i>	Over-Austerity	Harshness	Choice	No False Gods
<i>Hello</i>	Isolated Delusion	Gossip	Sociable Sincerity	Communion
<i>Thanks</i>	Narcissism	Charm	Appreciation	Mystical Union
<i>Goodbye</i>	Undernourishment	Rejection	Completion	Renunciation
<i>Please</i>	Depression	Aggression	Assertiveness	Devotion
<i>Sorry</i>	Guilt	Blame	Honour	Forgiveness
<i>Yes</i>	Self-Indulgence	Parasitism	Responsiveness	Surrender

No

A strong, yet abusive No may be seen as over-strict parenting, bullying authoritarianism and severity of discipline. If a child is raised by parents whose general demeanour is of this type, then they will necessarily take on those qualities, either in the active or passive sense, to a certain degree. In the self-abusive case, the child will grow to become an adult who continues to be subjected to strict authority and bullying. In an extreme case they may be the type that has been dominated at public school and then decide to join the armed forces, police or other highly disciplined institution where they become a person who continues to attract powerful, dominating types to play out the re-echo of their habituated childhood expectations.

In the abusive case, the child grows to become what they perceived either or both parents to have been: dominating and controlling others, denying independence of identity, intruding upon others without regard for their boundaries. In practice these two modes of behaviour alternate within one person, although one will be more frequently visible. So the child victim becomes both adult victim and persecutor. Let's not be too horrified when it is suggested that all of us have these tendencies no matter how hard we try to contain them and educate our lower selves to a higher consciousness. Occasionally both forms of behaviour—self-abusive and abusive distortions of the No archetype—will show in each of us. A typical way to recognise this dysfunction is where No is not the beginning of negotiation but the premature end of the possibility of dialogue.