



# THE GOLDEN EGG

One word can make everything easier

*When there is too much in that basket.*



With competing demands on time and resources, trying to take on too much can make anyone's "basket" of tasks difficult to manage. Yet many people seem unable to say "no" to more projects. Saying no can be an important way to manage existing commitments and stay firmly focused on one's purpose.

Frances Hesselbein was CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA from 1976 to 1990. She was so successful that Fortune magazine voted her "Best Nonprofit Manager in America." In her book, "My Life in Leadership,"

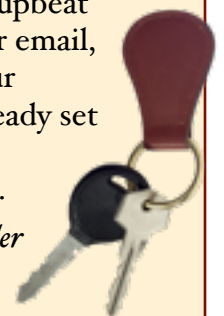
Hesselbein describes how she kept the Girl Scouts "mission focused." With every opportunity that came along for the organization to partner or try something new, she asked herself whether it would be good for the girls. Often, she said no. Hesselbein tied her decisions to purpose. This is the opposite of what many organizations and individuals do when an opportunity -- or demand -- arises. It worked; during those years, the Girl Scouts grew from wavering to vibrant.

Often, fear of "missing out" or of incurring someone else's ill will is the barrier to saying no. Hesselbein models mission-based decision-making: "*Is this what we are about?*" and "*What am I trying to accomplish and will this help?*" Saying no eliminates overflow, leading to an enhanced ability to manage that basket.

## Present Yourself!

When it comes to emails, there is no such thing as tone of voice or even a real live smile to communicate your disposition. Yet there is a way to set a positive tone right from the start. I like to use the word "Greetings!" immediately after the salutation. No one who says this word can be in a bad mood. It conveys a positivity; a smile is implied. Don't believe me? Try saying "Greetings!" without smiling. It would only work for someone visiting Earth from another planet. With such an upbeat kickoff to your email, the rest of your message is already set up for a more receptive read.

*-Jennifer Lader*



## WORDLIFTING: WHEN LISTING A SERIES, COMMA USAGE MAY GIVE PAUSE

When listing a series of three or more items, it is a matter of style whether to use a comma before the "and" that helps to wrap up the series. AP Style, used for many newspapers and magazines, says that a comma should not be used: *The young men appeared on the street wearing black shoes, sneakers and monster slippers.*

Yet, apart from newspapers, many people will read the lack of the comma in



this series as an error. This is because both MLA -- meaning Modern Language Association, the standard in schools -- and Chicago style -- often used in book publishing -- require use of the comma. The general population has therefore internalized the idea that a comma before the "and" or other conjunction is needed. *To avoid the appearance of an error when describing a series or list in letters, emails, and other reports, use the comma.*

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