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January 3rd

## BE RUTHLESS TO THE THINGS THAT DON'T MATTER

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“How many have laid waste to your life when you weren’t aware of what you were losing, how much was wasted in pointless grief, foolish joy, greedy desire, and social amusements—how little of your own was left to you. You will realize you are dying before your time!”

—SENECA, *ON THE BREVITY OF LIFE*, 3.3b

One of the hardest things to do in life is to say “No.” To invitations, to requests, to obligations, to the stuff that everyone else is doing. Even harder is saying no to certain time-consuming emotions: anger, excitement, distraction, obsession, lust. None of these impulses feels like a big deal by itself, but run amok, they become a commitment like anything else.

If you’re not careful, these are precisely the impositions that will overwhelm and consume your life. Do you ever wonder how you can get some of your time back, how you can feel less busy? Start by learning the power of “No!”—as in “No, thank you,” and “No, I’m not going to get caught up in that,” and “No, I just can’t right now.” It may hurt some feelings. It may turn people off. It may take some hard work. But the more you say no to the things that don’t matter, the more you can say yes to the things that do. This will let you live and enjoy your life—the life that *you* want.