

Will you partner with me in the No? By: Rebecca Liston

Around these here parts, we have a core value of Partnership.

We like to enter into conversations from a place of Partnership.

We like to enter into client relationships from a place of Partnership.

We like to BE in Partnership. *(Even when we choose to be alone for a bit... 'cuẏ we're introverts, after all, each one of us!)*

A couple weeks back we had a sales call. It was a good one. You know the type where you're practically dancing in your seat at the prospect of working with someone? Yep, it was one of those.

And we left that call, Sarah and I, grinning like crazy, and I said to her: "How freakin' cool would it be to partner with them?!?" And we agreed, together, that it would indeed be freakin' cool.

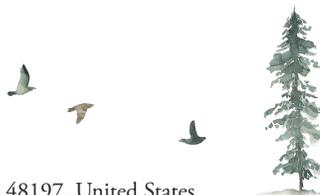
We left these prospective clients with a plan of how we felt we could best serve them moving forward. We talked to them about work we had done with other clients, explaining our process and our "take" on business (and life). And at the end of the call, we suggested that they take some time to sit with it all, for it's a Big Commitment to Partner With Us, and we want to make sure it feels good for all involved. We tell them to reach out with any other questions, and that we are ready to move forward when / if they are!

Fast-forward a few days. The prospective new clients reach out and want to connect again. We cross our fingers. We're pumped to talk to them again! We move some things around in the calendar to accommodate them, knowing that they'd appreciate a quick response to their queries (or just like to get started working with us sooner than later!)

We go to the call with them, open, ready to answer questions, available to begin work should they so choose.

But instead of the "YES WE WANT TO WORK WITH YOU" we had been hopeful to receive, we heard the words, "We sat with this, and it just doesn't feel right to us at this time."

Now, I will be the first to admit I was disappointed.



But then I took a moment to reflect.

These folks had reached out to talk with us, via Zoom, on video, face-to-face, to tell us “no.”

They did not avoid contact with us.

They did not slip their answer into an email.

They did not whisper their “no” into the wind and assume we would hear it.

No.

They emailed and asked to set up a conversation. They took time to talk with us and to explain their process. They did not hide. They did not delay. They did not shy away from what was, no doubt, not the easiest thing to do.

Instead, they approached us with their “no” as they had approached us in the beginning when we explored how we might work together: From a Place of Partnership.

In the end, I felt honoured.

Honoured that they respected us enough to be honest and forthright.

Honoured that they appreciated our time and our energy.

Honoured, really, to simply have met them.

And grateful...deeply grateful to them for meeting us where we like to Be...even with their “no.”

As the days have unfolded from here, I am trying to watch my own self and my interactions with others more closely. Oh, I am good at approaching in Partnership when I am happy, when I am a “yes,” when it feels good to me. But how do I do when I am tired? When I am sad? When things don’t feel especially good, or I don’t actually want to do what has been requested of me? How do I do when I am feeling a “no?”

The bar has been set by these prospective clients. I now know what it is to be honoured in The No. I hereby pledge to do my utmost to move forward with this knowing, and Partner as well in the Nos as I do in the Yeses.

