

STORY
WALKER
365

7 to 10
YEARS

BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

THE NO THAT MATTERS

A Story by Arkedelic



STUDENT CONNECTION

THE NO THAT MATTERS

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THE NO THAT MATTERS

It started with a new assistant coach.

Coach Adil had left for two months to care for his sick father, and a temp coach took over the Sunshine Squad's evening football training.

He was loud. Too loud. He smiled too much, and laughed a little too hard at things that weren't funny.

On day three, he ruffled Nik's hair so often it left it flat on one side. Nik didn't like it, but he didn't say anything.

When he offered to show Sam how to "position her hips properly for a stronger kick" and moved behind her to adjust her stance, Sam wriggled away.

"Let me try it my way," she said quickly.

The temp coach laughed. "Feisty one. I like that."



Something about that line made Sam's stomach drop.

Later, Sam told Jane and Mario.

“Maybe he's just being encouraging?” Jane said, unsure. “But yeah... that sounded weird.”

“It's not what he says,” Sam muttered. “It's how he says it. And how close he stands. Even when no one's around.”

“Does your stomach twist?” Mario asked. “Mine did once when a grown-up tried to playfully grab me from behind and wouldn't stop when I said 'enough.'”

Sam nodded.



Jane leaned forward. “That feeling is real. My mom says if something feels wrong, it probably is.”

“Even if the person hasn't ‘done’ anything exactly wrong?” Nik asked, joining them. “I mean, what if we overreact?”

Sam looked at him sharply. “It's not overreacting if it's your body.”

The next evening, the temp coach tried to joke with Sam again. This time, she took two steps back.

“Please don't touch me,” she said — clearly, and loudly.

A few other kids turned to look. The coach's smile faltered.

“Woah, relax, kiddo. I'm just—”

“I said no,” Sam repeated.

That night, she told her father. Calmly. Factually. Clearly.

He looked at her for a moment, then said, “Thank you for telling me. That was the right thing to do.”

By the next week, Coach Adil was back.

No explanation. Just a quiet change.

But Sam noticed something else: the team now had a small poster by the entrance.

Your body belongs to you.
No one gets to touch you without your permission.
If something feels wrong, say something. To someone you trust. Always.

“Did your dad speak to the school?” Jane whispered one day.

Sam shrugged. “I think he did. I didn’t ask.”

“But aren’t you curious?”

“A little. But mostly, I’m... relieved.”

Nik smiled. “I’m proud. You said what I was too nervous to.”

Sam looked at him. “You can still say it. Anytime. To anyone.





Loudly.”

Mario grinned. “We should make wristbands. Like a team motto. My body, my rules.”

“Or a chant,” Jane added. “No means no — even if it’s whispered!”

That week, something shifted.

Not just in football.

Sam stood taller. Nik spoke firmer. Even Mario started saying “no” when people took his fries without asking.

Because saying no isn’t about drama.
It’s about dignity.

And sometimes, the bravest play on the field... is standing your ground.

THE END

THE POWER OF MY NO

What you need:

A few role-play cards (you can make them yourself!), a parent or friend to practise with, and a safe space where everyone agrees to listen and respect each answer.

HOW TO DO:

- 1 On small slips of paper, write simple everyday situations, like:
 - A friend borrows your toy without asking.
 - An older kid tries to hug you when you don't want to.
 - Someone keeps teasing you even after you say stop.
 - A grown-up insists on a favour that makes you uncomfortable.
 - You want to leave a game, but your friends say "just one more round."
- 2 Take turns drawing a card and acting out how to respond.
 - Practise saying "No" clearly — not rudely, not shyly, but firmly.
 - Add your body language: stand tall, look up, and use a calm voice.

- 3 After each round, talk about how it felt — both to say “no” and to hear it.
- 4 End the activity by creating your personal “No List” — moments where your “no” will always matter (for example: unwanted touch, being pressured, or when your comfort feels ignored).

Reflection/Purpose: This activity builds inner strength by helping children rehearse their voice in safe, everyday contexts. It teaches that “no” isn’t about anger: it’s about respecting yourself and others. By learning to use calm words, confident posture, and trusted support, children see that their boundaries deserve to be heard, protected, and honoured, always.

FIVE FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT BOUNDARIES IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM



1. ELEPHANTS HAVE 'RESPECT CIRCLES'

In elephant families, space matters. When a younger elephant wants to play, it often stretches its trunk toward the elder's face, but waits before touching. If the older one stays still, it's a yes. If she turns away or lifts a foot, it's a clear no. The herd learns to respect that signal — no questions asked.

2. PENGUINS SAY NO POLITELY — WITH A BOW!

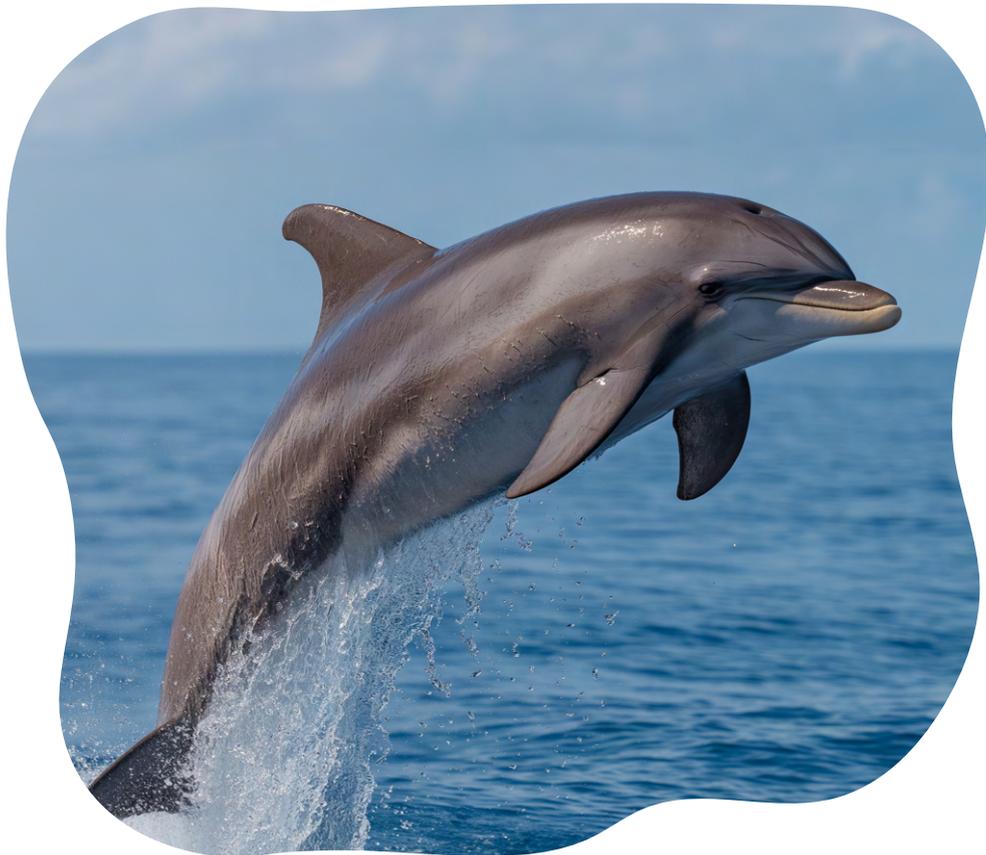
During nesting season, male penguins sometimes offer pebbles to females as a gift. But if she's not interested, she simply looks away and gives a short bow. It's her version of "No, thank you." The male understands and moves on — no drama, no chase.

3. CATS USE THEIR EARS AND TAILS TO SET LIMITS

When a cat flicks its tail or turns its ears sideways, it's sending a boundary message: I'm done. Ignore that, and you might get a hiss. Cats remind us that “no” doesn't always need words — body language can speak loudly too.

4. WOLVES HAVE RULES FOR RESPECT

In a wolf pack, even the leader doesn't take what it wants without permission. Wolves communicate limits through posture. A lowered head means “I accept,” while a raised paw can mean “Not now.” Those cues keep harmony and trust within the group.



5. DOLPHINS KNOW WHEN TO STEP BACK CONVERSATIONS

Dolphins love company but also value space. They use clicking sounds and gentle taps to signal when playtime's over. Scientists have seen one dolphin swim away mid-game and the others immediately pause, respecting the signal. In their world, no means not now, not never.



Image Courtesy: Midjourney

THE LINE IN THE SAND

The sun was melting into gold over the football field when Ama sprinted to the goalpost, her braids flying behind her. She'd been training hard for weeks — faster runs, sharper kicks, steadier aim.

But lately, practice hadn't felt the same.

Coach Dumo, the new substitute, clapped loudly as she scored. "That's my star player!" he boomed, coming closer than Ama liked. He patted her back once, then again, his hand staying a second too long.

Ama forced a smile. "Thanks, Coach."

He grinned. "Don't be shy! You've got talent. I just need to help you loosen up."

That night, Ama couldn't sleep. Her stomach felt tight. The next day, she told her best friend, Kito.

"Maybe he's just friendly," Kito said carefully. "But if it feels wrong, it's wrong."

Ama nodded. "It's like my body says no, even when my mouth doesn't."

At the next practice, when Coach Dumo reached out to "guide her stance" again, Ama stepped back. Her voice shook, but it came out steady enough.



“Please don’t touch me.”

The field went silent. A few other players stared. The coach laughed awkwardly. “Relax, Ama. I was only—”

“I said no.”

Ama’s heart hammered, but she didn’t move.

And then...

- What did Ama’s teammates do when they heard her say no?
- How did Coach Dumo react after being told to stop?
- Did Ama tell someone at home or in school what happened next?
- How might her courage help other kids feel safer speaking up?
- What could the team do to make sure everyone’s “no” is always respected?

Your turn to finish the story

See you next Monday with another interesting story!

Got feedback or a suggestion? We would love to hear it!
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