

# “Yes, and...”

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We’ve all done it. Whether it was a trip to Florida or some other warm destination, our plans were ruined because of a constant downpour. Or a ski trip to Colorado was a bust because of the unusually warm winter. Whatever the case, our reality didn’t measure up to our expectations and we railed against whomever or whatever seemed most responsible (or closest) at the time. So, three or five, or however many days slip through our hands in disgust, depression or some other form of oblivion when it could all have been different with a shift in perspective.

Maybe you’ve experienced this as well. Perhaps on that rainy trip to the South, you read a book that changed your life, or happened upon a new relationship you never would have discovered if you had spent your time on the beach as planned. If we had stayed holed up in our room in a foul and bitter mood, blaming this one or that thing, we would have missed these wonderful adventures. Sometimes we just have to open our eyes and look at a situation from a fresh perspective.

I remember an exercise called, “Yes, and...” Whenever a person spoke the only reply allowed had

to begin with “Yes, and...” It wasn’t long before we discovered the power of this imaginative thinking. “It’s raining.” “Yes, and...” “Our new uniforms didn’t arrive in time for our performance.” “Yes, and...” Rather than commiserating and wallowing in the unforeseen situation, possibilities begin to form, bringing unexpected—and wonderful—results. Again, it’s all in the perspective.

This reaction allows us to be present with the way things are but to respond with a new question, “What do we want to do from here?” Now we begin to see all kinds of new possibilities and pathways to explore.

What’s your biggest challenge? What student or situation causes you the most frustration and seems nearly unbearable? Perhaps, you would benefit from taking another look and asking, “What am I not seeing here?” “Is there another way to look at this?” Are you even present

in this situation anymore or are your responses knee jerk reactions based solely on a perception formed days, months, or even years ago? Maybe it would help to *look again* without the scripted response or *resisting* the way things are. Join in the adventure instead.

“Indeed, the capacity to be present to everything that is happening, without resistance, creates possibility” (Zander and Zander, *The Art of Possibility*, 2000). Isn’t this what education is all about; discovering possibilities and exploring new things? When our attention is focused on how wrong things are, we lose the ability to think outside the box and see new possibilities. It’s all in our perspective; how we think about things.

James Allen wrote in his timeless classic, *As A Man Thinketh*, “All that a man achieves or fails to achieve is a direct result of his own

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thoughts.” Our life and actions move in the direction of our thoughts. I recently heard someone say, “If you don’t like where you’re headed or what you’re thinking, think a new thought.”

What possibilities would unfold if we thought of our current difficulties with the “Yes, and...” approach? What if we took a new thought regarding that troublesome student? The *Law of Attraction* is based on the principle that we attract into our lives whatever we focus on. Where’s your focus? What are you thinking? An accurate indication may be found in what you say. What do you say about that student to other teachers or staff members? Is there room for change or new possibilities?

This is not ‘mind over matter’ gobbly gook. I’m talking from experience and you know it’s true too. Our perspective or focus will either feed our hopes or confirm our fears. If we plan to change our situation or

the way we relate with a student, we cannot focus on things or people or circumstances that shift our gaze in the opposite direction of our intended result.

Albert Einstein said, “I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.” In other words, imagination is the force behind innovation, discovery, problem-solving, and peace-making. What would it hurt to dream a little? You might see that difficult student in a whole new way and propel him in a new direction.

It’s time to become the architect of your life, of your classroom, of your destiny. You can do it by managing what you think, the way you view a situation or student, or by what you’re imagining. It won’t be long before the quality of your life will begin to line up and match your thoughts. Now that’s a thought!



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