

## **SUMMARY:**

### **What was this idea again?**

"Yes, And" means to listen to, accept and build on another person's idea or request. It is the foundation of improvisational performance.

### **And what does this have to do with my job?**

Proactively using "Yes, And" in conversation with another individual requires that you are present, listening closely, and adding to their idea. Doing so makes the other person feel heard, validated, and supported. It tends to increase connection, trust, adaptability and creativity. It creates a very different dynamic than its arch nemesis, "Yes, But."

### **But what if I disagree with what the other person said?**

That's OK. Actively cultivating a "Yes, And" mentality will grow your ability to accept and build on ideas that you may initially resist. Rather than instantly rejecting someone else's idea, you will create space to evaluate ways you can support it, helping the relationship in the process. Ask yourself "*If I were to support this idea, how would I do it?*"

In addition, if you seek to understand the motivation or "why" of the person's request, you may be able to work together to create a mutually satisfying compromise. For example, it may not be possible to meet a request to hold an important meeting in Hawaii – but if the core motivation is for the team to get out of the office and have a change of scenery, there are other plenty of local destinations that can accommodate that motivation.

At the end of the day, the relationship is vital. If saying "Yes, And" isn't possible, ensure the requester leaves the interaction feeling actively heard and appreciated – not bluntly or tactlessly rejected.

### **What's the end goal?**

To develop relationships that are more collaborative and trusting and work groups that are more supportive and innovative.

### **How can I practice this?**

The easiest way (which isn't always easy!) is to literally use the words "Yes, and" when responding to someone else. Try to incorporate specific words used in their original sentence in your response.

## **SIMPLE ICE BREAKER EXERCISE**

### **Words of Wisdom**

**How:** Form a circle. The group will work together to create a sentence, one word at a time. Aim to create a quote you might see on a motivational poster - albeit a ridiculous one. For instance,

1<sup>st</sup> person: The

2<sup>nd</sup> person: Day

3<sup>rd</sup> person: Is

4<sup>th</sup> person: Won...

A player can end the sentence by saying "Period," at which time the next person starts a new sentence. Sentences must be grammatically correct but can be totally absurd.

**Why:** In addition to being a lot of fun, this activity helps us remember that everyone has something to contribute on a team. Sometimes your word will be big and zany, and sometimes only something simple like "the" or "a." Be flexible, and to do your best to step up or step back, depending on what is needed!

To see a slightly different version of this exercise in action visit: <https://youtu.be/aqaPoFOATGw>

To request information about additional improv-based training workshops contact  
Jon Ulrich, Executive Director, at [info@improvcincinnati.com](mailto:info@improvcincinnati.com) or 513.900.1110.

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