

Practice Applied Improv (1½ hours)

Creative Leaders need to be able to facilitate co-creative emergent thinking among diverse groups of people and lead the group to positive outcomes. As you have just learned, the simple phrase “Yes, and ...” can be an incredibly powerful tool for empowering others in creative collaboration. In this assignment you will practice and observe how “Yes, and...” leads to different responses and outcomes than “Yes, but ...”

Here's what you do:

1. Organize a small group of colleagues, co-workers, friends, or family. You can tell them that they are going to try out a technique to help groups become more co-creative and achieve positive outcomes
2. Choose a challenge that the group needs to solve or a topic to discuss. For example, at work you might discuss what to do for your next advertising campaign. At home you might want to talk about what to do for your next vacation.
3. Part I: With no instructions, start the group discussion by making an obviously unappealing (but marginally reasonable) suggestion – with some enthusiasm.
 - a. For example, you could suggest to your co-workers that for the next ad campaign you want to hire an airplane to fly a banner with your company's name over the city every Monday morning at 9:00am sharp.
4. Sit down and let the discussion proceed from there for 5 or so minutes, or until there is a natural lull in the discussion or other break point.
 - a. Note the mood, dynamics, roles people play, solutions, and other outcomes
5. Part II: Ask the group to start again, this time asking everyone to agree to follow one rule. The rule is that no matter what suggestion is made, the next response has to be “Yes, and...”.
 - a. This takes the form “Yes, what I like about your idea is and we could[.....”
 - b. The idea is to first acknowledge a previous idea by articulating something that you like about that idea, and then to build on it and/or take it in a new direction – always keeping the discussion moving towards positive outcomes.
- i. Ex: “Yes, what I like about your idea is that it adds a bit of fun – associated with our name -- right at the beginning of the work week, and we could have a radio spot air at the same time.”
6. Start the group discussion again by making the same obviously unappealing (but marginally reasonable) suggestion – with some enthusiasm.
7. Sit down and let the discussion proceed, making sure everyone follows the “Yes, and...” rule. Feel free to jump in with your own “Yes, and...”
 - a. Note the mood, dynamics, roles people play, solutions, and other outcomes
8. Ask the group to compare how these two approaches felt and to compare the solutions generated