



Book Club and Team Discussion Guide for

Say “Yes, And!” to Change

Thank you for reading **Say “Yes, And!” to Change** and for taking the next step by exploring it with others.

The ideas in this book are simple. Not always easy, but simple. When change shows up, most people instinctively respond with “yes, but.” We see the obstacle, the risk, the reason something won’t work.

Improvisers train themselves to respond differently. They respond with “Yes, And.” They accept what is happening and build from it.

That small shift unlocks creativity, collaboration, and momentum. It is also the core of the framework in this book.

The YES AND Framework helps you:

- Harness change instead of resisting it
- Unlock the brilliance already inside you and your team
- Transform apathy and disengagement into acceptance and excitement

But reading about these ideas is only the first step. Real insight often happens when people pause, reflect, and discuss what the ideas mean in their own context.

That is what this guide is for.

What This Guide Is (and What It Is Not)

This is not meant to be a workbook or a detailed course.

It is a **discussion catalyst** designed to help individuals, teams, and book clubs explore the ideas in the book together.

Each chapter section includes a few questions intended to spark conversation, reflection, and practical application.

The goal is not to get through every question. The goal is to create meaningful conversation.

If a discussion goes in a different direction than the guide suggests, that is perfectly fine. In fact, that is very “Yes, And.”

How to Use This Guide

This guide works well in several formats:

Team Learning Session

A leader or facilitator chooses a chapter and uses the questions to guide a discussion.

Book Club

Participants read the book in advance and meet to discuss the questions together.

Leadership Development

A group works through one chapter at a time over several sessions.

You might discuss the entire book in a single session or explore one chapter per meeting.

A simple approach is:

1. Review the chapter theme.
2. Choose 1–3 discussion questions.
3. Talk about how the ideas apply to real situations.
4. Identify one small action to try before the next meeting.

You do not need perfect answers. Curiosity is more important than agreement.

A Note for Facilitators

If you are leading the conversation, your role is not to provide answers. Your role is to create space for exploration.

Encourage people to build on each other's ideas. Listen for opportunities to respond with curiosity instead of correction. If the conversation slows, ask one more question.

In other words, facilitate the discussion the same way improvisers build a scene:

“Yes, And.”



Chapter 2 – Framing the Problem

Summary

Change feels overwhelming not because people are incapable, but because it disrupts habits, drains cognitive energy, and threatens emotional safety. Change isn't the real problem. Our brain's protective response to change is.

The chapter explains two key drivers of resistance:

1. **Cognitive Overload** – Change breaks autopilot. What used to be habitual now requires conscious effort, draining mental energy.
2. **Emotional Threat** – Change triggers fear around competence, identity, safety, and control.

Resistance doesn't usually show up as open defiance. It shows up as “Yes, but...,” a rational-sounding reflex that protects comfort while quietly stalling progress.

Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (For Individuals)

1. Think of a change you've been avoiding (big or small). Is the change itself actually difficult, or does it just feel mentally overwhelming?
2. In the website story, the resistance created more stress than the change itself. Where in your life has procrastination caused more suffering than action would have?



3. What habits or routines in your current role make your work manageable? How do you react when those habits are disrupted?
 4. The chapter describes change as draining your “mental battery.” What drains your battery the fastest during change: learning new systems, unclear expectations, loss of control, fear of looking incompetent, or something else?
 5. When you hear yourself say “Yes, but...,” what are you usually protecting? Your time, your competence, your comfort, your identity?
 6. The chapter suggests resistance is often a self-protective reflex. What part of you might be trying to stay safe when you resist change?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (For Teams & Leaders)

1. Where in our organization are we mistaking cognitive overload for resistance or laziness?
2. What recent change has broken habits for our team? How much conscious effort did we assume people had available?
3. How do we currently support people when their “mental battery” is low during transitions?
4. What unspoken fears might be operating during change here? (Fear of irrelevance? Fear of failure? Fear of losing status? Fear of incompetence?)
5. How often do we hear “Yes, but...” in meetings? Does it typically focus on threat or opportunity?
6. Are we creating space for people to voice emotional concerns about change, or are we expecting them to “just adapt”?
7. When rolling out change, do we address the emotional and identity impact, or only the tactical steps?
8. If resistance is often a protective reflex, how might our leadership approach shift from “overcoming resistance” to “reducing threat”?



Chapter 3 – The Change Response Ladder

Summary

Chapter 3 introduces the **Change Response Ladder**—a practical way to identify how you (and others) are responding to change *right now*, and how to move forward with intention instead of default reactions.

Rather than labeling people as “good” or “bad” at change, the Ladder shows six shifting response levels: **Hostility** → **Resistance** → **Apathy** → **Hesitation** → **Acceptance** → **Excitement**. The chapter highlights **apathy as the silent killer** (often more dangerous than hostility because it’s invisible), explains the **cost of staying low** (burnout, lost productivity, stalled innovation, turnover), and the **benefits of climbing even one rung** (faster adoption, psychological safety, creativity, momentum).

It also reframes change through the improv concept of an “**offer**”: not all change is good, but **all change is an invitation to respond**, and your power lives in that response. The chapter closes by raising the stakes: the world is accelerating, so the real question is how to become the kind of person/team that can handle *any* change.

Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. **Where are you on the Ladder right now** with a change you’re dealing with (at work or personally)? What specifically puts you on that rung?



2. Think about a time you were **apathetic** about a change. What caused the numbness? Was it overload, lack of trust, feeling powerless, too many changes, something else?
 3. The chapter says you don't need to jump to excitement—**one rung up can change everything**. What would “one rung up” look like for you this week (in behavior, not attitude)?
 4. When you're low on the Ladder, what do you tend to do: withdraw, complain, procrastinate, sabotage, overthink, go silent? What's your pattern?
 5. The chapter reframes change as an **offer**. What is one “inconvenient offer” you're currently getting from life/work, and what response would put your power back in your hands?
 6. The pace of change is accelerating. What is one habit, mindset, or practice you want to build so you become **more adaptable no matter what comes next**?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Teams/Leaders)

1. Where do you think our team/organization currently sits on the Ladder regarding *this* change: **apathy, hesitation, acceptance, resistance**? What evidence do we have (not guesses)?
2. The chapter suggests **silence is not buy-in**. Where might we be interpreting “no complaints” as success when it may actually be apathy?
3. Which rung do we *typically* aim for as leaders? Acceptance? And what would it take to create the conditions for **excitement** (ownership, creativity, energy), not just compliance?
4. The chapter outlines costs of staying low: burnout, productivity loss, stalled innovation, turnover. **Which of those costs are we already paying right now?** Where do we see it?
5. In the software company example, small involvement moves (asking “what are we missing?”, short input sessions, visibly acting on feedback) helped people



climb. **What are 1–2 specific “one rung up” moves we could make in the next 2 weeks?**

6. “Not all change is good... but all change is an offer.” How can we acknowledge the real downsides of a change **without** letting the organization get stuck low on the Ladder?
7. If the real question is “How do we become the kind of team that can handle any change?” what capabilities do we need to build? **Trust, communication norms, experimentation, faster learning loops, psychological safety?** Which one is most urgent?



Chapter 4 – The Solution: Yes, And!

Summary

Chapter 4 introduces **“Yes, And” as the solution** to the fear-based “yes, but” reflex and makes the case that two small words can create a big shift in how we respond to uncertainty.

Through the college orientation story, the chapter shows how “Yes, And” often looks like a **tiny, courageous step** taken while your brain is screaming “stay safe.” It then explains what “Yes, And” really means (and what it *doesn't*): it's **not agreement**, not forced positivity, and not being a pushover. It's a **mindset of openness, curiosity, validation, and forward-building**.

The chapter connects “Yes, And” to brain science (shifting from threat response to possibility response), illustrates how language maps to the Change Response Ladder, and outlines three outcomes of the mindset: **Harness Change, Unlock Brilliance, Transform Apathy into Excitement**. It also tackles the common objection (“I could never do improv”) by reframing improv as a **human skill** grounded in the Improviser's Mindset (fun, willingness to fail, focus on what you can control) and comfort stepping into uncertainty.

Finally, it introduces the **YES AND Framework** (Y, E, S, A, N, D) as a repeatable toolkit for turning the mindset into daily practice.

Discussion Questions



Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. In the orientation story, Avish takes a small risk (sitting next to two strangers) that changes everything. What's a "tiny Yes, And step" you've avoided lately because your brain wanted short-term safety?
 2. Where do you personally confuse "Yes, And" with being agreeable or saying yes to everything? What would it look like to use "Yes, And" without compromising your standards or boundaries?
 3. Think of a recent moment when you said (out loud or internally) "Yes, but..." What was the fear underneath it—failure, rejection, looking incompetent, losing control, wasting time?
 4. The chapter claims "Yes, And" can shift you from threat response to possibility response. What helps you move into possibility fastest? Curiosity, humor, support, time, clarity, small experiments?
 5. The Improviser's Mindset includes: have fun, be willing to fail, focus on what you can control. Which of those is hardest for you during change (and why)?
 6. The chapter says "certainty rarely comes first." Where are you waiting for certainty before taking action? What would a reasonable "try it anyway" version look like?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Teams/Leaders)

1. The chapter argues you can diagnose Ladder position by listening to language ("Yes, but..." vs "Yes, and..."). What phrases show up most in our culture, and what rung do they suggest we're on?
2. "Yes, And" is not agreement, it's a response mindset (listen, validate, stay curious, build on what's useful). How could we model that in meetings when we need to challenge an idea or say no?



3. The sales team example shows energy shifting when they reframed from “we don’t have time” to “small step for two weeks.” Where could we apply that exact pattern right now, turning a big change into a small pilot?
4. One outcome of “Yes, And” is psychological safety. What do people on this team need to feel safe enough to contribute ideas, especially when uncertain or skeptical?
5. The chapter distinguishes “surviving change” from using change to “unlock brilliance.” If we were truly using change as a launchpad, what behaviors would we see more of? Experimentation, speaking up, cross-team help, initiative?
6. The YES AND Framework is presented as a flexible toolkit. Which step do we most need right now as a team: Yield, Explore Core, Start Small, Access Creativity, Notice/Nurture Emotion, or Dig Deeper, and what’s happening that makes that step urgent?

Chapter 5 – Yield to What Is

Summary

Chapter 5 introduces the first step of the YES AND Framework: **Yield to What Is**—the ability to stop arguing with reality long enough to respond effectively.

Through Avish’s missed opportunity during COVID, the chapter shows how refusing to accept a new reality (“when will things go back to normal?”) keeps you stuck, drains energy, and leads to flawed plans. Yielding is not giving up; it’s like yielding in traffic: acknowledging what’s happening so you can move forward safely and intentionally.

The chapter distinguishes three responses:

- **“Yes, but”** (arguing with reality, staying stuck)
- **“Yes”** (resigned acceptance, heavy compliance)
- **“Yes, And”** (grounded acceptance + forward motion)

It expands yielding into three levels of reality (**external, interpersonal, internal**) and emphasizes letting go of the past (regret, resentment, old identity) to reclaim energy. Then it moves into building toward what could be—shifting from “back to normal” to “better than before,” using impossible goals and constraints (Jaws) as creative fuel, and co-creating solutions rather than dictating them.

Bottom line: **Yielding is the gateway to momentum, and the “And” is where brilliance begins.**

Discussion Questions



Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. Where in your life or work are you currently saying some version of: **“Yes, but this shouldn’t be happening”** or **“Yes, but once things go back to normal...”**?
 2. Avish describes how resisting reality drained more energy than adapting. Where are you spending energy on frustration, regret, or “should-have-beens” instead of action?
 3. The chapter names three realities to yield to: **external, interpersonal, internal**. Which one is hardest for you to face honestly, and why?
 4. What is something you need to **let go of** (a plan, a version of success, an identity, a grudge, an old method) in order to move forward?
 5. The chapter offers “Think better, not back.” What would it look like to ask: **“How can this new reality become even better than what I miss?”** in one area of your life?
 6. The chapter argues “impossible goals stir the soul.” What’s an “oh hell yeah” impossible goal you *want* to pursue? What makes it feel exciting (not exhausting)?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Leaders/Teams)

1. Where is our team or organization acting like **Borders** (hoping the disruption goes away) versus **Barnes & Noble** (yielding and adapting even imperfectly)?
2. What current change are we treating as temporary or “not real yet,” and what would shift if we fully accepted it as the new playing field?
3. Where do we see “Yes, but” thinking in our culture (timing, budget, workload, risk, “we tried that already”)? What does it prevent us from seeing?
4. The chapter says skipping yielding leads to flawed plans, divided focus, amplified emotion, and missed opportunities. Which of those four costs are we paying right now?



5. The chapter warns leaders not to show up like “Moses with tablets.” Where are we over-dictating change instead of inviting co-creation?
6. If constraints can be creative fuel (Jaws), what constraint are we currently complaining about, and how might we use it to spark innovation?



Chapter 6 – Explore and Express Your Core

Summary

Chapter 6 is about the second step in the YES AND Framework: **Explore and Express Your Core**. The core is the intersection of your strengths, passions, and values.

Exploring is the process of uncovering what is already true (not forcing an answer you think you “should” have). Expressing is taking that truth and intentionally building your work and life around it.

The chapter makes the case that this step is not a “nice-to-have.” It is the foundation for the three outcomes of the book:

- You harness change by using disruption as a reset that brings you closer to who you actually are.
- You unlock brilliance by identifying what your brilliance even is, then operating from it.
- You transform apathy into excitement by reconnecting people to work that fits who they are.

This chapter gives examples and tools for finding the core (Morning Pages, play and curiosity, inventories, asking others) and for expressing it (80/20 and the “one hour” idea, using the core as a decision filter, calendar protection, and aligning roles/goals to strengths). It also addresses the “what if I’m a jerk at my core?” objection by clarifying that core is not an excuse for bad behavior; it is a responsibility and a starting point that evolves.



Bottom line: When you know your core and build from it, work gets lighter, better, and more alive. That is how you create flow, momentum, and real engagement in the middle of change.

Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. What part of Mike's story hit you the most: the misery, the clarity moment, or the permission to change direction? Where might you be "slowly withering away" even if you look fine on the surface?
 2. When you think of your core as strengths + passions + values, which of the three is clearest to you right now, and which feels foggiest?
 3. Where do you catch yourself using "yes, but" language about your core? For example: "Yes, but that's not my job," or "Yes, but I don't have time to do more of what energizes me." What is that protecting you from?
 4. Think about your recent "flow" moments. What were you doing? What conditions were present? What does that tell you about your core?
 5. The chapter suggests multiple exploration tools (Morning Pages, play/curiosity, inventory, asking others). Which one are you most likely to actually do, and what would make it easier to start this week?
 6. If you applied the "Hell Yeah or No" test to your current workload, what are 1–2 "Hell Yeah" tasks you want more of, and 1–2 "heavy" tasks you want less of (even if you can't eliminate them completely)?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Leaders/Teams)



1. Where are we currently assigning work based on availability, job title, or “who did it last time,” instead of aiming roles and goals at people’s strengths? What is that costing us?
2. In what ways might apathy on our team be less about attitude and more about misalignment, where people do not get to use what they do best?
3. LEGO drifted away from its core under pressure, then recovered by refocusing. Where are we tempted to chase “non-core” initiatives right now because they feel urgent, trendy, or fear-based?
4. How safe is it here for someone to say, “This is not where I’m strongest,” or “This work drains me,” without being labeled difficult or not a team player?
5. If we protected “core time” the way we protect meetings, what would change? What is one practical thing we could stop, shorten, or redesign to create more core time?
6. What is one decision coming up soon where we could use a core filter question as a team: “Does this align with who we are at our core?”



Chapter 7 – Start Small, Take Small Steps

Summary

Chapter 7 is the “And” in action. You can set an impossible goal, you can yield to reality, you can know your core, but none of it matters if you never take the first step. This chapter argues that massive change rarely starts with massive action. It starts with one small, doable move that creates momentum and feedback.

The 48-Hour Film Project story shows how one tiny commitment (clicking register) snowballed into a whole creative track record. This is connected to improv: great scenes die when performers try to control the ending (Kool-Aid), and great progress dies when people demand certainty and perfection before they begin.

The leadership angle is that small steps create psychological safety. You do not remove guardrails, you shrink the task so experimentation stays safe and reversible. The chapter then gets practical with four tools: shrink the task, identify the next step (important, doable, or fun), use forcing functions, and use the AAA formula (act, analyze, adjust) so you do not “take small steps” in the wrong direction forever.

Bottom line: you cannot control the whole change. You can control your next step. Do that, learn from it, then take the next one.



Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. Where do you default to “Yes, but I’m not ready” in your life or work right now? What is the cost of waiting for readiness?
 2. Think about the project you are procrastinating. If you had to shrink the starting point until it felt almost embarrassingly easy, what would the first step be?
 3. Which “Next Step” question is most useful for you: most important next step, most doable next step, or most fun next step? Why do you think that one works on your brain?
 4. Where have you made the mistake of trying to “script the ending” too early, like the Kool-Aid story? What got flatter or more painful because you were dragging yourself toward a pre-chosen outcome?
 5. What forcing function would actually work on you (not the version of you in a productivity book)? A deadline, body-double, public commitment, app blocker, or something else?
 6. The AAA formula includes Analyze and Adjust, not just Act. Where are you currently “posting every day for three years” in some area of your life, taking steps but not learning? What would you analyze this week, and what is one adjustment you would make?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Leaders/Teams)

1. Where do we, as a team, ask for giant leaps instead of small visible steps? What would it look like to redesign that change so the first step is safe, reversible, and instructive?



2. Where might micromanagement be showing up as fear (fear of mistakes, fear of non-compliance, fear of looking bad) and how could we shrink the task so we can loosen control without creating risk?
3. What are the “guide rails” in our world (compliance, brand standards, safety rules, customer commitments)? How can we make them clear enough that people can experiment confidently inside them?
4. Do we reward progress or perfection? Be honest. What do people on our team believe gets punished, and what do they believe gets rewarded?
5. If we committed to AAA as a team, what would our cadence be? Weekly? Biweekly? What would we measure or review so we learn faster, not just work harder?
6. You only need 15–25% of the group to spark a movement. Who are our “easy yes” people for a change initiative, and how can we start with them without creating an us-versus-them dynamic?



Chapter 8 – Access and Apply Your Inner Creative Genius

Summary

Chapter 8 is about reclaiming the creative genius you already have, and then actually using it.

The breakthrough in Avish's business did not come from better marketing. It came from asking a better question, adding a scary constraint, and running small experiments until his keynote went from "works" to "crushes." That is the through-line of the chapter: creativity is not a personality trait or an art hobby. It is practical imagination applied to problems, communication, innovation, adaptability, and momentum.

The chapter has two big points:

- Creativity is the cure for apathy, because creation re-engages the human spirit. When people can express ideas, they wake up.
- Accessing creativity requires bypassing the inner filter. Calm the pond (stillness) or outrun the critic (speed). Then apply the flow to a real challenge by changing the "pebble" (the question, the metric, the why, or the constraints).

For leaders, the job is not "be the ideas person." The job is to create the conditions where people's genius can safely come out: "Yes, And" culture, better brainstorming rules, equal airtime, and protected creative time.

Bottom line: stop polishing what is safe. Start trusting what is new.



Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. Where in your work or life are you stuck in “fine”? Not failing, not thriving, just... fine. What do you suspect “fine” is costing you?
 2. What is one area where you keep telling yourself, “I’m not really a creative person,” even though you solve problems and create things every day? What would change if you stopped using that label?
 3. What is a current problem where you are asking the wrong question, or using the wrong metric?
 4. Which approach helps you access ideas more reliably: calming the pond (stillness) or outrunning the filter (speed)? What is one concrete way you could use your preferred approach this week?
 5. What is a “pebble” you have been throwing into your mental pond over and over (the same question, the same framing), and what are three new pebbles you could try instead?
 6. Where do you avoid creativity because it might reveal something true about you?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Leaders/Teams)

1. Where does our culture unintentionally punish creativity? (Example: we ask for ideas, then swat down the first person who shares one.) What is one behavior we should change immediately?
2. In brainstorming, do we spend too much time evaluating too early? What rule could we adopt so “yes, but” is banned during idea generation, but still has a productive role later?



3. Who tends to dominate our ideation meetings, and who tends to disappear?
What format change would give every voice a real chance (silent solo ideation first, then sharing)?
4. Do people feel safe offering half-formed ideas here, or do they wait until everything is polished? What is one way we can reward contribution, not correctness?
5. How could we protect “maker time” so people can actually create, not just talk about creating? What is one meeting we could shorten, eliminate, or move?
6. If we ran one small “creative sprint” per week, what would we want it to produce: new options, prototypes, process improvements, customer experience ideas, or something else?

Chapter 9 – Notice and Nurture Emotion

Summary

Chapter 9 is the emotional engine room of the whole framework.

The core idea is simple and slightly annoying (because it's true): we don't make logical decisions and then feel emotions about them. We feel first, and then logic shows up later to explain why our emotional reaction was "totally rational."

That's why "emotion drives content." Whatever you're feeling becomes the filter that shapes your words, your choices, your tone, your leadership, and your culture. Ignore emotion and it still runs the show, just from backstage.

Culture is collective emotion over time. Psychological safety isn't touchy-feely fluff; it's a business advantage, because teams do better work when speaking up isn't met with negative emotional backlash.

Bottom line: emotions don't disappear when you ignore them. They just grab the steering wheel when you least expect it.

Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. Think about a moment you regret, a comment you wish you could take back, or a decision that created an unnecessary mess. What emotion was driving content in that moment?



2. Your default “emotional PR department” is your logic explaining after the fact. Where do you see that in your own life: justifying a snap reaction, a procrastination spiral, or an avoidant choice?
 3. Which emotion shows up most often for you at work when change hits: anxiety, frustration, resentment, uncertainty, excitement, something else? Where do you feel it in your body, and what does it tend to make you do?
 4. The chapter talks about proactive noticing (before a meeting, before a task) and reactive noticing (in the heat of a moment). Which one do you use more naturally, and which one do you avoid?
 5. What is one “emotional pebble” you drop into your own pond regularly (dread, irritation, pressure, self-criticism)? What would be a more useful pebble you could practice feeding instead (curiosity, humor, steadiness, compassion, determination)?
 6. When you catch yourself doom-scrolling, procrastinating, or numbing out, what emotion do you suspect is underneath it? If you named it out loud, what would change?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Leaders/Teams)

1. In our workplace, what emotions do people most commonly feel when they see a calendar invite from leadership, open a company-wide email, or hear “quick question”? What does that suggest about our culture?
2. Where do we unintentionally send the message “your feelings don’t matter (but mine do)”? Not in a dramatic way, but in the everyday patterns: tone, speed, public callouts, dismissive responses, silence, “we don’t have time for this.”
3. Think of a recent change rollout. What emotions were present that we treated like distractions instead of data? What would we do differently if we took the emotions seriously without letting them run the show?



4. What is one leadership behavior we could adjust to increase psychological safety this month: private check-ins instead of public callouts, clearer expectations, better listening, more transparency, fewer surprise decisions?
5. The Shonda Rhimes story is basically “billion-dollar fallout from a tiny emotional moment.” Where are we at risk of “small comment, big consequence” in our own organization?
6. What would a consistent “Yes, And” emotional response sound like here when someone raises concerns, expresses frustration, or admits a mistake?

Chapter 10 – Dig Deeper

Summary

This chapter is the “slow down so you stop solving the wrong problem” step.

Dig Deeper is about staying with what’s already on the table long enough to uncover what’s underneath it: the real issue, the real goal, the real fear, the real opportunity, the real brilliance.

The shift is from a reflexive, shallow “yes, but” (react, correct, move on) to “Yes, And” (acknowledge, then explore one beat longer). In practice, digging deeper looks like curiosity, better questions, and the willingness to sit in discomfort long enough to get clarity.

This ties to everything:

- Change stalls because teams treat symptoms, not causes.
- Brilliance stays buried because we don’t question our stories, assumptions, or “have-to’s.”
- Apathy grows when people feel dismissed and unheard.
- Great improv (and great leadership) comes from **expanding** an idea before advancing to the next one.

You don’t need more ideas. You need the courage to take one idea deeper.



Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection & Application (Individuals)

1. Where in your life or work are you working hard on something that might no longer match the goal you actually want? What's one "Polywumpus" you've kept alive past its expiration date?
 2. What's a recurring frustration you have right now (a person, a task, a pattern)? If you asked "Why?" five times, what do you suspect you'd discover underneath the surface complaint?
 3. Think of a recent moment where you reacted quickly (email, meeting, family moment). What emotion or assumption was driving your response, and what deeper question could you have asked instead?
 4. What's one "have to" on your plate that might actually be a "choose to," an outdated expectation, or a default you've never questioned? What would change if you dug deeper into why it's there?
 5. Where do you personally default to "advance" mode (moving quickly to the next idea, next solution, next task), even when "expand" mode would probably create better results?
 6. What's a "yes, but" you say to yourself all the time ("Yes, but I don't have time," "Yes, but that won't work," "Yes, but that's just who I am")? If that "yes, but" were a doorway, what might be on the other side if you opened it?
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Leadership & Organizational Discussion (Leaders/Teams)

1. What's one issue we keep "fixing" with surface-level solutions (more meetings, more reminders, a pizza party, a new tool) that might be a symptom of something deeper?



2. In our meetings and conversations, where do we reward speed over depth? What would it look like to normalize “Let’s stay with this a beat longer” as a team habit?
3. Where are we unintentionally creating apathy by not inviting real input? If people believed their voice mattered, what would they do differently?
4. Think about a recent change initiative. What deeper questions did we not ask early enough (clarity, fears, tradeoffs, ownership, “what are we not seeing”) that later cost us time or trust?
5. The chapter highlights that digging deeper can surface uncomfortable truths. What do we tend to avoid hearing here, and what’s the cost of avoiding it?
6. Nadella shifted Microsoft from “know-it-all” to “learn-it-all.” If we wanted that shift in our team, what would we start doing this week (questions we ask, behaviors we praise, how we respond to mistakes)?



Closing Discussion Questions

Personal Reflection (Individuals)

1. Where are you currently answering an opportunity with “Yes, but...”? What’s the real emotion underneath that “but” (fear, discomfort, perfectionism, protecting your identity, avoiding disapproval)?
2. If you were one “Yes, And” away from changing something meaningful, what would the smallest version of that “Yes, And” look like in the next 7 days?
3. What’s a recent change you’ve been trying to “survive”? How could you reframe it as something you can “use,” and what might it reveal about your strengths or brilliance?
4. Which step of the YES AND Framework is most natural for you, and which step do you resist the most? What does that resistance tell you?

Team / Leadership Reflection (Leaders or the Group)

5. Where is our team or organization saying “Yes, but” to a needed change right now? If we replaced that with “Yes, And,” what would we do differently this month?
6. If “change needs a model,” what is one behavior we want leaders (or the team) to model consistently when change hits (language, meeting behavior, decision-making, emotional tone)?
7. What would “brilliance revealed through change” look like here in practical terms? Not a slogan. What would we see people doing differently day to day?
8. What is one team agreement we want to adopt going forward that reflects the Yes, And default setting (for example: “We ask one more question before we jump to solutions,” or “We name emotions without making them the enemy”)?

Final Thought

By the time you reach the end of this discussion guide, you have likely explored a wide range of ideas about change, creativity, leadership, and collaboration.

But the most important insight is this: the power of the YES AND mindset does not come from understanding it.

It comes from practicing it.

Every day, each of us faces moments when we can respond with “yes, but” or “Yes, And.”

“Yes, but that will never work.”

“Yes, but we tried that before.”

“Yes, but this change is too difficult.”

Or:

“Yes, this is the situation we are in.
And here is how we will move forward.”

Those small moments shape culture. They shape leadership. They shape what becomes possible.

If there is one takeaway from the book and this discussion, it is this:

You do not need perfect conditions to create progress. You only need the willingness to accept what is happening and build from it.

So as you leave this conversation, consider one final question:



What is one “Yes, And” you will practice this week?

Start there. Try it in a conversation. In a meeting. In how you approach a challenge. You may discover that the next great idea, breakthrough, or opportunity is already in front of you. You just need to say:

“Yes, And.”

Now go create something brilliant.