

# Yes, And

## The Relationship Game Guide

“Yes, and...” is the golden rule of improvisational theatre, indicating that performers should accept the reality of what the other performers have proposed and add to it to grow a scene.

This way, the scene is able to move forward smoothly.

**The “Yes, And” Relationship Game** is a fast and fun way to train your brain to reach for validation first when interacting in your relationship.

With “Yes, And,” everybody always makes sense.

### Whose Line Is It Anyway?

This short-form game from “Whose Line” is called Sound Effects. Two performers are given a scene and two audience members must provide the sound effects.

Notice how they are constantly adapting to one another to form a funny story.



<https://youtu.be/UOExbd2L1xc>

# Round One: “No, but...”

Before we get to the creative validation of “Yes, and...” try a round using the phrase “No, but...” instead. Each sentence your partner says, you must reject in some way.

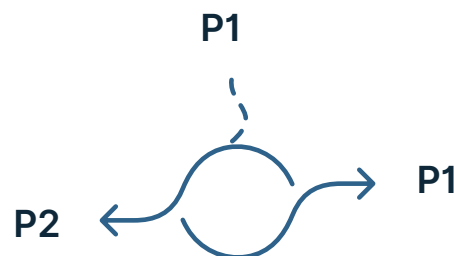
[Watch Empathi’s therapists try “No, But”](#)

## STEP 1

Decide who goes first—volunteer or flip a coin. This player (**Partner 1**) says a fantastical sentence to begin the story.

## STEP 2

**Partner 2** adds a sentence to the story which **rejects** the reality of the first sentence and starts with “No, but...”



## STEP 3

**Partner 1** adds another sentence starting with “No, but...” which **rejects** the reality of **Partner 2’s** sentence.

## STEP 4

**Partner 1** and **Partner 2** continue this way for a short time or until the story is impossible to continue.

**Tip:** *Don’t worry too much about your story failing—it’s designed to!*

## Reflection

What did this version of the game feel like?

Did you establish characters and a location?

Was there any movement in the plot?

How did it feel between you?

Did this way of talking to each other feel familiar?

# Round Two: “Yes, and...”

You and your partner are going to create a scene or story together, one line at a time, built on the premise that what your partner just said was absolutely true. Every response must start with “Yes, and...”

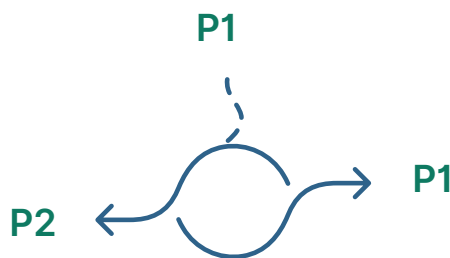
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## STEP 1

Decide who goes first—volunteer or flip a coin. This player (**Partner 1**) says a fantastical sentence to begin the story.

## STEP 2

**Partner 2** adds a sentence to the story, fully **accepting** the first sentence as true and beginning with “Yes, And...”



## STEP 3

**Partner 1** adds another sentence starting with “Yes, and...” which **supports** the reality of **Partner 2’s** sentence.

## STEP 4

**Partner 1** and **Partner 2** continue this way until the story reaches a natural end.

*Tip: Don’t focus on sounding clever or funny. All you have to think about is making your partner look good, and your partner will do the same for you.*

## Reflection

How did it feel to have your partner validate what you said?

How did it feel to be able to validate your partner?

Did you feel like you were on the same team?

Start to pay attention to how often you negate each other in your daily life, and try to find little moments to “Yes, And” each other instead.

# Examples

Need some inspiration? Here are some examples of the many different kinds of stories you can tell together.

**Partner 1:** Did you hear that Nicki Minaj rescued a cat from a tree?

**Partner 2:** Yes, and the cat started speaking to her.

**Partner 1:** Yes, and Nicki discovered it had a talent for rapping!

**Partner 1:** Captain America wrote us a letter asking if we'd join the Avengers.

**Partner 2:** Yes, and before we could respond, he appeared in our living room through a portal!

**Partner 1:** Yes! And then the other Avengers started appearing, one by one.

**Partner 2:** Yes, and the Hulk sat on our couch and broke it in half!

**Partner 1:** This morning before work, I was abducted by an alien.

**Partner 2:** Yes, and I saw them take you so I snuck onto their ship!

**Partner 1:** Yes, and I saw you on their big screens and distracted the alien.

**Partner 2:** Yes, and I heard your distraction on the speaker—our favorite song!

Was this exercise helpful? Checkout our online courses at [get.empathi.com](https://get.empathi.com)

## Figs O'Sullivan

Hi! I'm Figs, creator of the Empathi method. The "Yes, And" game is one of the many ways we train our therapists to help couples strengthen and repair their relationships. For the most effective relationship help, [schedule a free counseling consult](#) or call us at [\(415\) 967-3447](tel:(415)967-3447).

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