

Face-to-Face is the Ultimate Social Media

Introduction | The Seeker | Engage Mindfulness | Look and See | Listen and Hear
Yes and... | StorySelling | Sales Guru

Excerpts * * * * from Yes and...

That afternoon. My mouth waters as I pass what seems to be every possible type of restaurant—Portuguese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Italian, Chinese, Mexican, BBQ, seafood, vegetarian. In the middle of this cultural smorgasbord, a marquee stands out. *Improvability*—the name on the sheet that Ron Fiedler gave me.

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After a quick read I learn that this is an improvisational theater company. I have never seen a live improvisation performance.

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I've gone from mindfulness trainer, to art curator, to orchestra conductor, and now to actors. None of them strike me as having traditional business backgrounds. Yet, they clearly played, and continue to play, an important role in the Sales Guru's success.

My new adventure is to meet with Brent Haley. He greets me in the lobby, wearing baggy jeans, a well-worn black T-shirt with an "Improvability" logo, and scruffy torn sneakers. His curly black hair tops off his skinny frame. I put him in his late thirties or early forties.

"Welcome. Come join us—we're in rehearsal." He leads me into the theater.

Eventually, I learn that his "join us" will become literal.

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"Join you?" I ask incredulously. My body tenses. Shock shoots up my spine. I love challenges, but this one intimidates me.

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"I've never met a successful salesperson who isn't a good performer. Let's face it, you're always on stage. You're always in front of an audience. And if you're any good at sales, once you are Face-to-Face with others, isn't your job to engage that audience? Emotionally engage that audience? Effectively connect with that audience? How else do you expect to stand out in this highly competitive and commoditized world?"

He is right.

He locks me in his gaze. "You are about to learn two words that will change your professional and personal life."

I am dumbstruck and intrigued by Brent's statement. "Two words that will change my professional and personal life?" I can't help wonder if this is the *mojo* to which the Sales Guru referred?

"So what do I do?"

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"You were introduced to how to ***engage mindfulness, look and see, and listen and hear.*** These are three crucial steps necessary to successfully improvise.

"Whether you're on stage, in a job interview or doing a sales presentation, you need to develop the skills to be fully present and pay attention in the moment, actively looking to see and listening to hear. Forget about what's

going on in your head. It is about what's taking place with the person or people in the room. In improvisational theater we take it a step further. The two most important words that form the foundation for improvisational theater are ...

Yes and... Two words that will change your professional and personal life.

"How does this apply to sales?"

"People new to improvisational theater and learning how to improvise are similar to most people engaged in a sales presentation, business meeting or interview. One is always trying to force the dialogue without paying attention to what's really being said, or not being said. Or paying attention to what's really happening or not happening at the moment.

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"Thank you Brent—I get it."

This exercise with Brent and his troupe clears up any confusion I have regarding my prior meetings with Cory, Andrea, and Ron. The Sales Guru is putting me through a process that makes more sense with each new step.

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Yes and... is the critical step to take in dialogue to enable you to connect solidly Face-to-Face."

With that, he wishes me luck, hands me a sheet of paper and expresses his desire—in any event—to see me again for class.

At this point, I am used to someone handing me a piece of paper with instructions for my next step on the journey. This time, the only thing written on the paper is the name Judith Gilman, and a phone number.

