

The Power of 'Yet'

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In this thought-provoking piece from international author and best-seller Tammy Watchorn, we consider the power of our language, in setting our project intentions. As project leaders, our teams, and stakeholders look to us to set the trajectory of our projects.

Whether we succeed or fail can turn on a dime. But what if that 'dime' is our internal voice, and our propensity to always look on the negative or positive side. What if we can codify optimism and simply translate it to a single word...

The Power of 'Yet'

This week I saw a comment from someone who said I can't get with the word Ninja. And I wanted to say:

"You can't get with the word Ninja yet".

Why did I want to say this?

Because the word yet opens up the power of possibilities.

We often say no to things because we don't think they're for us. It's a reasonable thing to do because we only have so much time and we do have a sense of what we like and don't like, what we're good at and what we're not.

But*... and there is a big but.

Our brain is constantly making predictions. Based on our previous experiences. When something new comes along it scans all the data we have and makes predictions on if this thing is for us or not. If we have no data or the data we do have is from a previous bad experience then the brain is more likely to predict 'no, this isn't for me' than 'yes let's give it a go'.

And*...

We all know that often in life, it's the new and unthought of experiences that fill us with joy, teach us new things, open up worlds of opportunities, relationships and all manner of things that we couldn't previously imagine.

I talk about this a lot in 'The Change Ninja Returns - and this time it's personal'

During my personal (unplanned and unwanted) life transformation I decided I needed a new approach to things. Why? Because I needed to start a new life, and I had no idea what that life would or could look like. I knew that without a new approach I might try and fill the gaps with the same things I'd lost and this would only remind me of what I had lost because some things can't be replaced. I needed new but had no idea what new was. Yet.

And so, I decided to say 'Yes' to everything for 3 months, even if it was to things I didn't think I'd like. I told myself I don't like it 'yet' and if I give it a go I might discover that I do like it after all.

I also knew if I only said yes to things I knew I already liked then this new life would be much harder to achieve and I would potentially end up pining for the things I'd lost rather than looking to the future. I needed to start this new unknown future, and to do that I said yes to everything to find out what the possibilities could be.

So what were some of these new things?

- I made Christmas wreaths -not for me but I met some lovely people.
- I butchered pheasant that were gifted- the dogs perhaps enjoyed this more than me but I made some good curry with the produce.
- I chopped wood - seems like a man's job but it was a good excuse for cake!
- I flew in a small aircraft and a helicopter despite not liking heights.

And when someone asked:

"Do you want to go outdoor swimming in a Scottish Loch?"

my insides shriveled from the perceived cold. The old me would have flatly refused, it sounded hellish, but I had to say yes and so off I went for a cold 'douk' in the local Loch.

It was, without doubt, one of THE best things I've ever done.

My brain said it's not for me.

I added the word yet.

I discovered that yes, yes it was for me.

So, if someone asks you to do something different. Perhaps a different approach to your work, one where your brain is thinking 'I haven't got time' or 'I've always done it this way' or 'that will never work' try adding the word yet. You never know what opportunities might arise, opportunities that your current brain can't even begin to imagine with just a simple word.

Have you given it a go.... yet?

Don't say I'm not a Ninja. Do say I'm not a Ninja 'yet' but will fix that by starting my Ninja journey today!

*You should also, where possible, change the word but for and... it does wonders in a conversation with someone who's closing down your ideas, don't say 'but this time it will be different', do say 'and this time it will be different' and see what a difference it makes

Tammy Watchorn, The Original Change Ninja, is an experienced Change Practitioner, Thought-Leader and Best selling author of the Change Ninja book series and the 4 Day Ninja Challenge. And a regular contributor to the Project Management Global, Career Whisperer section. She strives to help her growing community of Change and Transformation Leaders to learn new ways to approach change; putting people before process. Find out more about the work that she is doing here and the launch of her new upcoming book.

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