



# Transforming Your Challenging Conversations

**UNDERSTANDING & TRANSFORMING: YES-BUTS WEBINAR #3**

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**SAVI® - SYSTEM FOR ANALYZING VERBAL INTERACTION**

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## Yes-But Spotting Awareness Exercise

Is it a Yes-But? Not a Yes-But? A different behavior?

#	Sentence	Behavior
1	Your proposal is certainly the most impressive one; however, it is rather costly.	
2	I'd like to shift to working part time, but still have the option to take on extra projects.	
3	Yes, that looks like an ingenious device – fun, but also functional.	
4	I'm very impressed with this candidate's references, and at the same time I have concerns about her ability to inspire a team.	
5	I can't seem to fix this problem; however hard I try.	
6	You just don't have the persistence it takes to succeed in sales.	
7	It may be tempting to see yes-buts as bad behaviors, but in fact no behaviors are good or bad in and of themselves.	
8	I totally understand why filing a lawsuit seems like a good idea; still, you don't understand all the risks that would be involved.	
9	While I see your point that the leader is responsible for this breakdown, we shouldn't overlook the ways other team members have contributed to the problem.	
10	We can't quit now; it's our responsibility to see this project through to the end.	

## Yes-But Strategy Practice: *Build & Explore*

**Goal:** A Yes-But communication shows up as a kind of polite fight in which the “yes” is ambiguous and the “but” brings in a contradiction. This exercise helps to build on the yes of the statement so that the listener may be more ready to hear your thoughts.

The Trouble with Yes-Buts	Yes-But Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inherent contradiction creates noise and tends to increase frustration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice you are about to enter a “debate mode”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The message heard by the listener is the “but”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an internal shift: orient toward agreement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences escalate, and any points of agreement get lost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State three genuine builds</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good ideas don't get developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask a broad question that incorporates your concern, remaining sincerely interested in the answer</li> </ul>

Work in pairs. Person A is the first speaker. Person B practices doing yes-buts and alternatives to yes-buts.

### Round One

**A:** State an opinion (or proposal).

**B:** Yes-but the opinion (or proposal).

**A:** React naturally. (Say whatever you are naturally inclined to say after hearing B's response to you.)

Examples:

**A:** We should redesign our website. **B:** Yeah, but we can't afford to do that. **A:** (Responds naturally.)

**A:** This country needs nationalized healthcare. **B:** Yes, but it will never happen. **A:** (Responds naturally.)

### Round Two

**A:** Repeat the same opinion (or proposal).

**B:** Translate your yes-but statement into three builds (Square 9) and a broad question (Square 5).

**A:** React naturally.

Examples:

A: We should redesign our website.	A: This country needs nationalized healthcare.
B: + It would be great to redesign the website. + I'd really like to have it look more professional. + We could also make the site easier to navigate so customers can find what they want more easily. ? How could we fit a redesign into our budget?	B: + That would finally give all Americans access to medical services. + It would show a commitment to healthcare as a basic human right. + And it would be simpler than the multi-payer system we have now. ? How could this become a priority for Congress?
A: (Responds naturally.)	A: (Responds naturally.)

Switch roles and repeat.

## Yes-But Practice

**Goal:** A Yes-But communication shows up as a kind of polite fight in which the “yes” is ambiguous and the “but” brings in a contradiction. This exercise helps to build on the yes of the statement so that the listener may be more ready to hear your thoughts. Take each bolded statement and apply the instructions 1, 2, 3, and 4:

For Example:

**“Our country has a just, fair tax policies.”**

1. Notice any emotional or physical reactions.  
*“Tense and agitated”*
2. State a yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
*“The taxes may be fair for some people, but not for the middle class.”*
3. Three Builds
  1. *“The people who are very poor don't pay taxes.”*
  2. *“Those with lower incomes also get many financial benefits.”*
  3. *“Individuals with children get extra tax benefits”*
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
*“What new policies would we work toward that would benefit the middle class?”*

**“This organization treats people really well. It's a privilege to be here.”**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**“That’s kind of extravagant. You could do a lot of other important things with that money.”**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**“I think everyone should get a living wage stipend from the government of \$1000 a month.”**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**A flat tax would be much better for the country.**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**In every household both partners should equally contribute to household tasks.**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Children who attend religious education classes grow up to be more responsive to the needs of others.**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds and a Broad Question
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**People with a healthy lifestyle should pay less for life insurance.**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**All illegal drugs should be legalized to stop criminal profits.**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**A weaker central government is better for the country.**

1. Your emotional or physical reactions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A yes-but that contradicts the statement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Three Builds
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Broad Question that incorporates your concern.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Yes-But Stems

(Choose any of these or make up one of your own)

### Popular Culture

- The best/worst movie in the past 20 years is...
- The best novelist writing today is...
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a very talented actor/actress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a terrific/horrible television show.

### Policy & politics

- The dominance of China in the world is...
- Housing for the homeless population is...
- National Health insurance should be...
- Abortion is...
- What we should do about Iraq is...
- The one child per couple policy in China is...
- Drugs like marijuana should be...
- Having a weaker central government is...
- Capital punishment is...
- A flat tax would be...
- Reinstating the draft would be...
- Two years of mandatory national service would be...

### Education

- Having separate schools for boys and girls is...
- The higher education available in the U.S. is...
- Teachers should be paid...

### Health Care

Our health care system is...

Medical residents should be...

36 hour shifts for medical residents are...

### Sex, gender, & child-rearing

- The main difference between men and women is...
- Sexual relationships among teenagers are...
- Men/women are better at...
- The best arrangement for child care is...
- Corporal punishment is...
- Breast feeding should be...
- It's irresponsible for parents to...

### Religion

- The problem with most religions is...
- The benefit of religious education is...
- Religious faith is good for society because...

### Criminal justice

- Law enforcement in this country is too...
- In our criminal justice system, minorities are treated...
- The biggest problem with our legal system is...

### Miscellaneous

- The salaries of corporate CEOs are...
- The most important thing in life is...
- Psychotherapy should be...
- Communication training

## Webinar Series Developers

Anita Simon, Amy Yeager, Cunera Van Hal, and Ben Benjamin developed this webinar series. Anita Simon is the co-creator of SAVI along with Yvonne Agazarian. Ben and Amy are certified SAVI trainers in the United States and worked together for 10 years. Cunera is a certified SAVI Trainer and teaches SAVI in the Netherlands.

## Your presenters today are Ben Benjamin and Cunera van Hal

Ben Benjamin PhD has been teaching and training communications skills since 1982. He had his first SAVI experience in 1998. With his enthusiasm, he went on to help develop the SAVI Training Program and certification track with Anita Simon, Claudia Byram and Fran Carter. He became the first Certified SAVI Trainer in 2002. He co-authored Conversation Transformations with Anita Simon and Amy Yeager in 2012. Ben is now a Senior Certified SAVI Trainer. He has developed, implemented, and taught SAVI trainings across health care, corporate, educational, and non-profit organizational settings both nationally and internationally and uses SAVI in his executive coaching practice.

Cunera van Hal MSc is a Certified SAVI trainer based in the Netherlands. She discovered SAVI in 2011 and is fascinated by the clarity, depth and potential of SAVI. Cunera made SAVI available in Dutch in the Netherlands in 2015 together with her Dutch SAVI colleagues Hella Ritz and Yolanda van der Poel. She enjoys leading SAVI trainings and uses SAVI in her role as leadership trainer, executive coach and team coach. For her clients in profit and non-profit organisations she develops tailor-made SAVI applications to support problem solving and effective teamwork.

## How to Continue Your Yes-But Learning

- Yes-But awareness quiz:  
[CTSAVI.com/YBquiz](https://CTSAVI.com/YBquiz)
- SAVI Coding Challenge:  
[CTSAVI.com/coding](https://CTSAVI.com/coding)
- Attend a live or online SAVI® training:  
[CTSAVI.com/open](https://CTSAVI.com/open)
- Practice the Strategy
- Conversation Transformation (Chapter 3)
- Online exercises:  
[CTSAVI.com/YB exercises](https://CTSAVI.com/YB_exercises)