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All You Need is Yes

John Lennon has said that he first fell in love with Yoko Ono at an exhibition of her work at a London art gallery in 1966. One of her pieces, the “Ceiling Painting,” required viewers to climb to the top of a white ladder in the center of the room. A magnifying glass that hung from the ceiling allowed viewers to peer into a small area of the ceiling where a single word was displayed in small, difficult to read letters.

It was a short word, one syllable, that made a strong impact on Lennon. Even though he did not fall from the ladder, he began to fall emotionally for the woman who would later become his wife. He immediately identified with the positive attributes of the word and shared her belief in the power of one simple word.

Many people think that the word was “love.” Instead, it is a word that can precede and maintain love.

The word was “Yes.”

A negotiated agreement is not obtained with one “yes.” By getting a series of “yeses” from the other side, starting with smaller or less contentious deal points, you create an atmosphere that makes it easier to agree on more complicated or contentious deal points later.

Next month, I shall discuss how to accumulate “yeses” from the other side in a mediation to neutralize hostile behavior and make them more likely to say “yes” to a final agreement.