



## Drop the “But” – Use the “And”...

It exists since language helps us to communicate, but (or better: and) it received serious consideration starting a few years back from thinkers like Peter Senge and Jim Collins/Jerry Porras as only two examples. Consideration for a common conjunction - how come? They all cite slightly different reasons of which I want to highlight two.

1 Even in trivial conversations, “but” creates opposition, “and” creates unity. When coaching or dealing with conflict, we want to get away from the problems or the issue at hand and work towards a solution. An example: “I can accelerate the project, but then it will come in over budget”. It seems that we only have two choices – speed or on-budget delivery. When asking, “How can we accelerate the project and stay on-budget”, we start looking more open-mindedly for ideas, opportunities and solutions that may allow us to accomplish both goals. We foster divergent and inclusive thinking that brings different factions back into the same boat of “delivery”.

2 A related and(!) even bigger-picture-reason [and for me more intriguing] is that “And” instead of “But” seems more aligned with our ever more complex, interconnected and tension-ridden environment.



The old black-and white thinking (Quality or price, manager or subordinate, headquarters or local office, job or family) triggered arguments that often included “we can do this, BUT that will suffer,...”.

The former “Either-Or” Zero-Sum game environment has morphed to be one in which you need to embrace contradictions, act and lead inclusively and make inherently opposing paradigms work for you. We need to think “and” to be able to prevail in the changing environments that we are facing – even more so as a leaders of others.

Try this for the week: Exchange “But” with “And” and see how that influences your thinking and the reactions of those around you! You want to discuss? Want help with that? Contact [me!](#)