



Crossing the Line

June 23, 2021

Rachel Yates

It's a fine line, I realize, between "draft" and "daft." One keystroke separates them. The more I rush, the more likely I am to send out a Daft Agenda, or email Daft Guidelines. It holds more truth than most of my typos.

Both adjectives reflect the incompleteness of the work product and the fact that it is subject to change. The daft version lets us know wholesale changes might be in order. In other words, it's not our finest work, but we're going to let it out there and see what it stirs up. In brave spaces, drafts can stimulate our thinking and creativity. Even a daft idea can spur us to out-of-the-box thinking. In brave spaces, unfinished, unpolished thoughts can be honed for the benefit of all.

In critical spaces, however, such ideas die, if they're disclosed at all. We can decide that our half-formed thoughts are not worth the risk of sharing. We can keep them safely tucked away where no one can poke holes at them. It's a loss.

I'm reminded of the linguistic brainstorming tool called, "Yes, And." Rather than respond negatively to an idea with "no" or "yes, but," this tool keeps the conversation and each idea alive with the response of "Yes, and..." The respondent is then expected to build on what was first offered.

For example, here are some conversation stoppers on the question of a fellowship event:

"We could have a church summer picnic." *"No."*

"We could have a church summer picnic. *"No, but we could go to the museum of religious art."*

The participants feel stopped in their tracks or forced to give in to an idea that doesn't appeal to them. Instead, the "Yes, And" conversation tool allows uncritical brainstorming:

"We could have a church summer picnic." *"Yes, and we could bring in religious art pieces."* "Yes, and we could set up the food tables to mirror the art pieces." *"Yes, and we could create tableaus like the Last Supper."* "Yes, and we could have a photographer to take their pictures." *"Yes, and..."*

When I've used the tool, it can be a dialogue between two people, or the conversation can go around the table with each person adding a thought. After a fixed time, the brainstorming ends. Pairs or tables then share what excited them. If you want to test the limits of "daft" and have some fun team building, this is a good tool. My experience though is that it also often results in at least a "draft" of an idea from which leaders can build. I know I'm already intrigued by this summer picnic idea.

No matter how you do this generative work together, I hope you will create that brave space for ideas to be shared and for the offer to be affirmed. You might cross the line into the daft, and that might be exactly where you need to be.