



January 11, 2024

I'll be honest. I'm in utter shock that it's 2024.

And I'm SUPER excited for it.

Part of this has to do with a simple shift a client of mine recently made.

It helped illustrate that even when things feel scary or hard, there are some truly easy things we can do to turn them around.

My client Lillian (not her real name) has had a tough year. She had been working in an environment that I can best describe as toxic, and was figuring out what was next for her when, unfortunately, was impacted by a consolidation of operations at her organization.

While she certainly felt a weight lifted no longer having to go to a place whose culture felt destructive, she was also, naturally, upset that the decision to leave had been made for her.

Being the go-getter that she is, one of the first things she did was network. And in no time at all Lillian secured a medium-term consulting gig.

What a win, right?

Yet... When friends and former colleagues asked her what she's been up to, her response was typically this:

"I lost my job in October, but I'm doing some consulting work while I figure out what I want my next permanent position to be."

If you have a keen eye, you'll notice the "B" word in her response.

Yup:

"BUT." 🙄

Lillian was qualifying her consulting work, downplaying all that she had accomplished in such a short amount of time.

When I asked Lillian why she thought she was responding this way, she thought for a moment, then told me, “I guess I feel like it’s not that impressive.”

I was, to say the least, surprised by her response. So, I prompted her on this. And how she really feels about her consulting gig started to emerge:

- ✔ Lillian actually likes the work she’s doing, a big shift from her last role.
- ✔ She has a great relationship with her manager.
- ✔ She’s even making sure she allots time for some well-deserved self-care, something she had been neglecting in her last role.

Through our discussion, Lillian began to realize that there’s no shame in the work she’s doing.

On the contrary, she’s actually feeling peace, connection, and happiness, emotions that had eluded her for so long.

So with this knowledge, I gave Lillian a challenge.

I asked her between then and our next session, every time she tells someone about her consulting work, she must change the “but” to an “and.” And to report back to me what she learned, if anything.

Well let me tell you... In our most recent session, boy did Lillian have a lot to say!

Changing that one word brought on a host of incredible realizations for Lillian.

Her energy shifted from discomfort with the “but” to exuberance with the “and.”

In fact, by making this small shift, Lillian shared some appreciations with me:

💡 “I carved out this opportunity for me.”

💡 “I feel empowered that I’m doing these things.”

💡 “I used to come from a place of emotion when things weren’t going my way - now I acknowledge my emotions and feel what I need to feel, and from there, can move forward into action.”

💡 “I am choosing not to think of the layoff as a bad thing - I never thought I’d be a person to reach out and network, and now look at me! A consulting gig and interviews with organizations I am pumped up about!”

💡 “I now realize that putting in the work even when not seeing immediate results pays off in the end.”

Lillian’s belief in herself through a simple vocab switch is all the energy I need to start 2024 off right.

Where can you turn a “but” into an “and” this year?

Cheers, Tracy

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