

# The Story of Yes and No

..... source unknown (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

Before words were words, a boy named Yes lived in a small village in a small kingdom. Yes was good at everything. He was the best, smartest and most liked person in his village.

Yes had a brother, and his name was No. No was jealous of his brother, because he wasn't very good at anything.

Whenever the villagers asked No for help, he refused because he didn't like people very much. Whenever someone asked Yes for a favor, he would gladly help, and he secretly didn't mind the fact that it irritated No when he did.

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One day Yes and No's father, Okay went on a long journey and he left his two sons in charge of all the animals. Yes took great care of the animals, but No didn't want to be bothered. So instead of helping his brother, No went down to the lake and threw rocks into the water.

After a long day of watching the animals, Yes was hungry and tired and he asked his brother No to watch the animals while he went to find some food to eat. Instead of watching the animals, No laid down and took a nap. The animals wandered onto a nearby road that the King happened to be traveling on that day. As the King's carriage came down the road, the animals ran across and the King's carriage had to swerve to avoid hitting the animals. The King was thrown from the carriage where he fell to the ground and hurt himself.

The King demanded to know why there were animals on the road and he asked all the villagers for an explanation. Yes was always honest, so he told the King the entire story.

The King thought for a moment, and then he came up with an idea that he was quite happy with. Yes and No were to work in the castle as his personal assistants as punishment for what was later referred to as the worst carriage accident in the Kingdom's history.

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The King needed help with many things around the castle because a King cannot be bothered with the daily tasks involved with running a Kingdom. However, soon after his decision about the two brothers, the King realized that only Yes would be of any use to him as a servant. Whenever the King asked No to bring him anything, it would get thrown away, broken or eaten. The King was quite sure that No was the worst servant in the entire world.

The brothers' most important task was to help pick the food for a grand party that the King was throwing later that night. Cooks from all over the Kingdom lined up at the castle's gate to offer the King their food for the party. Of course, the King could not go and grab the food himself, so he asked Yes and No to do it for him.

Cook after cook came to the King with their dishes, each hoping to serve food at the grand party. If the King liked the dish, he called for Yes to go and fetch it for him. If the King didn't like the dish, he called for No and the dish would be destroyed moments later.

Pretty soon this started catching on around the Kingdom, for if a King does something, his loyal subjects are never far behind. If they didn't want a second scoop of potatoes, they would say "No." And if they liked what someone was offering, they would say, "Yes." And ever since that day in a small village in a small kingdom, Yes has meant Yes, and No has meant No.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

### OPENING CLASS

"In order for your Yes to mean something, so must your No."

– unknown

Take a moment to notice what's present for you – what you are consciously or unconsciously saying yes to.

What if for the next hour you simply said yes to your breath, if you invested in this one, small thing? How much more space and freedom could you create?

### DURING CLASS

#### *AFTER TELLING PART I OF THE STORY*

Notice what you are saying yes to in this moment. Maybe you're agreeing to your complaints and excuses. Maybe you are saying yes to forcing something.

Is there someplace you need to say no?

How would saying no open up more freedom for what you really need and want?

### CLOSING CLASS

No is a powerful word, one that creates space for the yes' we really want in our lives.

What do you need to say no to this week?

### EXTRAS

We often think of personal power in terms of saying yes, but the word, no, actually affords us more power and freedom.

In her book, "The Art of Extreme Self-Care," Cheryl Richardson says that creating an "Absolute No List" is one of the most powerful things we can do to improve the quality of our lives.

The Absolute No List is comprised of things that you no longer want to do. Those things that cause you anxiety. Those things that drain your energy. Those things that steal your time and don't benefit you.

Invite your students to create an Absolute No List for their week and to observe how saying no improves the quality of their life.