



**WHITE OAK**  
Counseling Center

George L. Carey, M.S.  
Licensed Psychologist

## Using “And” Instead of “But”

Ever had anyone respond to you, “Yes, *but*, I see it this way”? Well, the message sent by the use of the word *but* is that what you said may be true *but* the second part, the part after the *but*, is really more important. You may feel that you are being told that their viewpoint is more important than your viewpoint. How often do you send this message to others?

If you heartily believe that your viewpoint is more important than someone else’s and if you have no desire to improve your relationships with others, this idea isn’t for you.

Here is a tip that gives equal weight to your viewpoint and the other person’s viewpoint:

**Replace the word “*but*” with the word “*and*” in your sentences.**

This simple idea can have dramatic effects on your own thinking and in your relationships. Let’s consider this a bit deeper.

The words *and* and *but* are conjunctions (con – with; junction - joining). Conjunctions are words that bring together two parts of a sentence. Webster’s New World Dictionary defines *and* as: “used to join elements of **equal** grammatical value”. Human behaviors can also be conjunctive by joining people with **equal** human value. Some language conjunctions, i.e. *and*, are more likely to be humanly conjunctive (bonding, joining) than other language conjunctions, i.e. *but*. That’s a convoluted statement.

There are challenges to making this change from *and* to *but*.

The first challenge is that you may not want to acknowledge that the other person’s viewpoints, feelings, or ideas are equally important to yours. Making them equally important challenges your ego and your desire to be acknowledged as better or more important.

The second challenge is that we don’t like to hold two seemingly competing ideas as equally important at the same time. As humans, it is easier to have only one truth, *but* when two persons are sharing their feelings, both people’s feelings are equally truthful. Feelings are not right or wrong, they are the personal experiences of an individual. Your feelings and mine are valid even when they differ about a shared experience.

Well, if you are willing to address these challenges, give this idea a try. Replace the word *but* with the word *and* to see whether it improves communication by promoting the importance of both people and their thoughts and feelings. Maybe using this linguistic idea will reduce the times people think of you as a “butt”.



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215-536-0308  
200 Apple Street, Suite 4, Quakertown, PA 18951  
[www.whiteoakcounseling.com](http://www.whiteoakcounseling.com)