

Yes, And...

Partnering With the Divine in Every Moment

Winging It With God, Part Two · Rev. Blaine Tinsley · Unity on Maui · October 4, 2026

AN INTRODUCTION TO IMPROV

Improv, short for improvisational theater, is acting without a script. Performers build scenes on the spot, with no idea where they will go. The foundational rule is “Yes, and...”: accept whatever your scene partner offers, then add something of your own. We began this talk with two short improvs. In the first, our volunteers answered every offer with “Yes, but...,” and the scene kept hitting walls. In the second, they answered with “Yes, and...,” and the scene came alive, going places nobody planned. In improv, anything your partner says or does is an *offer*; refusing it is *blocking*. As improv teacher Keith Johnstone observed, beginners block constantly, mostly out of fear, because blocking feels safe and keeps us in control. But a player who only says “yes” and adds nothing strands the scene too. The scene needs the *and*. That, Rev. Blaine said, is where we come in.

THE HALF-TRUTH ABOUT SURRENDER

Many of us grew up with a spirituality that stops at “yes”: *Let go and let God. Get out of the way. Accept what is.* There is real wisdom in that; acceptance matters. But it is only half the truth. Somewhere along the way, many of us heard “surrender” and translated it as “do nothing.” We said yes to God, then folded our arms and waited for the scene to play itself.

MOST OF OUR SUFFERING COMES FROM ARGUING WITH REALITY

This is the wisdom in the “yes.” When we resist what is, insisting things should be other than they are, we suffer, and reality wins that argument every time. Saying yes doesn’t mean we approve of everything. It means we stop spending our energy fighting what has already happened, so that energy is free for what comes next.

WE ARE CO-CREATORS WITH THE DIVINE

In Unity, we understand that we are co-creators with the Divine: not spectators of a plan finished before we arrived, but participants in a creation still unfolding. Spirit moves *through* us, not just *around* us. Spirit isn’t only waiting for our permission; Spirit is waiting for our contribution. Surrender is the “yes.” Co-creation is the “and.” A spiritual life needs both.

THE WEDDING AT CANA

In John 2, at Jesus’s first miracle, the wine runs out at a wedding, a real social disaster in that culture. Mary tells the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Jesus doesn’t snap his fingers. He asks the servants to fill six stone jars with water, and they fill them “to the brim” (John 2:7). Each jar held twenty or thirty gallons: many trips to the well. No one told them a miracle was coming. They simply did their part, fully, and the miracle came through their willingness.

GOD PROVIDES THE OFFER. WE FILL THE JARS.

This is the “and.” Our part is rarely the miracle itself. Our part is the faithful, ordinary work of carrying water: showing up, doing what is ours to do, and doing it to the brim. God provides the offer, we fill the jars, and something greater than either could do alone comes through.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

In Matthew 25, a master entrusts his servants with money before going away. Two invest it and double it. The third buries his in the ground and says, in effect, “I was afraid, so I hid it.” He lost nothing and stole nothing. He said yes to the gift; he just didn’t *add* anything. He is the improviser who freezes on stage, accepting the offer and then blocking his own contribution. The tragedy isn’t that God is harsh. It’s that the gift was meant to grow, and fear kept it underground.

WHERE OUR “AND” COMES FROM

Our “and” isn’t something we manufacture alone. It rises from spiritual faculties God has already placed within us, which Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore mapped as the Twelve Powers. Three of them are especially at work in a good “yes, and.”

FAITH, IMAGINATION, AND WILL

Faith is the “yes.” It is the willingness to trust the offer, even when it isn’t the scene we planned. Faith says, “I don’t know where this is going, but I believe there’s good in it.”

Imagination is how we see what to add. It is the power to envision a possibility in what we’ve been handed that no one else noticed. The servants at Cana saw water; imagination sees what water might become.

Will is the step itself: carrying the jar to the well, and back, and back again. It is the moment we stop thinking about our contribution and actually make it. *Faith, Imagination, Will: yes, see, step.*

CO-CREATION IS NOT ABOUT CONTROLLING THE OUTCOME

This is the freeing part. Good improvisers don’t know where the scene is going either. They aren’t writing the whole play; they’re adding the next honest line and trusting their partner with the rest. That is all God asks of us: not the whole script, just the next line.

WHEN THE WIND TOOK MY NOTES

I once officiated a beach wedding in Wailea for a couple Kai and Melissa. I wrote three typed pages of what I believed was my finest wedding speech. Two sentences in, a trade-wind gust lifted the pages from my hands and carried them out over the ocean toward Kaho‘olawe while fifty guests gasped. One groomsman gave chase until he remembered he was wearing rented shoes. My first instinct was to block, to recite the speech from memory. Instead, I said, “Well, it looks like Spirit has edited my remarks.” and I then asked a question I had never planned: “Tell us the moment you knew you loved each other.” Kai remembered Melissa driving two hours in the rain to bring him soup when he had the flu. Melissa knew when Kai cried at a dog food commercial. Half the guests were in tears, and Melissa’s mother called it the most beautiful ceremony she had ever seen. The wind didn’t ruin that wedding. It made an offer. My only job was to say yes and then bring something real to the scene.

THREE INVITATIONS FOR THIS WEEK

Each day, when life hands you something, whether welcome or wildly off script, pause and ask:

1. *What is the offer in front of me right now?* It might be a hard conversation, a diagnosis, a change at work, or an unexpected free afternoon. Before you react, recognize it as an offer: the opening line of a scene you are invited into.
2. *Will I say “yes” to it?* Saying yes means accepting what is real instead of arguing with it. It doesn’t mean you like it; it means you stop blocking and step in with faith.
3. *What is my “and”?* Ask: What is my next faithful step? What can I bring to this? Let imagination show you a possibility and let will carry the first jar to the well. Not the whole script, just the next line.

CLOSING

Remember our volunteers: the scene came alive the moment they stopped protecting themselves and started building on each other. God is the most generous scene partner there is. Spirit keeps making offers, not to trap or test us, but because the scene is better with us in it. God doesn’t need us to have the whole script. God just needs our willingness to play our part. Yes, and. Amen.

AFFIRMATION

I say “yes” to what Spirit offers, and I bring my whole self to the scene.