

## Say Yes to All of Life

“Yes, Yes, Yes.” I enjoy seeing these words colorfully emblazoned on banners at the marvelous Oregon Country Fair in Veneta (a must-go July experience for lovers of alternative reality).

This is the heart of strangeness, the vitalizing power that makes life into passionate ooh’s and ah’s rather than listless oh yeah’s and so what’s.

Yes. This is. We are. It barely matters what the “is” and “are” consist of.

Opening ourselves to it, embracing it, saying yes to it, glorying in the mystery of how this particular slice of external and internal reality came to be after 14 billion years of big bang evolving — such is living life with eyes positively wide open.

I don’t mean to sound Pollyannaish, excessively optimistic. Life can suck. It can be painful, depressing, disappointing, tragic.

But saying yes to all that is a lot better than denying it. Kudos to the folks in Salem who organized the Stories from the Dark Side series at the Grand Theatre (last Thursday, May and June). Great idea, inviting people to share tales from the darker side of themselves.

Recently I came across one of those wise Twitter epigrams that say so much in 140 characters or less: “Self hate lives in the gap of what you think you should be and what you actually are.”

Yes. This is what you are. This is what I am. Yet also more, because of Yes, and Yes, and Yes... without end.

Back in the 1960’s us Vietnam War-era protesters often heard the words, “Love it or leave it.” Meaning, the United States. It was a stupid saying. But changing one word puts it in accord with my Yes philosophy of life.

Love it and leave it. Love what is true right now inside and outside of us. And leave that behind as we open ourselves to the fresh reality of what is possible in the next ever-changing moments.

There always is another Yes. Until there isn't. There's no No, existentially speaking. So long as we live, we always are living positively, even in our deepest negativity.

Salem, like everywhere else, thrives when people are open to anything and anyone. Dogmatism, certainty, fixedness, rigidity: these confine the creativity of Yes.

Sure, not everything that is, is what we want. However, making desirable changes first requires seeing things as they are. Then the avenue to what should be opens up with the next "...and Yes."

I meditate every morning. Today I repeated Yes, Yes, Yes as sort of a mantra. After a few minutes I felt the pleasure that often comes from hearing or saying "yes."

(OK, not if you ask your boss if you're being fired, but otherwise.)

Meditating did spur an uncomfortable yes-memory. When I proposed to my wife, the words came out so botched Laurel had to say, "Are you asking me to marry you?" Yes, I said.

Such is the power of yes. It transforms a bad beginning into a happy ending.

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Strange Up Salem seeks to lift our city's Blah Curse. Give us a Facebook like. Brian Hines blogs at [hinesblog.com](http://hinesblog.com)