

Saying 'yes' has made all the difference



From left: Cheryl Jost, Marybeth Curtis Kelly, Sheila Fahey, Ann Kenneally Ryan, and Maryjo Welch rehearse for "The Apple Doesn't Fall Very Far from the Tree."

By Beverly Beckham JUNE 04, 2015

Apparently I was saying "no" too much. "No, thank you." "No, not today." "No, I'm sorry. I can't." Which is why my daughter Julie began talking to me about the power of yes.

Saying "yes," she explained with a serious expression and her hand on my shoulder, had led her to people, places, and experiences she might not have had if she had let distance, weather, and an "It's too late and I'm too tired" mindset keep her in her comfort zone.

Saying "yes," she said, had broadened her world.

Which is why I said "yes" last November when a friend called and asked, "Do you want to be part of a flash mob at the Quincy Christmas Parade?"

"No" was all set to cartwheel off my tongue, "No, I have shopping to do." "No, it's too cold." "No, I don't even like parades."

But because I said "yes," I met John McDonald, who, I learned while waiting for the flash mob to start, had run a dinner show at the Common Market in Quincy, where my "power of yes" daughter worked many years ago. On top of that, he has also been involved with live theater and entertainment for more than 30 years.

"Yes, I would love to know more about what you do," I told him then. "Yes, I would love to see your mother/daughter show, 'The Apple Doesn't Fall Very Far from the Tree,'" I said when he e-mailed a few months later.

But I can't, I had to say. I have to be somewhere else. So he invited me to a rehearsal. ("Yes, I'll go.")

There, I got a peek at a musical revue that makes you smile, tugs at your heart, has you singing along, and leaves you thinking about mothers, daughters, teachers, aunts, and all the special women in a person's life.

Five talented performers sing with their five talented daughters, alone and together. And they rock.

And if I hadn't said "yes," I wouldn't have known about this show, which is next weekend, June 12-13, at the Common Market in Quincy (www.brownpapertickets.com). And I would have missed out on something fantastic.

Same thing with Karen Kalafatas and Stephanie Chase, two creative and energetic women who compose and sing songs for kids.

I met Karen, not when she was performing her children's songs, which are fun and touching and original, but when she performed as part of a series called First Mondays at the Napoleon Room at Club Cafe in Boston.

On the first Monday of every month, you get to hear a singer for an hour. There's live entertainment almost every night at Boston's only supper club, but First Mondays introduce new artists.

Karen sang for adults the night I met her. If I hadn't said "yes" to going, I would never have known about her. Or known

that every day, she makes life a little better by singing to kids.

"Yes," I said to my husband when he asked if I wanted to check out the River Club in Scituate a month ago.

I met Stephanie Chase that night, another gifted and talented singer who, like Karen Kalafatas, spends her days singing and entertaining and writing fun, happy, poignant, wonderful songs for children.

Stephanie, known as Mamasteph, is well known all over the South Shore. But I'd never heard of her, until I said "yes."

Yes, I will go see my friend Kristanthi Pappas at the Blackthorne Publick House in South Easton.

I expected fantastic vocals from her, but I didn't expect fantastic accompaniment in an intimate lounge where singers and musicians are encouraged to bring not just their voices and perform, but also guitars and horns and whatever they play.

And, "yes," I said to Julie, who started this whole power of yes thing. "There's a performance at the Strand Theatre in Dorchester. Can you come?"

Charlotte, my 8-year-old granddaughter, sings with the **Boston City Singers**. They had a concert last Sunday. A stage full of schoolchildren wearing Boston City Singers shirts sang in harmony, singing about love and hope for a better world.

And the world, while they sang, did feel better.

"Yes" has led to all this, to music and song in places I didn't even know existed.

There's more out there, of course. Lots more. But you have to say "yes" to find and enjoy them.

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