

# IMPROV YOUR OD PRACTICE

## Why Improvisation?

From: The Center for Creative Emergence, <http://www.creativeemergence.com/>

### Improv and Inspiration

- Raises energy, alertness and positive feelings
- Engages & integrates different parts of the brain & body
- Unleashes an aliveness only found in the fertile moment
- Increases self awareness and expands self concept
- Becomes self motivating because it's fun
- Awakens & focuses previously dormant creative potential
- Generates edge-of-your-seat excitement

### Improv and Ideation

- Creates new neural pathways and releases endorphins
- Fosters the ability to think on your feet & under pressure
- Develops confidence in navigating the unknown
- Generate more novel ideas in a shorter amount of time
- Develops flexible thinking
- Activates the imagination in new and surprising ways
- Expands the "playing field" of the mind

### Improv and Innovation

- Enables more risk taking and spontaneous behaviors
- Shakes people out of traditional ways of doing things
- Increases ability to add to other's ideas in inventive ways
- Challenges assumptions
- Breaks habitual patterns of thinking, being, and doing
- Fosters experimentation without fear of failure
- Allows new patterns, directions & prototypes to emerge

### Improv and the Creative Team/Culture

- Instantly equalizes every member of the group
- Breaks down barriers quickly and non-threateningly
- Sets the stage for ongoing generative co-creation
- Increases trust between team/group/org. members
- Fosters thinking in terms of OURS. "Look what WE did!"
- Enhances the skill of supporting; giving and receiving
- Engages the whole person & whole team

## **Four Rules of Improv:**

**Yes and** – Replacing ‘but’ with ‘yes, and’ is very empowering and it will make everyone be right. It moves conversations forward and has people continue to listen instead of shutting down at the ‘but’.

**Be in the Now** – In order for a scene on stage to really work well, the actors must stay present in the scene. This skill involves really listening and really letting go of personal agendas.

**Be a Character** – Taking on another persona can be effective and fun to have us be different when making a request or presenting an idea. Acting as if you are someone else also takes the pressure off of trying to be yourself. What would the character say? How would they stand? What would they do? You will get different results!

**Make your teammates look brilliant** - Always focus on the other people on the team, acknowledge their contribution, ensure they have what they need to do their job. Not only will it make them look brilliant, you will too!

## **Improv Resources**

### **Books**

**The Improvisation Playbook** – Tristan McAvery

**Innovation at the Speed of Laughter** – John Sweeney

**Truth in Comedy: The Manual of Improvisation** by Charna Halpern, Del Close, and Kim Johnson

**The Ultimate Improv Book: A Complete Guide to Comedy Improvisation** by Edward J. Nevraumont, Nicholas P. Hanson, and Kurt Smeaton

**The Second City Almanac of Improvisation** by Anne Libera and Inc. Second City

**Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre** by Keith Johnstone

**Improv Wisdom: Don't Prepare, Just Show Up** by Patricia Madson

### **Articles**

**Advancing the Scene: Improv as an Organization Intervention** by Kristy Dominguez, Donna Howell-DePew, and Patty Walters; *Organizational Development Practitioner*, Vol 39, No 2