

Improvisation

Improvisation: *to speak or perform without preparation, to make or create (something) by using whatever is available*

Spontaneous: *Something done or said in a natural and often sudden way and without a lot of thought or planning*

Improvisation Rules

There are many different rules related to improvisation that you may encounter but there are 3 main rules that you should always remember regardless of if you are a professional improv player or just being introduced to improv for the first time.

Rule 1: No Blocking

The word blocking here refers to not accepting suggestions as they are given; e.g., partner A: "I sure hate getting wet in this downpour." Partner B: "It isn't raining." When a player blocks an idea given, it puts the other player in the position of defending the suggestion or coming up with a new one. Either way, it isn't fair to the player and doesn't allow the scene to move forward.

Rule 2: The first player to speak must give something to his or her partner

The first player to speak must give something to his or her partner by answering either the who, what, where, when, or why of the scene they are going to build together.

Rule 3: Commit to your first idea

Commit to your first idea. Don't second-guess yourself or try to plan what will happen next. Your first idea is usually your best one. Go with it and believe in it one hundred percent.

Rule 4: You don't have to be funny

The hidden riddle of improv is that the harder you try not to be funny the more funny your scene is going to be. Why? Because it's the very best kind of improv scene you can do is an "interesting" scene, not necessarily a "funny" one. When you do an interesting scene, a very surprising thing happens, the funny comes out all by it's self. Stick to your character, stick to the story that is being told, and to stay within the reality of the scene you are playing.

Rule 5: You can look good if you make your partner look good

When you are in a scene, the better you make your partner look the better the scene is going to be and, as a direct result, the better you are going to look. You may enter a scene with some really great idea about the character you are going to play or an idea you want to do but your partner probably has absolutely no idea what's cooking in your little mind, and so has no idea how to react. No matter how brilliant your idea might be, it's practically worthless if the scene as a whole goes bad. WORK TOGETHER!

Rule 6: Tell a story

Storytelling is probably the easiest rule to remember but the hardest one to do. The real magic of improv is when we see the players take totally random suggestions (*like a plumber and a cab driver selling winter jackets on a tropical island*) and somehow "make it work". If all these unrelated elements are going to come together then it's going to happen in the course of an interesting tale. So that's just what the players are going to try and do, tell us all a story.