



Posted on Sat, Mar. 28, 2009

Carolina Improv Company's tips, tricks and basic rules

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Make everyone else look like a rockstar.

Don't worry too much about you. The best improv students aren't the ones that say, "Look at me, I'm funny!" They're the ones who commit themselves fully to trying every exercise we're working on. The comedy will happen.

Don't be afraid to screw up. That type of concern doesn't exist here. If we screw up at CIC we like to screw up big so that there's no question we gave 100 percent.

Trust | Believe your partner is the best improv partner.

Trust yourself | Whatever you say is the truth of the scene.

Focus | Listen, watch, concentrate: If you are in a scene or are going to enter a scene, be aware of everything going on around you.

No side talking | Give full attention and focus to those performing on stage; this is a safe environment, criticism and judgment are not allowed.

Don't ask questions, make statements | This puts the burden of creation on your partners on stage and is less interesting.

Say yes/always accept | Whatever you or someone else does on stage is reality. Don't deny offers and suggestions from your partner. Ignoring an assumption is a negation. "Yes, but" is also a negation. Remember "Yes, and."

Follow directions and commit 100 percent | Don't try to be the best performer, just commit 100 percent to the game or exercise. If you don't understand the game/exercise, speak up.

Give and take | Not everyone can talk at the same time. Be aware if you are dominating a scene. If you are, hold back. Don't always be the one who starts the scene.

Make your partner look good | Worry more about how your partner looks than how you look. You cannot look good unless your partner looks good.

Don't tell jokes or try to be funny | This is improvisation, not stand-up comedy.

Make active choices | Action is better than standing around. It is more interesting to be in an active scene and more interesting for the audience to watch. Avoid storytelling and "instructing."

Explore and heighten | Add information to the scene: who; what; where; when and why. The why is often forgotten. The more specific you are, the better. Add status, conflict, detail. When in trouble, use your "where." Don't *tell* what, *show* what.

Work to the top of your intelligence | Intelligent humor pays off in the long run. Shock humor wears thin very fast.

Stage picture/voice | Be seen and heard.

Source: Gina Trimarco, Carolina Improv Company