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Voices of Improv 101 students

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Here's what some Improv 101 students had to say about their experience in class and at the recital:

Kay Von Hoesen, real estate appraiser:

"I was deathly afraid of performing for an audience, especially because I find improv such a struggle. For me, it is terribly difficult speaking and acting on the fly. In real life, I'm typically deliberate in what I say and do. That's part of the reason I took improv, to learn to think quicker on my feet. What we do in class amongst ourselves is fine, because we're all in the same boat, but I didn't want to humiliate myself in front of an audience. At first I thought I'd go to the recital as an audience member. But then I feared I'd watch all of you on stage and regret my choice. After all, part of the reason I took the Improv class was to push myself into trying something new, something outside my comfort zone, and to challenge myself. So I took the plunge."

Barbara Belyski, sales consultant, mom and Girl Scout troop leader:

"I would like to sell Tastefully Simple on more of a full time basis beginning this summer. ... In addition to their Web site, their products are marketed through home taste-testing parties by consultants such as myself who offer samples, easy meal ideas, recipes, serving suggestions and fun!

"I originally signed up for the improv classes to feel more comfortable in front of my hostesses and their guests when doing a party. Standing in front of a crowd had always been hard for me. I feel I failed at so many other ventures in my life because I didn't have the confidence in myself to make them work.

"Now, I feel with the tools I have acquired through improv classes, I can be more successful when I speak to potential clients. In the past I was afraid to ask anyone to host a show because I automatically assumed they would say no. I didn't want to burden them or make them feel uncomfortable. I didn't realize that I was the one who felt uncomfortable asking. Taking the class has given me a new outlook on things. It is now easier for me to ask clients if they would like to enjoy a fun evening with friends and food. Improv really made a big difference in my life!

"If I could pin point one thing that really helped me get through the first class it was the fact of knowing that everyone was in the same boat. We were not there to judge or be judged. Gina provided a very trusting atmosphere. I appreciated that. It's not very often that you can walk into a room filled with 12 strangers and be able to express yourself freely. What happened in improv stayed in improv, at least for me."

Kim Hecker, veterinary technician:

"I most enjoyed meeting new people and learning to think on my feet. I learned that improv is not impossible, even if you've not done it before, as long as you keep an open mind and be accepting."

Greg Watson, computer student at ITT and aspiring actor:

"I took the class to try and become more confident in front of people, in interviewing and business. I learned not to tense up in front of people."

Dennis DiSabato, lawyer:

"It was a lot of fun. I think I came in hoping to be able to use it at work, in the courtroom. But it also gave me the ability to be goofy."

Jessica Stokes, lawyer:

"My favorite thing was being able to act like another person and be someone other than who I am in my everyday life. I like to act silly, but I rarely do."