

# Become An Improv-Master!



***Leveraging Improvisation  
in Toastmastering and Life***



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**Improv defined:** An act of spontaneous invention;  
That which is improvised. Impromptu.

**Why Improv is important for Toastmasters (and life):**

1. You can't prepare for everything in advance. We need to improvise
2. Sometimes you have to "go with the flow," or go "off-script"
3. Adds additional tools to your communication tool-kit
4. Speaking is collaborative. Improv utilizes partners, audience.
5. You become more aware of your environment and its stimuli
6. Stimulates creativity.
7. More exciting and unanticipated results generated from Improv
8. Sharpens your listening skills.

**Why Improv is important in Life:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Concept 1: Accepting the Offer**

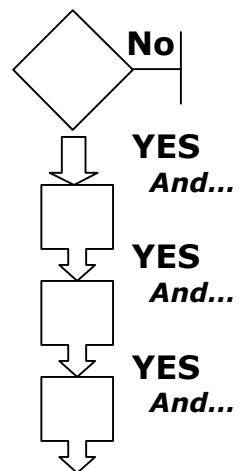
An overture is made. You can *accept* it or *block* it.  
When you accept it, it can be built upon;  
When you block it, you go back to the drawing board and must start again. Momentum and rapport are lost.  
In Improv, Table Topics and in general, we should accept and build upon others' offers.

Accepting the Offer

☺ YES, AND...

Blocking the Offer

☹ YES, BUT...



**Concept 2: Making Your Partner Look Good**

In collaborative situations if each person focuses on helping their partner succeed, everyone wins in the end!

**Concept 3: Thinking Creatively**

Creativity derives from mixing up ideas and thinking in non-linear fashion. Experimentation is encouraged. Infinite possibilities exist when you go "off-script" and accept what the universe provides.

## YOUR NOTES

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### Warm Up Your Tongue...Using Consonant Contact 😊

**B**ig boy Barsul brought beaucoup de bodies to bookstores in Bavaria.

**C**assandra Cockrill continues to convalesce while communicating with her cadre of confidantes.

**D**ennis Dawson denies disliking dem' Division D dudes and dames.

**F**eliciai Favroth & Federico Fellini film frivolous folks for fabulous, frightful feature films.

**G**ordon Gecko's greed grows in gargantuan gaggles guaranteed to gunk up our goliath gains.

**H**appy Harrison has historically herded his hapless helpers with hope and humor.

**J**ames Joyce just joined the Jetsons for juicy jaunts to Jonestown for java juices & junk food.

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*Write your own tongue-twister using the consonant your first name begins with*

#### Related Links:

FREE DOWNLOAD:

Improv Encyclopedia: <http://improvcyclopedia.org/download/book.pdf>

BOOKS:

Keith Johnstone's *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*; Also *Theatre Sports*

Viola Spolin: *Improvisation for the Theatre*

LOCAL VENUES FOR CLASSES:

Bay Area Theater Sports: [www.improv.org](http://www.improv.org)

Big City Improv: [www.bigcityimprov.com](http://www.bigcityimprov.com)

LOCAL FESTIVALS:

SF Improv Festival: <http://sfimprovfestival.com>

SF Theater Festival: <http://sftheaterfestival.org>

Search for "improv" and "fringe festivals"

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Download Craig's Table Topics Article from *Toastmaster*, Feb. 2010:

[www.expressionsofexcellence.com/ARTICLES/](http://www.expressionsofexcellence.com/ARTICLES/)

[Turning\\_Tables\\_on\\_Topics\\_Article.pdf](http://www.expressionsofexcellence.com/ARTICLES/Turning_Tables_on_Topics_Article.pdf)

## **An Assortment of Improv Games**

**The Collective Story (AKA The Progressive Story):** Each participant contributes a bit to the story. There's no right or wrong. Listen and add to it!

**Conversation from A to Z:** Pairs of people converse on a topic, alternating sentences. The first person's sentence begins with A. Their partner's sentence begins with B. The originator's next sentence begins with C. Try to get to Z!

**Accepting the Offer:** Converse with a partner on a topic of your choice. Whatever your partner says, you accept, by saying "Yes, and..." before appending your own idea. To which they respond "Yes, and..." See how well you develop an idea, story or concept. (The alternative is to have the same conversation but each response begins "Yes, BUT..." Notice the difference when one's offer is blocked instead of accepted!

**Tell a Story...A Word At A Time.** Pairs of people attempt to tell a story a word at a time. Try to set your partner up, not stymie them!

**The Conversation within the conversation.** Two people engage in a conversation. Two other people, standing behind the people in conversation, represent what each person is thinking! They verbalize the fears and dreams of the conversational partners, for all to hear.

**Gibberish:** A great way to warm up. Instead of responding to a Table Topic in English or French or Swahili or Spanish, respond entirely in Gibberish — a nonsensical language. Emphasize vocal variety, facial expressions and gestures to get your point across.

**The Change Game.** Begin to tell a story. At some point, your partner or leader will say "Change" and whatever you just said, you must now change. For example, if you were describing going on a vacation to Alaska, when you hear "Change" you must alter the location from Alaska to a new place of your choice. Each time "change" is called out, whatever you just said (person, place, thing, action, feeling, etc.) must be changed, and then you continue the story with a new variable inserted.

**The Gift!** A variation on the concept of accepting the offer, pairs of people present each other invisible gifts. As the recipient opens his or hers, the recipient (not the gift-giver) declares what was received, something always wanted!