

## Improv Games - Warmups & Games from Improv Theater

-*Countdown*: shake 8X each: r.arm, l. arm, r.leg, l.leg, body. Then shake 7X each, 6X etc.

-Say your own *name*, throw ball to someone else in the circle.

-Say name of recipient, throw the ball there.

-throw & catch *invisible ball*.

-Send *handclap around the circle*, fast as possible. Change direction (sign clearly). (Or: hop, sing note, etc.)

-*Wink wink* – stand in a circle, A winks at B, A goes to B's place. B finds winking partner C, goes there; etc.

-*One person walking*, everyone else freezes. When so. else starts walking, first walker freezes. When walker freezes, so. else starts walking.

-All walk through the room, one person freezes. (Variation: when you freeze, sing a note)

-*All or nothing*: All freeze; when one starts walking, all walk. When one freezes, all freeze.

-*"Yes! Yes! Yes!"*: All walk through the room. Point at something, go there and say „yes!“ to it. Etc.

-*"No! No! No!"*: Same game with „no!“

-*"Wrong names"*: All walk through the room. Point at something, go there and loudly call it the wrong name

-*Where's Walter?* All walk through the room. Leader gives signal to freeze & close eyes; asks „Where is XY?“ All point to place where XY is standing. Etc.

-*"I am a tree"*: build a sculpture - 1 steps into circle, says, for example, „I am a tree“ and stands in a „tree“ pose. 2 joins in saying „I am an apple“, stands in „apple“ pose. 3 joins, says „I am the worm“, stands in „worm“ pose. Cut – 1 and 2 leave circle. 3 (the new 1) repeats „I am the worm“, a new 2 & 3 join with new poses, etc.

-*"Up to 3"*: Larger group stands in circle. Whoever wants to make sounds/sing/speak etc, steps into the circle and communicates musically with the others inside the circle. When so. wants to stop, they step outside the circle again. The only rule: when 4 or more are inside the circle at the same time, the „piece“ ends.

An add-in for any game:

-*"Circus bow"*: When so. makes a „mistake“ and frets/apologizes etc.: step forward, spread your arms, make an exaggerated clown's bow – everybody applauds.

### Basic rules of Improvisation:

- Say yes! Accept every ball and pass it on – stay in the game.

- Make mistakes! Who makes no mistakes is not improvising. Learn to enjoy them and turn them to gold. Every pearl started out as a grain of sand („Do not fear mistakes. There are none.“ - Miles Davis)

- Don't plan ahead. Be a blank piece of paper. Let yourself be surprised.

- Show up (that makes up 80% of success, according to Woody Allen)

- Start somewhere. Ideas will come as you improvise. The plan will come in the making.

- Just do the next step – planning ahead can be a block

- Judging is a block! Take what is there.

- See the obvious and do it. Be average – what is „normal“ for you can be exiting and new for everybody else

- Be alert. Observe your surroundings. Do one thing at a time and savor it.

- Face the here and now; Take what is there and expand it. Don't fight reality.

- Enjoy instability (like riding a bicycle; or intonation)

- Stay the course – what is my task now? Small things can be meaningful

- The glass is half full; see what is already there

- Find like-minded people!

- Look out for each other: Let your partner look good. Give up control. Let the music lead.

- Be open & receptive for the others ... and for yourself

- Stay in motion: make variations, change perspective, change focus, change roles

- Enjoy the ride! Be playful!

### Literature:

Keith Johnstone: Improvisation and the Theater, 1981

Patricia Madson: Improv Wisdom. Don't Prepare, Just Show Up. 2005

Viola Spolin: Improvisation for the Theater, 1963

Stephen Nachmanovitch: Free Play – Improvisation in Life and Art 1991