**What?  Improv takes skills?**

Improvisational acting is acting without a script of lines to memorize and rehearse a head of time. Actors make up the story, dialogue, and blocking as they perform the scene. Although the experts often make it look effortless and it is unrehearsed, improvisational acting is an extremely technical and difficult art form.  It takes a lot of skill and practice to really be successful at it.  Here are a few skills you should develop in order to improve your improv:

1. **Establish a Specific Situation**

Usually in an improv scene you are given one piece of information for your scene, for example who you are, where you’re at, or what you are doing.  It is your job, as an acting team to become a playwright as well as an actor and write rest of the information you are not given.  You write this information as a team while you act through the scene together.  The more unique and detailed information you write into your scene, the better.  Things you must decide and write into your scene:

* **Who are you? –** Create specific, detailed, and interesting characters.
* **Where are you? –** Decide where you are and why you are there.
* **When is this happening? –** Decide a specific time the scene takes place.
* **What are you doing? -** Define what is occurring during the scene.

1. **Create a conflict then further the conflict**

All movies, theatre, books or anything exciting is centered on conflict. That means there must be a problem. You need to create a conflict for your scene.

* **What’s the problem?** Create a conflict or problem in your scene.
* **How are we solving it?** The “meat” of your scene comes from the interesting and unique ways you solve your problem.
* **Further the conflict-** Once you solve the problem, the scene is over, so add complications or more problems to your scene to keep in interesting and keep the scene going.

The more detail and creativity you use to answer these questions, the more interesting and unique your improvisation will be! Create these details and situations together by LISTENING to your partners, reacting to what is happening, and adding your own creativity to the scene.

1. **Plan Less, LISTEN More**

In order to take your partner’s ideas and add to those ideas, you need to **LISTEN** to you partner. Often, armature improv actors try to “plan” or think a situation out ahead of time. PLAN AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE! **LISTEN** and react. Actors spend their whole lives trying to make a scripted scene look spontaneous. Improv really is spontaneous. Go with the flow. Use what comes to your head immediately. Trust yourself. **LISTEN!**

1. **Open your Mouth and React**

Have you ever watched a movie or television show that was unappealing because it was so overdone or predicable? The most engaging and interesting scenes involve new, fresh ideas that people have not seen or experienced before. This will happen more often if you don’t try to think things out too much. Remember: **LISTEN**! After you have truly listened to your partners in the scene, open your mouth and simply react to them and creativity will happen!

**5.    Always say “Yes and… ”**

**This is THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE of improv, but we will talk about it last here in relation to the other rules, it’s the one you should remember the most.** Because you and your partner(s) are writing a scene together when you are performing improv, once one of you writes a detail of the scene by saying it or acting it out, that detail is truth in the world of the scene, and no one can say that it is not.  When a partner gives you information about the scene or answers a question for you **LISTEN!!!!! and ADD TO THEIR STORY!** Take the information and incorporate it into you acting of the scene, even if it wasn’t what you were thinking was going to happen.  Go with it then contribute your own ideas to it to carry the scene further along.