

### What I learned in Drama 103: Intro to Improvisation

What I learned in Drama 103 is to just start writing. As you move your mouth the words will start to form and maybe then suddenly it's not in a format you

acceptable.  
There are boundaries to be played with

intended or even one that seems

customs of our culture

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(left to right, for example)

why not right to left or d

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But to say experimental is not entirely right.

I think my favorite thing is that to improvise is to **PLAY**.

In high school there was a day when I realized I was inviting friends over to “hang out.” Then came the tilt! I returned to my childhood ways – I invited peter over to *play*. In fact, I just (I use the term loosely) got a message from him: “can we play when you get home?”

Lessons are learned the way humans were meant to learn in Improv. You make a mistake, and you feel it, you internalize it, and you grow from it.

For example the format you chose to write a final paper in might prove t

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you abandon that approach and start anew.

Self consciousness is a treat. To really be aware and conscious of myself, and how people perceive me – accurately aware – is a delight. It can cause me to stop talking, and should sometimes.

It is easy

to BLOCK

an offer.

to NARCISSISM.

Too easy.

And often coupled  
which I possess (TOO much of.)

So listen,

what have I learned?

(don't listen

the letters won't read to you)

PAY ATTENTION

does not just mean notice how many windows are in the room

-or-

the way someone walks

-butalso-

it means to listen to and accept and justify without being selfish  
everything your partner says

It's hard to really get over myself.

This class has taught me to listen and share.

It's sort of like KINDERGARTEN without TOYS.

Instead we have imaginary balls and STORIES.

Sharing a story is hard. Stories are hard enough on their own! Perhaps this is another thing I learned.

Make you partner look good. (one of my favorites) – is another way of saying pay attention.

I need to work on this. I see it as the goal of Improv. Well,  
maybe more to make your partner *feel* good. To feel  
like they have options and to have fun.

Should I tell you a story?

It's possible that  
improv is easier with  
many preloaded story ideas  
to draw on, like gnomes living in  
mushrooms or kids with an imaginary  
friend; but here is the danger when I have  
a preloaded story it becomes very difficult to  
PAY ATTENTION.

So here, I will pay attention to myself as I tell this new  
Story, which needs a setting which is very important I ought  
to brainstorm settings: beach, outhouse, concert, tunnel, etc.

Once there was a frog named Marsha. Marsha lived on the most beautiful lilly pad on the pond. It was far enough away from the dock so humans didn't touch it, but in shallow enough waters to allow her easy access to mates on the shore with no pads. (is it going to be a romance now?) One day (it needs to be interesting, after all), a young boy of about ten years brought a canoe to the pond. He did not use the dock, instead he crawled through the cat tails that surrounded the pond, scaring off many of Marsha's friends and even stepping on a strange frog's leg. Marsha watched in horror as Harry ribbited and croaked away his pain. The boy realized his error and scooped Harry gently into his hands before hopping in the boat with him. He paddled gently out into the middle of the pond, letting the soft summer breeze surround him and his new batrachian buddy, before drifting over to the nicest lilly pad he'd ever seen. Harry let out a large gasp, an almost human noise. Marsha stared directly at him. They hadn't seen each other since they were tadpoles and they promised they would leave this pond together. (I'm done with this story – need an ending) – So the boy put them both in a box and drove away into the sunset. The end.

Stories are hard. Clearly.

I think I might be done with this essay. I said what I wanted to say. Or maybe I'm just embarrassed.

No, safe space!

I learned to listen, at least a little, and I learned that I Need Practice.

I learned that it's so easy to see when other's are messing up and so easy to make that same mistake.

I learned that humans love narrative, and are delighted by the simplest things.

I learned that we know what we want.

There are life lessons and metaphors everywhere but I hardly want to just list them (it's not what the audience wants)

I love the idea that some disembodied david is the audience of my life, and my body is just an improviser sitting on the yellow line shouting suggestions at the improviser sitting in the chair. The audience (me) watches the action, and then cheers or boos. Only I am not as smart as an audience. I don't know whether I will cheer or boo until after I see it – I can't do it just at the suggestion. And I don't know what to suggest. But sometimes I get it right, usually, and my audience cheers. Taking drama 103 got a standing ovation. Hopefully there's more to come.

MARSHMALLOWS.

that is my devil's snare. perhaps by typing it out I will be freed from it's grasp. It is the preloaded word that I want to say as every word ball. It is persistent and annoying.

There are genres of creativity – in word ball, you can pick a really random food. but it's still a food. Objects are less random when you zoom out to a category. petunia? just a flower. which is just a plant, which is just another living thing. Bear? Animal. Living thing. pocket knife? just a tool. or just an object. Happiness? just another abstract thought. It's hard to be original! which is why it's pointless to be. Dare to be dull. But don't keep saying foods. Pick a different category. Learn the categories. Improvisation does not mean not having a toolbox to choose from.

word.

I'm out.

David Havens

(whose spirit animal just might be  
a chipmunk riding on an  
eagle's back, having  
so much fun)