

FALL COMEDY CLASS SURVIVAL GUIDE

CLASS SCHEDULE - Saturdays 10am Teens, Saturdays 12pm Preteens

Classes - September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12, 19, 26

Showcase - November 2 (30-minutes after class starts)

Bonus/Make-Up Classes - November 9, 16, 23 12pm for all ages

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Walter's #1 Rule: HAVE FUN but never at another's expense. There are no mistakes in Improv, so you have nothing to fear. Let go of ego and insecurity. Suspend judgement of self and others. Improv is all about team.

Improv #1 Rule: "YES! AND..." We say yes to everyone and everything - the only exception is personal safety - we do not allow others to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to us. Improv requires we beyond respect each other. We focus on making our team mates looks great. We accept all for who they are, what they wear, the words they say etc. We are inspired by our scene partners, and in turn we offer big choices to inspire them in return. A scene becomes a simple give and take of choices built upon the foundation of previous choices.

LISTENING - Listening is the #1 skill in life - but especially in acting, singing, comedy, directing.... Even painting.

FOCUS - Focus will save your life in the theater. A lot of what we do is less structured that most jobs. But if we do not focus and stay present / aware, we can hurt ourselves and others.

MAKE BIG MISTAKES - well, not on purpose. This philosophy is all about not fearing failure. More so, never worry about those little mistakes. Take chances! Play at your 100% best at all times. If you make a mistake, LEARN FROM IT. If someone else makes a mistake, LEARN FROM IT. Let go of that horrible feeling. The world is not ending. Don't make yourself or others feel bad for simple "OPPS" moments. (Leaving this typo in to make a point LOL). Recover quickly and push forward.

NEVER MAKE THE FACE - When I was 5, my piano teacher said, never stop and never make the face. If you don't tell us you messed up, we never know (except your teacher and mom - can't help you there lol)

Journal: Everything you need to succeed as a comedian is all around you. Keeping a journal allows you to track your observations and experiences. We create our own comedy text book. Observe our world. Record it. Record what you learn in comedy class - new games, stand-up ideas etc. Write about the good, the bad and the ugly. Journals help us process a very subjective world. Having some stage fright, write about it.

DAILY HOMEWORK

START EVERY DAY WITH A SMILE Enter a room with a smile and get many more in return. Don't wait for the world to make you happy. Lead by example!

OBSERVE YOUR WORLD - EVERYTHING you need to do/know for Improv and Stand-Up Comedy is all around. Reporters report. Artist interpret. Record what you see in your journal.

STAND-UP COMEDY 101

Every comic starts the week brainstorming ideas for comedy. Every Monday list 5-10 things you might want to explore. When you brainstorm don't judge. Just vomit ideas into journal w/o edits.

Treat every class the way a comic treats an open mic. Open mics are where young comics hone their craft. We try new bits. We often fail miserably. We get up and try again. We get to hear the words we wrote. We flesh out our stories.

WHERE TO START? Simply brainstorm a list of things. Don't edit. We are not trying to create the end product. We are simply vomiting ideas onto paper. What makes you mad? What makes you sad? What makes you laugh? What have you observed or experienced at school, home, work, vacation, in public places etc? Simply list a bunch of ideas. List about 10 different ideas.

Now just get on stage and start reading the list. Maybe start to tell us the story of what happened. Keep talking until you get the light (The universal comedy symbol for it's time to get off stage). Finish the bit and go.

IMMEDIATELY open your journal and write - How did that go? What got a laugh? What got crickets (Dad Silence)? Now we start to edit our material a bit down to the best 3-4.

NOW we brainstorm details. For a story, think WHO WHERE WHAT. Characters? Setting? What Happened? Consider the five senses. What did you see, hear, smell, taste, touch?

Get back on stage and try out the best bits from last time with new detail. Then go back to the journal. How can we make this funnier?

ALL SIDES - try looking at your topics from all angles, different perspectives.

The Magic Three - Just like three points make a plane (geometry) or ELA teacher says to make three arguments to support a thesis in a book report, comedy likes the rhythm of three. What is over all theme? You need at least three points to support that theme, right? We can combine stories - take things from multiple events to form ONE CRAZY AMAZING STORY.

THE Nth DEGREE - Something happened. What worse COULD have happened? What could you have said? What could you have done better? What could you have done to make it worse?

Analogies - What is your story similar to? Finding similarities in seemingly different can be hilarious.

Heighten the Attitude - raise the intensity of the emotion driving this bit.

IMPROVISE - The reason comics use Open Mics to develop material is the audience. Respond in real time to your audience reactions.

Each season we will develop a new 2-3 minute routine. Have fun. Don't expect to be show ready on day one. You have 8 weeks to craft your ideas. But you should never say "I've got nothing". Be prepared. EVERY WEEK Brainstorm, organize thoughts, talk on stage, process that experience in your journal. SIMPLE!