**IMPROVISATION**

Commedia Dell’Arte (go to <http://www.theatrehistory.com/italian/commedia_dell_arte_001.html>, which is also a link on my website) is credited with the true beginnings of improvisation. Improvisation is acting without a script…everything is made up in the moment. Actors are given a situation or a conflict and from that they create the scene.

**Rules of Improv**

1. **Stay in the Moment**
2. **Don’t Ask Questions**
3. **Don’t Deny Information**

**Stay in the Moment:**

* To stay in the moment means that whatever information has been created for the story, you must continue using that information and not all the sudden change the parameters of the story. For example, if you establish that your relationship is brother and sister, you can’t suddenly change that relationship to father and daughter. If you put your scene in Hawaii, you can’t sudden morph yourself to Alaska. You have to stay in the moment for your scene to make sense and for the audience to be able to follow your story.

**Don’t Ask Questions:**

* Questions don’t move the improv forward, especially closed ended questions (yes or no questions). It is difficult not to ask a question, but you must always try to turn questions into statements…that is what will move the improv in an interesting direction.
* If all you do is ask questions then your scene might sound like this: A: “Did you go to the store?” B: “Yes” A: “Did you get the Milk?” B: “Yes” A: “Did you have enough money?” B: “Yes” and so on…not an interesting scene and not moving the story forward.

**Don’t Deny Information:**

* Any information that is presented in the scene must be accepted by both scene partners. If someone says they are your spouse, then that is the relationship that you now have to play in the scene. If you deny that information it becomes a scene about an argument rather than a story that can be built.