



Everyday Improv Tips from Four Day Weekend

Improv at Home:

1) Improv is about being present and in the moment. When you're at home, enjoy the moment and don't get distracted. **Ex. Turn off the TV and your smartphone and live in the reality of the moment with your family. Make time everyday to be more present for yourself and your family.**

2) In improv, we learn to show rather than just tell. If you love someone, show them - don't just tell them you love them. **Ex. Give them a hug. Buy them flowers. Write a card and let them how much you appreciate them. Clean up around the house. Do the unexpected for someone else.**

3) In improv, we're always playing characters who are friendly, happy people who know and like each other and have a shared history together. Your family has the ultimate shared history together, so go make a lifelong memory today. **Ex. Plant a tree with your kids. Work on a jigsaw puzzle together. Cook a meal together. Sing karaoke. Create something together. Have fun.**

4) In improv, listening is very important. And more than just listening, you have to receive your partner's information. Receiving means you're taking part-ownership of the idea and building on it. **Ex. When in a conversation, listen first. Then pause and process before you answer. And then, repeat and build on the information.**

5) At home, try to find a way to "disrupt" the daily routine. Take the mundane and routine things at home – like chores - and have fun with them. **Ex. Create a sense of play at home. Pick a song that brings the family together and sing it together. Change roles in the household. Maybe, instead of Dad cutting the grass and Mom cooking a meal, let the kids take over the chores (supervised, of course) and cook a meal together. Give Mom or Dad the night off. Or better yet, go out for pizza or have an impromptu picnic.**

Improv at Work:

1) Improv is about striking the word “no” and replacing it with “yes, and.” This process takes “an idea” and makes it “our idea.” In corporate terms, this is known as “socializing an idea” and getting “buy in.” **Ex. At a meeting, instead of shutting someone down, listen, let them speak and, even if you strongly disagree, begin your response with a thoughtful, “Yes, and... that’s a good idea. Let’s see how your idea might inspire the team and help our company.”**

2) In improv, what we come up with together is far better than what we come up with individually. This concept encourages collaboration and reminds us that we are only responsible for our small piece of the pie, not the whole thing. This can be a huge stress reliever when you consider the amount of work we all do, day in and day out while at work. **Ex. Do your part on a project and always be open to asking for input and help from others. Creative feedback and suggestions from others is invaluable. It’s not only a sign of strength but even an “evolutionary advantage” to ask others for help. Do your part and advance it together in conversation.**

3) Believe it or not, everybody is an expert in something you’re not. Embrace the differences in other people. Know your strengths and surround yourself with people who complement your weaknesses. **Ex. Grab a cup of coffee with individual coworkers on your team and have a chat to explore how you can support each other’s strengths and weaknesses.**

4) Control is the enemy of improvisation. Trust in the process and don’t always try to control everything. Basically, try not to micromanage all the time. **Ex. Let employees or team members have more flexibility – be confident in their ability to deliver and achieve their goals, and help them as needed. Delegate, don’t dominate. You have a team for a reason.**

5) Create an environment where everyone’s voices are heard and valued equally. Chinese military general and philosopher Sun Tzu once said, “Loyalty, above all else, is based on appreciation.” **Ex. Create an environment at work where people are not afraid to speak up. You never know where the next great idea will come from.**

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