

Expressing yourself, laughing, and being with others are healing, safe, and fun ways to explore your creative side. Em Harpp-Meulbroek will take you through a 90 minute introduction to Improv. Improv is not just for people on TV or witty comics in the city! It is truly for everyone, because **everyone** is creative. No experience is necessary, just be yourself. Improv is a valuable and energizing activity that helps you be mindful, playful, and have a lot of laughs as you communicate with others. Improv can truly enhance your life, and allow you to enjoy your own creativity and that of others.

Em has an MA in Theatre Education from Emerson College, and has been teaching improv for over 25 years. She also teaches at Rye Arts Center and Rye Middle School.

### **Improv(e) Your Life**

Improv is being used all over the world to help people communicate, connect, and deal with stress. It's available to everyone of any age! It's never too late to try Improv. You don't have to be an actor, be "funny", or perceive yourself as creative. Play can boost your immune system, allowing you to be sociable, expressive, and relaxed. It also helps alleviate some of the isolating pain of depression and anxiety. Just say yes, and dive into a wonderful, creative and fascinating world that will enhance your life!

## **What People are Saying about Say Yes Improv Programs and Workshops:**

***"My son enjoyed Em's Improv classes so much that I myself signed up for her adult classes! He said that in addition to having an insane amount of fun, her class was the most stress-free, judgement-free environment in which he could be himself totally- silly, funny, exuberant, clever, free. It was lovely to see him so happy and fulfilled. The most positive change that I noticed in him and continue to see is his willingness to say 'yes' to trying new things. I recommend this class to one and all, young and old!" -Parent of RMS student, Rye, NY***

***"I think you should make this class longer." -Rye Middle School Student***

***"I learned to say yes!" -Rye Middle School Student***

***"It is so fun!" -Osborn Elementary School Student***

***"It was fun and moved quickly! Teacher's enthusiasm and positive energy were contagious."-Adult Workshop Participant, Rye, NY***

***"It was fun and you could be silly without judgment." -Adult Workshop Participant, Rye, NY***

***"Loved the variety of exercises and how you started small and safe, then built to be more expressive." -Adult Workshop Participant, Rye, NY***

***"Incredible job engaging every single class member, even the ones usually on the sidelines." -Colgate University Student, Hamilton, NY***

***"She was so energetic and made every part of the experience fun and engaging." -Colgate University Student, Hamilton, NY***

***"(How) Improv can be a genuine form of empathy and communication." -Colgate University Student, Hamilton, NY***

## **What is Improv?**

It's a fun, creative and inspiring form of play available to everyone, regardless of experience. It's paying attention, having fun, and expressing yourself in a low-stakes atmosphere. While there is a plethora of definitions for Improvisation, a.k.a. Improv, it really boils down to this: It's all about saying YES in the moment and making things up as you go along. Not a bad philosophy for life, eh?

## **Why do Improv?**

- Relax and unwind in a non-judgmental forum
- Gain more focus, creativity and mindfulness
- Enhance assertiveness, communication and social skills
- Learn to be more expressive and open-minded
- Learn to listen and to say YES
- Use Improv to solve problems at home, at school, at work
- Develop metacognition

## **Who does Improv?**

Anyone. And EVERYONE. You do not need to be an actor or a comedian to do Improv. Anyone of any age can do it. It is easy to get started, and it's a wonderful way to connect with yourself and other people.

## **How do you Improv?**

All you need are a couple of people, open minds, and the ability to say yes to whatever comes your way. No special props, locations or skills are needed to enjoy and reap the benefits of this amazing activity.

## Improv = Play = Empathy

*"I learned so much more about what Improv actually means and what it can help people to do--I didn't realize it was so far-reaching in what it can accomplish and how it can help people."* -Colgate University Student

*"To accept and love is a better way to go through a scene (and life) than to hate others' ideas."* - Student, RMS

### What Say Yes Improv is NOT

This is not an comedian/actor-training program. It is not about just trying to be funny. Improv is an immersive experience for ANYONE and EVERYONE. It is about improving your life and learning to work with others, socialize, accept, be creative, and communicate with ease no matter what life throws at you.

Yes, it's true that Improv can be performed professionally, and there are many incredible Improv teams out there. It's also a great skill to have as an actor, so by all means, join us. But remember, Improv goes deeper. There's more in it for you than a quick laugh. It can change your life. So say YES.

Improv can help you in so many different areas of your life. At first, it might seem like you are "just being silly" (not that there's anything wrong with that!) , but in fact, you are deepening your connection to others, learning to communicate and live in the moment, express yourself, and reduce stress. In fact, play has been studied by Dr. Jeffry Mogil, of McGill University, and has been proven to increase empathy among strangers after a mere fifteen minutes of play. Improv is definitely unfettered play. The TedTalk, "Press Play", describes his work, as well as the benefits of play for people of all ages.

[www.npr.org/2015/03/27/395039920/how-can-playing-a-game-make-you-more-empathetic](http://www.npr.org/2015/03/27/395039920/how-can-playing-a-game-make-you-more-empathetic)

In all of our classes, students are encouraged to express themselves, remain open, yet connected, take healthy risks and say YES to the moment.