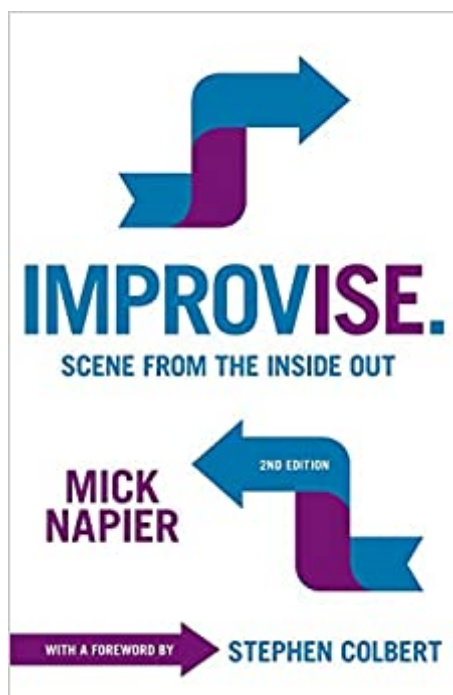


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# Improvise: Scene From The Inside Out



## Synopsis

This expanded and revised edition has a new foreword by The Late Show host Stephen Colbert, additional advice and tips for success, and a full reproduction of Mick Napier's web journal from his time directing the famous show *Paradigm Lost* for The Second City that included Tina Fey, Rachel Dratch, and Kevin Dorff. Renowned improv instructor and award-winning director Mick Napier has been at the heart of the professional improvisation community for more than 25 years. The first edition of *Improvise* quickly earned its position as necessary reading for improv students across the country and around the world and gave birth to a new generation of performers who questioned "The Rules" of improvisation. In this entertaining and incredibly informative book, Napier will teach you the essentials of...

- Why "The Rules" don't matter
- How to take care of yourself in a scene
- Using context to your advantage
- Effective two-person scenes
- Balanced large-cast scenes
- Successful auditioning
- Solo exercises you can practice at home

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Award-winning director and experienced improv instructor Mick Napier presents *Improvise: Scene from the Inside Out*, now in an expanded and revised second edition with additional tips, tricks, and techniques as well as a full reproduction of Napier's web journal from his time directing "Paradigm Lost" for The Second City. Chapters teach the reader about the oft-misunderstood art of improvisation - creating performance art (comedy, drama, or what-have-you) on the spot with no script, whether by oneself or as part of a group. Topics covered include how to use context to one's advantage, two-person scenes, balanced large-cast scenes, advice for successful auditioning, solo

exercises one can practice at home, and much more. Actors of all walks of life (whether their primary venue is improv-heavy or not) will directly benefit from Napier's expertise; comedian and talk show host Stephen Colbert certainly did, as he testifies in a brief yet hilarious foreword!

--Midwest Book Review Mick Napier's *Improvise* contains excellent examples of actual development of improvisational ideas, showing how dialogue can be improvised and developed with specificity. The Wizard of Oz example is often used, and makes it easy to identify with each of the techniques as they are introduced. The book contains many practical ideas throughout and the breadth of the book is excellent, especially for those who are serious about considering entering the world of improvisation professionally or even as a hobby. Further, audition techniques and a journal from his work with Second City take us into the real world of improvisational theater and help many who are interested in moving in that direction. Mick Napier has really created an exceptional handbook for improvisation. --Reader's Favorite

Mick Napier is the founder of the acclaimed Annoyance Theatre in Chicago and New York, as well as a Director and Artistic Consultant for The Second City, the most influential and prolific comedy theater in the world. Napier is known both nationally and internationally as an innovator and creative force in comedy, improvisation, and theater. With the Annoyance, Mick has spent more than 25 years developing and cultivating a style of work and production that has been both acclaimed and imitated. As a Director and Artistic Consultant for the globally renowned Second City, he made his mark, having directed more than 10 revues there including the 40th and 50th Anniversary revues, and *Paradigm Lost*, which earned him a Joseph Jefferson Award for Direction. Throughout his career, Mick has directed such high profile actors and writers as Aidy Bryant and Vanessa Bayer (*Swear Jar*), Tina Fey, Jason Sudeikis, and Stephen Colbert (*The Second City*), Martin Short (*Martin Short & Friends*), Jeff Garlin (*I Want Someone to Eat Cheese With*), and David and Amy Sedaris in their Obie Award-winning hit *One Woman Shoe*.

Great book. Different philosophy about improv than other books I've read on the subject. Great exercises you can do by yourself to improve your skills.

Best book on improv on the market. I love this book because you could drop it in the middle of a desert and 4 months later snakes would be improvising scenes well without ever having watched an improv show.

So far I've read Chalma Halpern's "Truth in Comedy", Viola Spolin's "Improvisation for the Theater", Keith Johnstone's "Improv", and now this book, and I would say this one has the most useful information as far as "becoming a better stage improviser" goes. What I mean is that it is full of tips, advice, and useful things to consider, and seems meant for someone who has already knows a little bit about the BASICS. Mick Napier asks the reader to rethink some of the "rules" that the basic improv teaching lays down, while adding some important insights of his own. In this sense, I think that "Truth In Comedy" is the best INTRO to improv, for someone just starting out. Then, I'd recommend "Improvise: Scene From The Inside Out" as a necessary followup, and then Keith Johnstone's "Improv" as a whole new viewpoint and also a deeper insight into the philosophy of being in the moment. (By the way, I would avoid the Viola Spolin book - it's written in a strangely stilted, boring, hard-to-read style, and really contains no memorable information). Particularly useful in Napier's book are the "Exercises To Do At Home", which is something I've been looking for - most other books have exercises which are meant to be practiced in a group setting. I found the chapter on "Improvisation & the Second Law Of Thermodynamics" to be unnecessary though - it didn't really add anything and seemed to be sort of a weird tangent. Luckily, it's short. Anyhow, after reading this book I really do feel as if I understand a lot more about what separates a "great" improviser from a merely "good" one. Now comes the hard part - PRACTICING & GETTING UP THERE AND DOING IT!!! P.S. I was recommended this book by Dustin Sharpe, my Improv instructor at the Acting School of South Florida, and also a member of the awesome improv group Mod27. Thanks Dustin!

I've taken 4 levels of improv so far, so I'm at an intermediate level. This book contains specific exercises you can do, specific things you can try, specific advice you can apply, and specific things to think about - no fluff, just great writing. It's fun to read this book even if you don't need to improve your improv!

Performing improv for 13 years I have read a lot of bad and a few GOOD improv books. 1. UCB 2. Improvisation at the speed of Life by TJ & Dave & 3. Improvise by Napier. Fantastic read for more ADVANCED improv performers. This book shows ways to always stay fresh and avoid falling in to routine. Ways to challenge yourself in typical scenes that keep you in the moment. Practices to do w yourself. Focused towards those that are experienced already but want to stay new & fresh. A MUST BUY for any serious improv performer! 130 page book that cuts to the chase from a man that has the background and years experience in every facet of improvisation.

Mick Napier claims to not lay out any rules. Not strictly true, but the point holds: thinking about what to do and what not to do won't help you advance a scene. Napier's new rules and explanations should help anyone who's done some improvising, and knows the feeling of a scene never taking off. If you don't know that feeling, I'm not sure that this book will connect. I found 'Improvise' much more helpful than 'Truth in Comedy' for actual scene work and, as everyone notes, less preachy and self-congratulatory. That's not to say that 'Truth' isn't worth your time, just that if I had to pick only one it's this one. Also, Napier includes exercises that one person can do on their own, which I found very helpful. These are mainly oriented toward developing mental muscles that allow you to make bigger, quicker leaps in thought, and get comfortable with first thoughts and going with your gut. So, good exercises for just being a human.

This book starts out slowly for the person who has improv experience, but once you're past the basic portion which is very important for beginners, you'll sink your teeth into the games, ideology, and best of all he has some solid suggestions for those who may not have anyone to play Improv with at home. His solitary exercises are top-notch. If you're a serious Improv actor, you'll want this book in your collection.

The new testament of Improv Comedy behind "Truth in Comedy". Napier is solid in this ideas and this is simple to digest. I highly recommend this.

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