



# IMPROV(e) Your Life with Laughter



## Laughter's Healing Power

As the flowers bloom and the world awakens from its winter slumber, I'm embracing a lighter, perhaps less tangible aspect of wellness for this Health Hub: Laughter & Improv. April isn't just about spring showers; it is also National Humor Month. So, let's explore the healing power of a good chuckle!

The influence of comedy and improv in all aspects of my life – from listening and its presence, to commitment and play – have proven applicable for me at work, at home, in relationships, parenting, and beyond. Laughter has physiological benefits; boosting immunity, relaxing muscles, and diminishing pain to name a few. It also has the ability to recalibrate our emotional compass, realigning us towards joy and resilience.

As we venture deeper into spring, I invite you to find a spark of humor in each day. It might be a shared joke, a silly observation, or an intentional pause for a funny video or stand-up routine—small capsules of giggles to nourish the soul.

"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people."

- Victor Borge

Humor has cushioned the bumps of my nearly two-decade marriage to an amazing improv artist and comedian. You can listen to me and my husband talk all about Improv in March's Healthy Lifestyles' Wellcast, [The Healing Power of Laughter and Humor](#).





"There's power in looking silly and not caring that you do." - Amy Poehler

## Life Lessons from Improv

Improvisation, or "improv," is not just a skill for actors and comedians; it's a powerful tool for everyday life. Here are 5 ways you can apply principles of improv to various aspects of your life:

**Embrace "Yes, And":** Instead of shutting down ideas or conversations with "no," build on what has been presented. Accept situations (the "yes") and add to them (the "and") to move forward, creating positive momentum in conversations and collaborations.

**Adaptability:** Improv teaches you to think on your feet and adapt quickly to new information or unexpected situations. By being adaptable, you become more capable of handling life's unpredictable moments with grace and creativity.

**Active Listening:** Good improvisers are excellent listeners. Apply this in life by really listening to others, which can lead to deeper understanding and better relationships. People rarely really listen. Most people, if they're not distracted by something, are really just waiting for their turn to speak.

**Collaboration:** Improv is a team effort, and scenes work best when everyone is contributing and supporting each other's ideas. This collaborative spirit can be brought into the workplace or any group setting, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and teamwork thrives.

**Learning to live in the moment:** When was the last time you thought about just being? When engaging in improv, there's no option but to be present and in the moment.

"[Being present] is the most important thing there ever is... Your entire life consists of the present moment. There never has been anything else." – Eckhart Tolle

# Unlock Your Creativity with Improv

This month, I encourage you to integrate bits of improv into your routine. Improv games are the perfect way to break the ice, enhance communication skills, and let loose a giggle or two! Watch how barriers dissolve and how the space becomes safe for creativity & vulnerability –and lots of laughter.

Here are three of my favorite games to play:

**Expert Speaker:** Ever wanted to be an expert on something? Now's your chance! Participants take turns being the "expert" on a topic, taking 30-60 seconds explaining details of fields they most likely know nothing about. It's a test of creativity and on-the-spot thinking.

**Alphabet Story:** Challenge your ability to think on your feet with a conversation where each successive line begins with the next letter of the alphabet.

**Emotional Rollercoaster:** Act out a scene. Then, characters in a scene have to switch their emotional states at the ring of a bell based on suggestions from the group. From happy to angry, sad to terrified – it's an unpredictable journey through the emotional spectrum.

Each of these games encourages quick thinking, collaboration, and a healthy dose of humor. Just have fun and be silly!



Written by:

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Meghan appreciates a good joke and loves reconnecting with her childhood self through singing and dancing and being silly! Her son will attest that she can make anything into a song and often sings & hums her way through her day. She likes to embrace life through the lens of play and would love to help you and your team let loose, so please contact her if you'd like her to come and visit your worksite to play some improv games! When she's not working as a health educator (a role she loves dearly), you can find her frolicking in the mountains with kids and playing in the snow/dirt/water, depending on the season.

