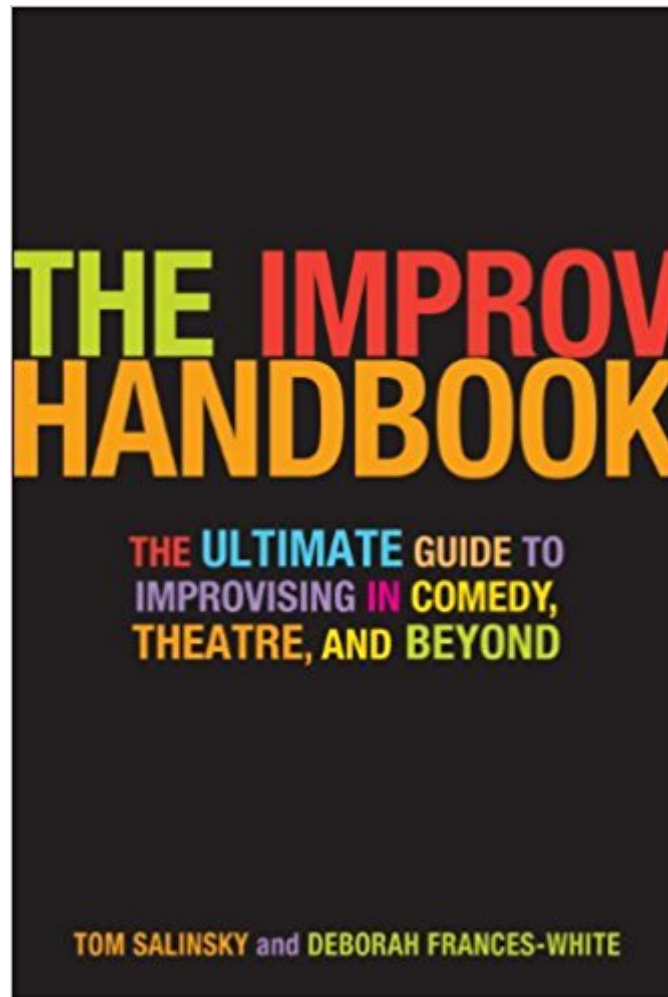


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# The Improv Handbook: The Ultimate Guide To Improvising In Comedy, Theatre, And Beyond



## Synopsis

The most comprehensive, smart, helpful and inspiring guide to improv available today. Applicable to comedians, actors, public speakers and anyone who needs to think on their toes. From *The Improv Handbook*: The problem for improvisers is anxiety. Faced with a lot of nameless eyes staring at us, and feeling more than anything else like prey, we are likely to want to display very consistent behavior, so that anyone who looks at us, looks away and then looks back sees the same thing. Thus we become boring, we fade into the background, and we cease to be of interest. *The Improv Handbook* provides everything someone interested in improvisational comedy needs to know, as written by a husband and wife comedy duo with years of experience and teaching in the field. In addition to providing a comprehensive history of improvisational theater as a backdrop, it also looks at modern theories and practices of improvisation on a global scale, including how the form of comedy has evolved differently in different parts of the world, from Europe to the UK to the Chicago scene. *The Improv Handbook* also contains an essential performance segment that details different formats of improvisation. Chapter topics include *Theatresports*, *Micetro*, *Gorilla Theatre*, and the inventions of Keith Johnstone and Del Close as well as other popular forms of improv, like those on "Whose Line is it Anyway." The core section of the book is called simply, "How to Improvise" and delves into issues of spontaneity, the fundamentals of storytelling, working together, upping the ante, and character development. The book concludes with sections on how to improvise in front of an audience and- just as crucially- how to attract an audience in the first place.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A great book for beginning and advanced improvisors that explains exactly what the mechanics are of the authors' interpretation of the Keith Johnstone school of improvisation, and for that it deserves 5 stars. But the authors deeply misunderstand and arrogantly dismiss the entire Chicago/Del Close school of improv, under the guise of Keith and Del being equally valid methods. At the beginning they explain that there are differences and that they'll give fair treatment to both, but then proceed for several hundred pages to denigrate the Chicago school for reasons that are invalid, and which shows they have limited understanding of what they're talking about. It's as if those parts were added late in the book's development when someone noticed that "ultimate" really only meant "half ultimate". An example of bias can be found in the short interviews at the end where of all the wise words of Keith Johnstone (who they label "The Innovator") they could have used, they instead focus on Keith saying that Del's work doesn't particularly fit with his views on improvisation (my paraphrasing). It doesn't help that they then included an interview with the mildly dismissive Charna Halpern (who they by comparison label simply "The Keeper of the Harold"), with questions based on misunderstandings of Del's teachings. To their credit they do try to explain some Chicago techniques, but there's a lot of misunderstandings. At one point they talk about "game" being a core Harold concept, taking it from the book "Truth in Comedy", thus confusing the UCB which focusses on game as the core of a scene, and iO and other Chicago schools which consider it just another tool in your kitbag.

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