Using Improvisation to Build Conversation

Improvisation is a useful way to engage others and build conversation. It can include verbal speech, sign language as well as alternative communication strategies. It fully values the combination of verbal and nonverbal strategies. It assumes competence of the participants, and in fact demands trust in the desire and responsiveness of the other person. It has as its focus not the individual, but instead the dialogue, the interaction. It is built on the premise that you can’t know what another person is trying to say; you can only invite the process. In improvisation, the topic emerges through a set of rules, explained below.

Rules:

1) Yes, and…..ACCEPT what the other has communicated, then ADD to it.

2) No denial. DO NOT REJECT IN ANY WAY WHAT WAS JUST COMMUNICATED.

3) Avoid driving. DON’T TAKE OVER THE CONVERSATION.

4) No questions. NO QUESTIONS.

5) Promote the DIALOGUE over the individual message.

6) Don’t ‘break frame’. DON’T LEAVE THE CONVERSATION.

7) Show and tell. USE GESTURES, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE.

8) Listen and remember. BE ATTENTIVE TO THE INTENTION OF THE MESSAGE AND THE THREAD OF THE CONVERSATION.

IT TAKES PRACTICE!