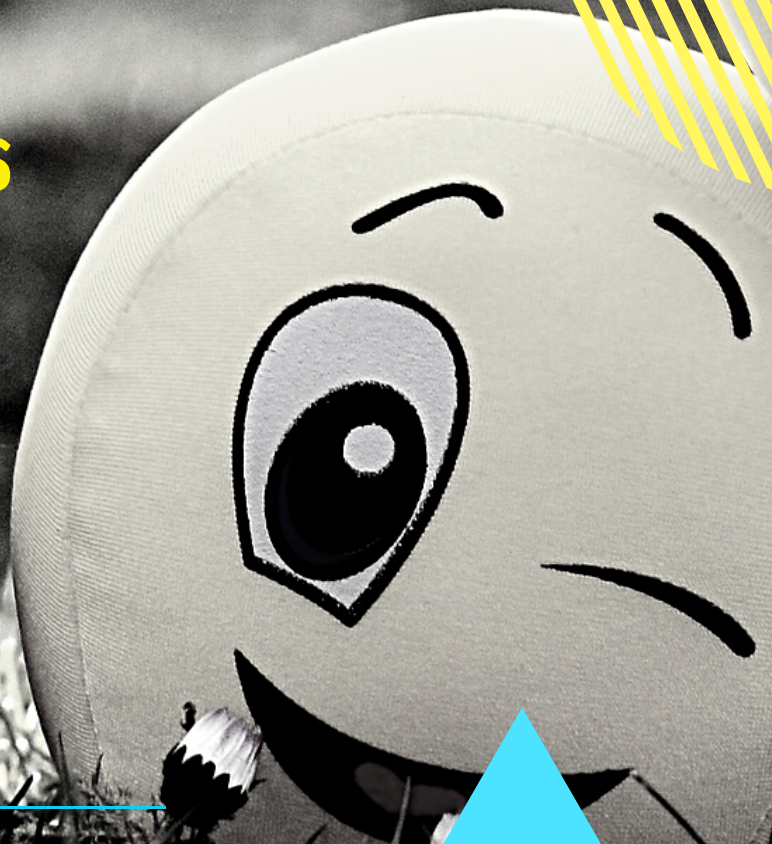


Improvisation techniques training
to act against emotional and verbal violence

ACTITUDE

improv theatre

Dealing with Emotions



NEWSLETTER

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EDITOR'S NOTE

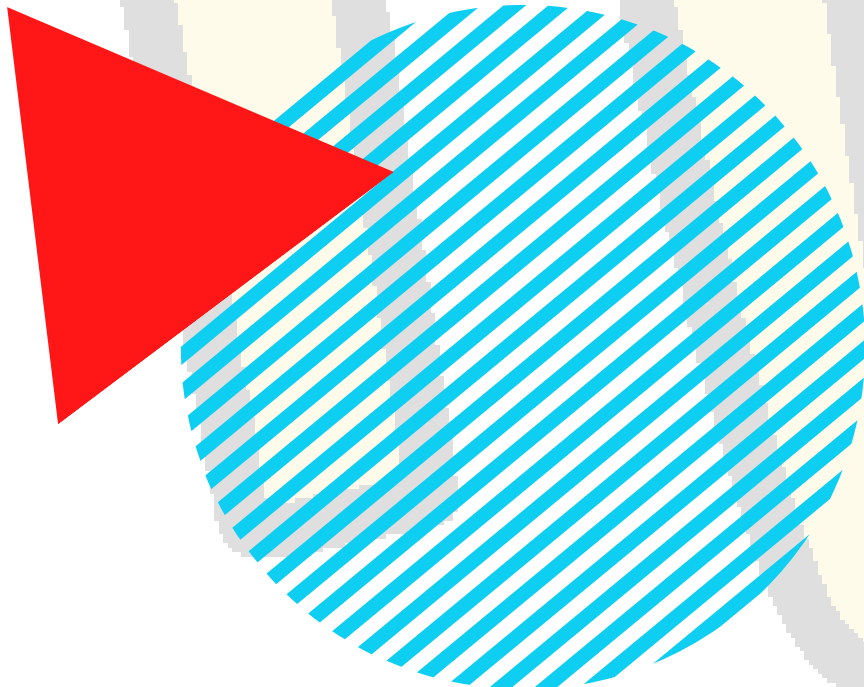
BY MARÍA CARRACEDO
INTRAS
FOUNDATION

All of us pass through challenging situations, in which we feel uncomfortable, unsure, afraid ...

Difficult situations produce intense emotions. Our emotions are important and have a function, but often they are not easy to manage and can cause pain.

In this issue we invite you to know and understand better those emotions and how improv theatre may help us to deal with them.

Discover the magic of improv theatre!





WHAT EMOTIONS DO WE TYPICALLY EXPERIENCE DURING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS?

BY KARIN BAKRAČEVIČ
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All emotions (even the unpleasant ones) have a function. Unpleasant emotions that we experience during challenging times are signals that let us know that something is not going well. They also motivate us to look for possible solutions for the problems we are facing. Therefore, it is essential to familiarize yourself with some emotions that are commonly experienced by us all. This way, you will be able to recognize the emotion as you are experiencing it, and this can help you understand your reactions better. Let us now look at some examples of emotions that we all experience when faced with difficult situations

Fear

It arises when a person interprets the situation that they are in a potentially dangerous or threatening to their well-being. It occurs when we assess that our coping abilities are not good enough to deal with the situation and thus functions as a warning signal. It tells us that we are vulnerable and motivates us to withdraw from the situation

Disgust

It arises when we encounter an object/situation we deemed is contaminated in some way, such as bodily contamination (i.e., spoiled food), interpersonal contamination (i.e., proximity to undesirable people), or moral contaminations (i.e., child abuse). Disgust motivates us to reject the object/situation and motivates us to change personal habits and attributes to avoid this emotion.

Anger

it arises when we interpret that something or someone interfered with our goals. Anger energizes our behavior and motivate us to face the perceived barrier directly and try to overcome it. Anger can be productive when it energizes our behavior and endurance to cope productively with the situation.



Sadness

it arises from **experiences of separation or personal failure.**

Sadness is a negative emotion that motivates us to initiate behavior to avoid experiencing it in the first place and thus facilitate productive behaviors (such as maintaining social contacts).

Anxiety

it is a **feeling of uneasiness and worries, often accompanied by physical changes, such as muscle tension, restlessness, fatigue, and problems with concentrating.** It also arises when the individual is faced with a **situation which the person views as potentially threatening for their well-being.** Anxiety is **often experienced when we expect future threats** and is, **therefore, future oriented.** In this way, anxiety (when it is **not overbearing**) functions as a **reminder of important future situations and needs attention**

SELF conscious emotions

There is another group of different emotional states that are often experienced when we are struggling with our sense of self and how others react to us. They are called self-conscious emotions. Some researchers also call them social emotions because our relationships form the foundation for experiencing them, and they typically arise in interpersonal contexts. The function of these emotions is relationship-enhancing since they can benefit relationships in a variety of ways.

Shame

It usually involves a negative evaluation of yourself. When experiencing shame, people typically experience a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness. It does not necessarily involve an actual observing audience and can also result from the imagery of how we would appear in front of others. Shame is a difficult emotion to experience since it often orientates people towards separation and distancing. On the other hand, it can serve as an opportunity to examine our actions and motivates us to react differently.

Guilt

It usually does not concern the entire self and, therefore, does not affect our core identity, as shame does. It is primarily linked to a specific event or behavior. People usually experience it as a sense of tension, remorse, and regret over their actions. Guilt typically leads to reparative actions, which are often constructive, proactive, and future-oriented. In those ways, it also improves our relationships in the long run.

The way improv theatre can assist to deal with negative feelings

It is quite normal that when people face an unfamiliar situation or enter a new room that they have initially a negative attitude. Negative emotions (fear, shame etc.) are the first emotions people have when they enter unknown territory. Our experience shows: This is not unusual, it is completely normal. As an improv theater trainer that is something we experience during any training at the beginning.



Improv theatre itself is positive! It is in the responsibility of an improv player to be positive. Otherwise we, as improv players, will not be able to connect well to each other during the play and we are not able to create good stories.

For this reason, there are countless exercises in improv theatre training, which have only one purpose: To be positive and to act positively. Our participants do experience this positive power during all exercises. They learn to transform their primary negative emotions into positive emotions and actions. Under guidance, they develop new strategies that lead to the (positive) goal. With applause the achievement of the goal is enthusiastically reinforced by all the participants. Fear soon turns into positive actions and shame into liberating cheerfulness.

Gestalt therapists know that the human brain makes no difference whether the actions take place in a protected space or in real life. In this way the participants will be able to gradually transfer their newly learned action strategies from improv theatre to everyday life.

The power of improv theatre is based on its positive nature. In this way all participants experience the development of new strategies playful and easy.

Applied improvisation – what a great tool for therapy!





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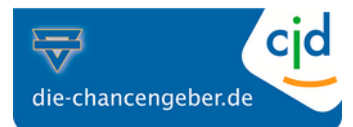
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