

Beyond "Suddenly Stardust": Embracing Possibilities

Improv theatre changed author Joanne Brokaw's life. Now she's helping others turn their fear into freedom using improv techniques.

ROCHESTER, NY, U.S.A., April 14, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "If there was a land called I Could Never Because I'm Afraid, I would be the queen. I would sit on an enormous throne wearing a mighty crown and regal robes, and I'd be known far and wide for my ability to come up with excuses to avoid doing even the things I actually wanted to. But when I turned 50, I went to an improv workshop. That's when I hopped a train from the land of I Could Never and got off at the next station, Maybe I Can." – [Joanne Brokaw](#)

Joanne Brokaw didn't set out to write "[Suddenly Stardust: A Memoir \(Of Sorts\) About Fear, Freedom & Improv](#)" (WordCrafts Press, 2019), although the award-winning freelance writer had authored many published works.

"I'd been talking about how much improvisational theater had changed my life, mostly to other women my age, and one day I just started jotting down notes," she remembers. "It was only as I continued writing about my improv experiences that I realized the book was writing itself."

The quirky page-tuner struck a chord with readers from both within and outside of the improv world, and reviews were excellent.

"Her reflections in this book are all at once insightful and revealing," says Law Tarello, MFA, who serves on the faculty of Chicago's famed improvisational theater troupe, The Second City.

"Suddenly Stardust is a guide to life, showing how improv can act as a template for living fully with others," adds comedian Wendy Liebman. "Say 'Yes,' I'll get this book 'and...' read it in one sitting like I did. And then cherish it like I do."

In her review, Liebman refers to a basic improv rule-of-thumb: "Yes, and..." suggesting that an improvisor accept what their scene partner offers ("yes") and then add something to it that moves the scene along ("and"). When Brokaw started applying "Yes, and..." to her life in general, she realized its transformative power.

With her new-found outlook and confidence, she quickly became a sought-after performer in

Rochester. She also leads improv workshops to help people of all ages – performers and non-performers – push past their own fear, embrace creativity, and learn how to play again.

"My workshops turned virtual during the pandemic, which actually opened up more opportunities for people who may have been afraid to explore their creativity in person," Brokaw explains. "Being online at home is a 'safe space' that can encourage participants to take more risks."

"Joanne has an excellent energy and...provides encouraging and meaningful feedback," reports France McCloskey, workshop participant and owner of Learning & Motivation Specialists. "I am inspired by participating in her program."

"I've been in several workshops and classes with Joanne. She really helps you get out of your comfort zone and your head as you do a variety of fun exercises that strengthen team building and idea generation," adds Dan Shea.

Starting May 1, Brokaw will offer a brand-new, six-week, online course called "ImprovPossible: Embracing life's possibilities through the power of 'Yes, and...'" Classes are Saturdays, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. ET, and will explore how the principles of improvisation can be applied to everyday life to silence the inner critic, communicate more effectively, accept mistakes as gifts, and live in the present moment – all as participants 18 years and older build confidence and have fun in a safe, supportive environment. [Learn more here.](#)

Brokaw also conducts once-a-month, pay-what-you-may Recharge Your Creativity Workshops, and created something she calls the Exquisite Collaboration Project. Based on an early 1900s Surrealist technique called the Exquisite Corpse, in which participants added to a work one bit at a time without seeing what previous participants had created, Brokaw's monthly collaborative poems have attracted contributors from across the U.S., Mexico, and as far away as Hong Kong.

"I find joy and purpose in facilitating opportunities for people who claim they aren't creative to actually participate in artistic creation," she says. "We're not pulling things out of thin air and magically making something appear. We're taking what everyone brings to the table and making something beautiful from it. That's the essence of creativity."

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