Improvising Your Career

How to Not Freak Out, Run for Cover, or Have to Move in With Your Folks (or Kids)

SLA Conference, Boston, June 16, 2015
So, what have you been hearing (or tweeting) at the conference?
It all goes back to improv....You have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

- Amy Poehler
From *The Start-Up of You*:

We call this mind-set “permanent beta.”

1. To always be starting
2. To forever be a work in progress
Your competitive advantage is formed by... your assets, your aspirations/values, and the market realities, i.e., the supply and demand for what you offer the marketplace relative to the competition.
Adaptability creates stability.

You are selling your brainpower, you skills, your energy.
Okay, I’m psyched – now how do I put this in play?
Position yourself for opportunity by building your improv chops

How?

Through your attitudes and actions
The **inner game** of improvisation

- Make friends with change
- Let go of perfectionism
- Develop your risk-taking muscles
- Get comfortable with failing
- Be able to laugh at yourself (endless entertainment)
- Find your inner fearlessness
The **action game** of improvisation

Take advantage of your environment
Practice your change moves
Network like crazy
Learn like crazy
Pay attention
Anticipate, and then....
Position for the next wave
Your top 10 career improv moves
10. Write down “SLA 2015 Boston” and what you talked about on business cards – on the way home

9. Send LinkedIn requests to everyone you met – personalize your request

8. Note in the conference program what presentations were on topics you might need/want to learn about – then follow up
7. Raise your professional visibility by sharing your conference insights – *blog, tweet, post*

6. Extend your conference learning – *ask for an informational interview*

5. Start monitoring your environment – *what direction are trends moving?*
4. Become your own change agent – what will you do differently?

3. Identify 3 ways you can get more out of your current job – and take the initiative to do so

2. Start practicing your anticipation skills – “scenario plan” potential threats, opportunities
1. And most important of all...
Don’t be perfect,
Be fearless
Thank you, and may you have a rich, rewarding, and resilient career!

Kim Dority
kimdority@gkdority.com
linkedin.com/in/kimdority
Author, Rethinking Information Work, 2d ed. (forthcoming)