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Updates regarding the new Social Media Policy.

**Update from Disaster Legal Services Team**
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Can Improv Improve Your Litigation Skills? Yes, it can!
By: Ryan Podges*

The Second City in Chicago is an improvisation-based theater company whose comedy shows have produced famous alumni such as Tina Fey, Chris Farley and Stephen Colbert. But in addition to being a training ground for aspiring comedians, the improv classes offered at The Second City, much like those offered at improv companies around the country, are increasingly teaching valuable lessons to another type of student—lawyers. To improvise means to create and perform spontaneously or without preparation. Whether we realize it or not, all of us improvise every day. As one of the lawyers taking classes at The Second City, I have experienced how learning the fundamental principles of improv has not only helped me get more laughs on stage but also bolstered my professional life.

One of the biggest keys to success for an improv actor is staying in the present moment. On stage, the only material an improv actor has to work with is the lines that come from their scene partner. If an actor's mind is not in the present moment and instead thinking about what they said in the past or what they want to say next, the actor automatically stops listening to the other person. This is when pivotal information is missed and the scene falls apart. It can be difficult, but many times as lawyers, our success also depends on staying in the moment. Whether our thoughts are sidetracked by a question during an oral argument or we receive a surprising response during a deposition, the ability to stay present and truly pay attention to what is being said can make the difference between winning and losing.

The very nature of improv means the shows do not have scripts and the actors are discovering the story in a scene at the same moment as the audience. As you may expect, when a new scene is beginning, many times two scene partners will have different ideas for where the scene should go. When this happens, each actor must be willing to either share their own idea or immediately drop it and accept their partner’s idea, if it is different. For example, if a male improviser approaches his female scene partner with the idea in mind that he will play the role of her husband, but the female actor says, “I’ve missed you, son!” then immediately we know this is a scene about a mother and her son, not a husband and wife. In order for these scenes to move forward and make sense, the actors must accept what their partners have created in the scene and then build on that in their own way. Accepting your partner’s idea at the expense of your own may be easy when you are making up a story on stage, but it can be a real challenge for lawyers in everyday practice. Though we may be attached to our own ideas, sometimes we need to be able to let them go or allow others to take them in a new direction in order for the best work product to be created.

The final and probably most painful lesson improv classes have taught me is how to accept the times I’ve failed and move on from those failures quickly. For an improviser, the fear of trying something new on stage and failing can cause you to hold back your ideas from your scene partners. But once you confront that fear and learn to embrace the feeling of nervous discomfort, you begin to unlock the ability to be brave and try new things. In improv, all your ideas are worthy of sharing and the instructors at The Second City often remind students, “There are no mistakes.” While the same cannot necessarily be said of the practice of law, as lawyers, we cannot allow a fear of failure alone to keep us from proposing new ideas or making...
bold choices. At times our profession requires creativity and the innovations and discoveries that arise when we are not afraid to fail often lead to the greatest successes for ourselves and our clients.

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**Dressing for Success in the Courtroom**

By: Carolina Leyva*

It has become far too common practice for young lawyers (and to a certain extent their older counterparts) to “dress down.” Whether it is dressing down for motion calendar hearings, special set hearings or meetings with clients, there is a relatively recent phenomenon of attorneys ditching the polished and professional power suit for a more relaxed and casual appearance. Almost every time I appear in court, I witness more and more brazen attempts to ignore the traditional dress code, for example, the tie-less male attorneys with their top two buttons undone and not a suit jacket in sight. Female attorneys have not fallen behind on this growing trend; the female version of dressing down consists of wearing a maxi-dress paired with open-toed sandals.

The courtroom is a sacred place and, like priests in a church, attorneys should appear in the appropriate attire. You may be thinking, “What does how I dress have to do with being a good lawyer?” The simple answer is it doesn’t … not really; however, the way lawyers look and present themselves has an enormous impact on how their respective skills and capabilities are perceived by third parties.

In my first few months of practice, I remember thinking I had no idea what I was doing—but at least I looked the part. Case law, statutes, and the rules of procedure are a lawyer’s sword, and a crisp suit is our armor. It is no secret that this is a conservative profession and showing up to court dressed up and put together sends a message to the judge, opposing counsel, and everyone else that you are a serious professional who is prepared.

Dressing like a lawyer outside of the courtroom is equally as important. Clients expect their lawyers to look like lawyers and when you are a 25-year-old freshly minted attorney, clients tend to confuse you for a law clerk. Dressing in a suit for work sends a message, I am a serious professional who will handle your case with the care and competence it deserves.

**Practical tips for young lawyers:**

- Dress for the part. You never know when you will be speaking with a client, a potential client, or a future employer;
- Wrinkles are the enemy. Whether you iron, steam, or dry clean your clothes, make sure they are crisp; and
• When in doubt, wear a suit. A classic suit in a neutral color will never fail you.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR ABA MEMBERSHIP?
Then visit the ABA Everyday membership initiative found here: http://www.abaeveryday.org/

EVENTS AT THE ABA MIDYEAR MEETING:
San Diego, CA – February 4 – 7, 2016:
In addition to the regular activities of the ABA YLD National Conferences Team during the ABA Midyear meeting, this Team is putting together a social media photo scavenger hunt. New attendees will have the opportunity to be a part of a scavenger hunt that allows them to meet seven YLD leaders, receive their business cards, and also take a selfie and post it to their social media accounts with the hashtag #YLDmidyear16. The first person to have a selfie with each YLD leader and receive their signature on a business card will receive a generous gift from the ABA YLD National Conferences Team. For more on YLD Events at the ABA Midyear Meeting, visit http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/events_cle/2016_midyear.html

UPDATE FROM SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM:
New Social Media Policy: The Social Media Team is pleased to announce the new Social Media Policy! The purpose of this policy is to provide direction on appropriate and effective ways to utilize social media on behalf of the ABA YLD when delivering content, facilitating engagement, and communicating with both members and non-members. The policy includes such information as sample posts, proper use of our social media channels, and of course directions for using the online spreadsheet we set up to capture posts from across the division. The new policy can be found here: Social Media Policy

UPDATE FROM DISASTER LEGAL SERVICES TEAM:
Disaster Team Outreach: The DLS team is currently implementing DLS in Mississippi, Texas, South Carolina, and California. Earlier this year, we implemented DLS in Texas, Wyoming, Saipan, and Kentucky. We expect this to be a busy year on the DLS font, as NASA predicts that this year’s El Nino is going to be the worst ever. The DLS team encourages all young lawyers to be prepared in the event of an emergency or disaster, and to coordinate with your local or state bar association to help disaster survivors.

Resources: Everyone should be thinking about disaster planning, whether it’s to help out the YLD DLS team, or in your own personal or professional life. Visit Ready.gov/ for ways you can prepare yourself for disaster. Also, don’t forget to check out the ABA Disaster Legal Services website as well as the Disaster Legal Aid website for up to date disaster-related information.

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## Upcoming Events:

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<tr>
<td>2/3/2016-2/9/2016</td>
<td><strong>ABA Midyear Meeting</strong></td>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/24/2016</td>
<td><strong>Essential Law Office Technology: All the Technology You Need Without Busting Your Budget</strong></td>
<td>Center for Professional Development Law Practice Division Young Lawyers Division</td>
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<td>3/23/2016</td>
<td><strong>Paperless: Don't Burn Money and Time – How to Run a Paperless Law Firm (Webinar)</strong></td>
<td>Center for Professional Development Law Practice Division Young Lawyers Division</td>
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<td>4/27/2016</td>
<td><strong>Cybersecurity: Ethically Protecting Your Confidential Data in a Breach-A-Day World (Webinar)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5/5/2016-5/7/2016</td>
<td><strong>YLD Spring Conference!</strong></td>
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