

Simple Ideas, Lightly Held

by Johnnie Moore

Life is complex, but it isn't complicated.

I'm going to explain what I mean by that, and why it means that many of the rules and prescriptions in business books for how to do things need to be taken with a big pinch of salt.

Instead, I suggest relying more often on a few rules of thumb, knowing that they are not the gospel truth. Some simple ideas work really well for me and my clients. They are drawn from the world of improv (improvisational theater) and I find them highly effective in my work—which involves helping organizations develop better teamwork and creativity. I'm not going to give you an exhaustive explanation of the depths of improv; instead I'm going to introduce you to a few of its principles and invite you try them on for size.

If you're the sort that likes a bit of explanation before trying something new, continue reading. If you're more of a "learning by doing" person, you might want to skip to the section headed "Try This With A Friend". You can come back to the other bits another time.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMPLICATED AND COMPLEX

This is what I mean when I use the word complicated:

The wiring on an aircraft is complicated. To figure out where everything goes would take a long time. But if you studied it for long enough, you could know with (near) certainty what each electrical circuit does and how to control it. The system is ultimately knowable. If understanding it is important, the effort to study it and make a detailed diagram of it would be worthwhile.

So complicated = not simple, but ultimately knowable.

Now, put a crew and passengers in that aircraft and try to figure out what will happen on the flight. Suddenly we go from complicated to complex. You could study the lives of all these people for years, but you could never know all there is to know about how they will interact. You could make some guesses, but you can never know for sure. And the effort to study all the elements in more and more detail will never give you that certainty.

So complex = not simple and never fully knowable. Just too many variables interact.

Managing humans will never be complicated. It will always be complex. So no book or diagram or expert is ever going to reveal the truth about managing people.

But don't panic. We can manage people if we stop trying too hard to get it right. We just have to live with that uncertainty and come to enjoy it.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (try spelling that after a couple of beers) puts it like this in *Good Business: Leadership, Flow and the Making of Meaning*: "One of the key tasks of management is to create an organization that stimulates the complexity of those who belong to it."

Great Theory; What Does It Mean In Practice?

Think for a minute about Southwest Airlines. This is a U.S. airline that for many years has been widely recog-

nized as much more successful and profitable than nearly all its competitors.

Southwest does not come across as a secretive company. There's a whole reality TV show revealing it, warts and all. There's not much about the way it functions that hasn't been examined and described. I'd venture to guess that most of what could be made explicit about how Southwest works has been made explicit.

So it's very interesting that almost no other airline comes anywhere close to Southwest in terms of success.

There seems to be a basic assumption, from business schools to bookstores, that success is only a matter of modeling something that works, making the process explicit, and copying it. The Southwest paradox suggests there's something fundamentally faulty in that assumption.

That's because like all human organizations Southwest is complex, not complicated. Trying to copy it would involve an impossible effort to replicate all the unknowable details of what makes it work (and there are a lot of variables . . . the market it grew up in has changed; no one can replicate the personality of its individual managers; you can't be the first to do what it does . . . and so on and on).

Lots of deep stuff is written about systems, chaos, and complexity. My own search is for simple ways of dealing with complexity—ways that don't attempt to cover all the bases but still allow us to embrace paradox and ambiguity in our decision making. This seems pretty much the essence of creative living. . . .

One of my favorite management writers, Richard Farson, says in *Management of the Absurd*:

In organizations, as in life, human behavior is often irrational—and problems do not easily lend themselves to the simplistic answers and gimmickry offered in the myriad business “self-help” books and management training programs available today. . . .

It is the ability to meet each situation armed not with a battery of techniques but with openness that permits a genuine response. The better managers transcend technique. Having acquired many techniques in their development as professionals, they succeed precisely by leaving technique behind.

I don't think human relationships are simple; I think they are complex. Paradoxically, I think that the best principles to follow are simple but also fuzzy and fallible. But it's much better to be approximately right than precisely wrong. It's better to contain the ambiguity and uncertainty than to live in denial of it.

As organizations grow, there's a tendency to reduce ambiguity by adding to the rule book. In part, this is a natural desire to embody the lessons of past mistakes. But the effect over time can be sclerotic.

Look at traffic lights in cities. Over time, more and more road junctions in London have been graced with traffic lights in an effort to prevent gridlock and improve traffic flow. The trouble is that although these lights may work in isolation, their cumulative effect is often to make the traffic worse. And recent experiments have shown that stripping all the lights out of a stretch of road has actually reduced congestion.

Growing From Where We Are Now

One of the biggest problems with trying to change is the reluctance to acknowledge where we are now. Southwest Airlines did not grow out of a vacuum, it arose from a whole set of circumstances unique to its location and the time in which it grew up. The company preferred Love Field over the new Dallas airport and it avoided many

regulations by flying entirely within Texas in its early years.

Trying to copy a business without noticing these unrepeatable differences of context is like putting up an elaborate rococo trellis and not noticing that instead of a Russian vine, someone has planted potatoes.

And while it's fine to draw inspiration from others, we need to get better at growing from where we are now, not from where someone else is.

Not Bowling Alone

Fortunately, we don't have to grow alone. What all those success stories have in common is that they all grew from the collaboration of lots of different people. Oh, some heroes may well be involved, but they came out of the interactions of lots of different people.

So I want to set out a few simple ideas about how we can grow together without baffling ourselves with diagrams and lists of instructions. These ideas are lightly held, because as already noted, there are no universal truths about organizational life.

OK, BUT WHAT SIMPLE IDEAS?

I don't know for sure what simple ideas will work best for you. But I'll share a few that work for me.

These ideas are taken from the world of improv. Actors use them to create great theater and we can use them to create . . . great theater. The sort of theater that engages staff and customers, creates a good spirit of teamwork, and deals with the unexpected with aplomb. You know, all that good stuff that seems easier to write books about than to do. . . .

These ideas resonate with my own experiences, both as a marketing guy and as a facilitator of groups and mediator of heated human disputes.

- Yes, And
- Be Affected
- Embrace Surprise

Not The Whole Truth

I didn't find it easy learning to ski. I've never been very good in classes, and I went through several hours of one-to-one instruction falling down and feeling pissed off.

I remember the point at which my instructor turned things around. He threw out this idea for my posture: imagine you are holding a tray of champagne glasses as you move down the slope. This was a strange idea, but as soon as I tried it, something changed and suddenly I knew I was skiing with a different feeling, and on another level. As in, ooh-err instead of ouch, and sort of upright instead of horizontal.

Later, another instructor noticed I was using my poles more like an ancient tribesman spearing fish. So for a while, he took them away—helping me to learn more about balance. Later, I could go back to poles with more of a clue how to use them.

Both these interventions worked where others failed. Neither made a lot of sense as mere ideas, yet they both generated results in practice. And once they'd worked, I didn't need to cling to them rigidly. I don't normally think of champagne glasses when I'm skiing. Once you're in some kind of flow state, you're not thinking about "the rules."

You might care to think of the following ideas in the same way. Not as "the truth"

about organizations or life, but more as ideas to try out and see what happens.

In the language of improv, these are offers, which you may choose to accept and build on, or to block—by stopping reading, or by generating stories about how they won't work or how some people would never do them.

TRY THIS WITH A FRIEND

Well done, you've either read all the explanations above, or you've skipped here. However you got here, welcome.

I invite you to read this section with one or more friends and colleagues, and follow some of the exercises together.

The trouble with reading books like this is that it tends to be a solitary experience. (Mind you, try writing one.) The essence of these ideas is that they are ways to create stuff together, not on our own. Also, I'd like you to learn by doing, rather than simply studying the words on the page.

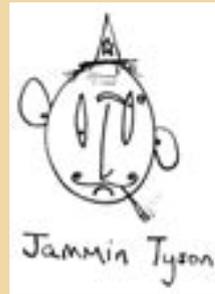
So here are the instructions for a simple activity to be done with one other person (you could adapt it for more people or get them to work in pairs). My suggestion is that you try a few rounds of this activity before reading on. I think it provides a good context for the material that follows. Then again, you may be like me, and feel impatient to get to the point, in which case you might try the activity later.

Or don't play at all, see if I care.

Anyway, here it is:

Paired Drawing

I've illustrated this with two examples. Not to show you the "right" answers, but to reassure you that we're not expecting Picasso here.



The exercise is simple: you're going to draw a face, together. It won't be a familiar face (probably) but one you're making up between you.

Once you're ready, you work silently. Resist the urge to discuss the picture as it develops and don't comment on each other's ideas. (You probably won't be able to suppress laughter, though.)

Draw just one feature of a face. It's up to you what it is: it could be an ear, an eye, a nose, a tattoo, an eyebrow . . . whatever. Rule of thumb: when you lift the pen off the paper, you've finished your turn. And remember, as you're working silently, don't explain what you've drawn.

Then your partner takes the pen and draws a feature. It may be another ear or eye, or it could be something else. Whatever it is, you then get the pen and carry on. Even if you're not sure what has been drawn.

And if you don't know—don't ask! Just carry on adding features as best you can.

Keep going like this for a few turns, each adding a single feature with each turn.

When someone gets the pen and hesitates about what to do, this means the face is finished. So that person now puts down the first letter of the name of this character. Keep adding letters until someone hesitates—and then you've finished.

And again, don't comment on what your partner writes, whatever you may think!

It's a good idea to do this at least three times. It's interesting to see how the experience changes with each repetition.

I suggest you now take a few moments to reflect with your partner on what it was like to do this together.

What was it like to create something mutually? Do you sense that what you drew is different from the picture either of you might have created alone?

Did you find that what your partner did sometimes surprised you? Was some existing plan of your own for “how things should be” disrupted?

Did you sometimes find the process amusing and enjoyable? If so, what was enjoyable about it?

What did you learn about working together from doing this?

I usually find that people engage with the exercise with ease and often enthusiasm. I often ask why we play games like this with more commitment than we give to many business meetings that, in theory, are about much more important topics. (Sometimes participants think this activity is pointless—and find it hard to explain their enthusiasm.)

What you've done here, with your partner, is to create something together that neither of you controlled, though you both influenced it. You contributed your own ideas and built on the other person's. So even if your partner drew something weird, or something you didn't like, you found a way to say: *Yes, and . . .* to them. You didn't (I hope) cross their stuff out, you let yourself be affected by their contribution. And if it was odd, well, you let yourself be surprised. Pleasantly, I hope.

I use activities like this—and the others we're going to try later—to support creative thinking and teambuilding. Sometimes people use them as a warm up exercise, but I think what they show us is more profound.

A Quick Side Note About Structure And Freedom

I've run this exercise lots of times now with hundreds of people. And you know what? All the drawings are of faces and they all have names. No one (so far) has ended up drawing a map of Africa or written a limerick.

I mention this now because when some people hear about improv they predict anarchy. But improv is not anarchy; each activity has a certain amount of structure. And then within the structure, people get to explore possibility. And this is what any sane organization wants its people to be willing to do:

to take a set of constraints and explore what is possible within them.
And now back to our normal program. . . .

Congratulations. This is a microcosm of what it is to improvise.
And now for some more details.

IDEA 1: YES, AND

At its simplest level, this is an injunction to stop saying “No, but” to our colleagues and instead say “Yes, and.” It’s not always going to work, but I’ve been surprised at the difference it makes when I find myself able to do this with sincerity.

No, I’m not suggesting that you simply agree with everything people say to you, so don’t panic. To put this all in context, here’s another simple activity you could try with a colleague.

What I Like . . .

Pick a subject where you’d like to generate a few creative ideas. For a warm-up, maybe choose one that’s not of world-shattering importance, so that it’s easy to engage with lightness. Like . . . where shall we go for lunch next time?

The first person gets to make one suggestion for what you do—say, “Let’s go to the staff cafeteria.”

The second person then says, “Yes, what I like about that idea is . . .” and then adds something they do like about it. The challenge is to find something you really like, which may take a second or two. For example “Yes, what I like about that idea is that it’s a quick journey and that means we can spend more time talking.”

This person then continues, “And we could—” making another suggestion. For this exercise, don’t worry too much about connecting to the first idea, just play. So you might say, “And we could eat the hottest curry on the menu.”

Back to the first person, who now continues with “Yes, what I like about that idea is . . . that as I don’t eat spicy food, I get to do most of the talking!”

And so on, until you decide to stop for coffee.

What this exercise may bring up:

For a lot of folks, this is great fun; they generate some wild ideas and get enthusiastic.

Others play at a slower pace but learn that they can find things to appreciate in what another person says, if they try.

And a few hate it, because (they say) it forces fake enthusiasm. That’s an interesting point of view, but I don’t believe the activity forces that—it’s a choice that the participants make. With an effort I think it’s always possible to find something to appreciate about the other’s offer.

I’d observe that within the structure of this activity, people will explore what’s possible and therefore come up with different styles and interpretations. That’s why I tend to ask people to play games without attempting to explain what “the point is.”

Anyway, some will insist on *No, but* for a *Yes, and* activity. That is always an option. Generally, I’ve found *Yes, and* works well for me in many more cases because most

people like to be acknowledged.

The Simple Power Of Acknowledgment . . .

“Yes, and” is sometimes more about acknowledgment of the other than it is about agreement.

I think acknowledging other people’s experience can be remarkably powerful, especially in situations of conflict. Yet it’s something we as a race are incredibly bad at doing.

What we like to do is offer our interpretation of what someone tells us, or rush to suggestions on how to avoid having certain feelings, rather than simply acknowledging them.

Time and again, I find that when I stop and simply let someone know I’ve heard what they said, and the way they said it, the quality of conversation improves for both of us. And when others do it to me, the impact is similarly strong.

And I’ve done it for myself. I remember on September 12, 2001, I was talking to an old friend who had invited me over for lunch. I actually felt unable to leave home, suffering like many other people from the shock of the day before. And then I just said to him, “Oh, I realize I feel too afraid to go out of the door, just give me a minute or two to feel that.” And after a few moments of acknowledging this fear, I soon felt quite happy to go on the visit.

IDEA 2: BE AFFECTED

I was going to title this “Make your partner look good”, which is often used as a principle of improv. It’s certainly something many people engaged in group discussions get wrong; they’re so busy asserting their own views that they trample all over the comments of others.

And I’m very much in favor of making your partner look good. If you watch people doing the drawing activity, you’ll notice that to begin with quite a bit of effort goes into making faces or in other ways suggesting that you’ve no idea what the other guy has drawn. What you’ll also notice as the activity picks up is that this stuff tends to diminish. And one of the effects is that the participants each make their partner look good.

So many arguments in business get waylaid by ego, and I guess most of us struggle with whether it’s our own or the other guy’s.

Of course, you may be thinking this is potentially an instruction to try empty flattery. And that’s why, in the end, I’ve opted to call this principle “Be affected”.

Being affected means more than just listening to the other person and nodding. It means being willing to let what they say sink in, allowing it to influence the way you feel and respond. It’s different from what often happens in conversations, where we’re impatiently waiting for the other person to finish so that we can quickly lob back our already-prepared conversation grenade—a state some call “talking or reloading.”

But enough theory, it’s time for another activity. This one is called One Word Story, and can be played in teams of two or more.

One Word Story

What you’re going to do is tell a story together, but in a slightly unusual way. If there are several of you, it will help to sit or stand in a circle.

You’re going to tell it one word at a time. So the first person will say a word,

then the next person will add one, and so on.

You don't need to think of a title for it and you certainly shouldn't have a planning meeting of any kind. Just let one person start with a word and go from there.

You might get lucky and find you immediately start creating coherent sentences. Or you may end up with some strange non-sequiturs. Either way, don't waste time in postmortems of any kind, or in trying to correct what others say or inviting them to say something "better." Just keep going.

Very often you'll find that amid some strange stuff, some clear sentences start to emerge. After playing for a while, pause and review your experience.

Take a moment and reflect on what you noticed.

What bits of the exercise were satisfying?

What approaches did you feel contributed to making the exercise work for you?

What do you think made it work less well?

These questions have no perfect answers, but after playing this a lot of times what emerges clearly is that in this activity making plans is a waste of time.

Many people doing this exercise have ideas about where they want the story to go and try to use their single word to drive it in a certain direction. Some are so attached to their plan that they sometimes repeat that word when their turn comes again, regardless of what others have said. Or they start planning their contribution two or more words before the one offered to them by the person right next to them.

All this is quite normal—and quite unhelpful, because it's a way of blocking out what is actually happening with your fellow participants in favor of a private scheme of your own. It's a simple way of not being affected by others.

Another thing that tends to happen is a lot of agonizing over "mistakes"—either one's own or someone else's. That's another way of holding up the flow and preventing forward movement.

If you review your experience and play again, not trying to make plans and really listening to your fellow participants, you'll likely find it a more satisfying experience. And you may be surprised at the stories that emerge—which, like the drawing in the first exercise, will be influenced by all and controlled by none.

Incidentally, in early rounds of the exercise, some players may seem to be deliberately sabotaging the round, or simply not getting it. I often find, though, when asked to reflect on how they play, these people will admit they've been trying to control the story and decide not to do it the next time. Another great thing about improv work is that people often learn the ideas for themselves, without having to be instructed.

So this is a very simple instance of what happens when we allow people to affect us, instead of trying to affect them. Of course, in longer improv exercises we develop this idea in more detail. For instance, when I'm training in customer service, I get people to think a lot more about how they empathize with complaining customers so they can develop an authentic and constructive response. It's an easy trap to just panic and rush about taking action without really understanding where the customer is coming from.

Emergence And Complexity

Think about this: in real life, organizations, brands, and ideas all emerge in the same

way that this story does. They are the end product of a series of interactions over which no one player has that much control. It's fine to set a goal; in this exercise we made the goal "a story," and you can play variations where you set a title or theme or perhaps limit the number of rounds. In life, the goal might be a bit grander—for example, "to build a successful airline"—but the way you get there can't follow some detailed blueprint. It will always emerge out of the interplay of lots of fallible human beings.

In this game, we created a few simple bits of structure—the order of taking turns and the number of words each person can say. In your airline, the structures and rules are, of course, rather more numerous—but there will still be scope for flexibility in how people play at building an airline within those structures. Remember Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi from earlier in this chapter? I think this is what he means by creating an organization that stimulates the complexity of those who belong to it.

IDEA 3: EMBRACE SURPRISE

Improv teaches us to be willing to let go of control and allow ourselves to be surprised.

I confess, sometimes I can be the world's biggest control freak. And in lots of situations it's good to feel in control. Other times I want someone else to be in control: on the whole, I like airline pilots to be in control of the plane.

That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about letting go of the almost pathological desire to control how other human beings respond to one's own actions. Giving up that kind of control may be a bit scary but it can be a huge relief. In all the exercises so far, we abandon some control and find it makes for a more interesting life.

Here's how it works: When I relinquish control, I'm no longer solely responsible for the outcome. Suddenly, I work more freely, believing that you're a smart person and you'll probably deal with things I forget to include. And if you don't, I can always invite someone else to join in and do it. Yes, when I give up control, I often lose the pressure and stress that makes a job difficult.

This is not rocket science. (I just asked a rocket scientist and he agreed with me. He says his affidavit is in the mail but that might bulk the chapter up too much.) Groups of people can think smarter than one person. I think James Surowiecki's *Wisdom of Crowds* covered that quite well.

Kathy Sierra is a highly regarded writer who keeps a great blog called "Creating Passionate Users." She points out in her blog that we learn more from surprises:

Think about the times you've done something that made intuitive or logical sense, but turned out to be so wrong. The times where you've said, "Whoa—I'll never do that again." Those are the memorable moments where you really learned something.

This is where so many teachers (and books) go wrong. In trying to make the learning smooth, and in a well-intentioned attempt to save the learner from having to learn the hard way, they simply tell you in advance what to do and what not to do. If there's a surprise lurking, they just tell you up front and spare you the trouble.

But they just robbed you of the chance to remember. To have that thing seared into your brain. What's worse, after they tell you how things really work, then they give you a lab exercise that simply demonstrates exactly what they told you. No surprises there.

Thanks, Kathy and good point. Improv creates surprises, which is why I think it has a lot to teach us—especially about the assumptions we so easily make about the world

and how it works.

What characterizes good teams learning together is that people get surprised—by themselves and by their colleagues. Surprised by what they learn and by what they find they can create together.

When people in conflict move from attacking each other to establishing common ground, they are surprised. When a team trying to solve a problem suddenly gets a new insight, there is surprise. When we discover new skills in our colleagues, we're surprised.

Surprise is the hallmark of learning and collaboration and a sign that people's attention has been engaged and they are energized.

Ah, you may be saying, but I'm not good with surprises. Excellent, then perhaps you need a little practice?

New Choice

This is a simple activity that can be done in pairs. One person will be a storyteller, and the other will be the audience. (You should, of course, reverse roles so you both get to try both positions; each offers things to learn.)

The storyteller gets to tell a story. For the purposes of this exercise, it's probably easier if it's made up. It doesn't need to be a great tale, it could just be "Mr. Smith Goes to New York" or "Timmy the Hamster Reads War and Peace". The storyteller begins the tale and the listener . . . well, the listener listens.

Here's the twist: at any point, the listener can call out "New Choice," which means the storyteller has to back up a few words and then take the story in a new direction. With either a minor change or a big one. If the listener likes the new choice, the story rolls on. If not, the listener can keep calling "New Choice" until happy with the results.

Here's one way it might go . . .

Cyril was an old man living in Liverpool—

New Choice!

Cyril was an old man living in Manchester, who one morning woke up and put on his favorite blue shirt—

New Choice!

. . . woke up and put on his favorite pink shirt—

New Choice!

. . . woke up and put on a blazer—

New Choice!

. . . woke up and put on an air of smug satisfaction to impress his wife who was lying in bed next to him—

New Choice!

. . . impress his wife who was lying about her age to a newspaper reporter on the telephone. . . .

That's just an example. You can experiment with what it's like to have lots of cries of "New Choice" and not so many.

Your mileage may vary, but most people find this an entertaining exercise once they opt to go with the flow. The listener can influence the story. And the storyteller may decide that it's easier to let the listener decide what's satisfying and thus feel free to try lots of different ideas out.

For now, I'm offering New Choice as good practice in being surprised—and perhaps surprising yourself at what creative ideas you can come up with.

We are such creatures of habit, it's really good to remind ourselves that, moment by moment, we can if we wish make different choices and explore new possibilities. Think of any number of successful innovations, and you could trace them back to some entrepreneurial inventor who looked at the status quo and made a new choice.

The way to succeed as an airline is to charge high fares—New Choice!

The way to make money from music is to force customers to buy CDs—New Choice!

People will only buy books in shops where they can actually handle the product—New Choice!

But this isn't all about world-changing ideas. It can be about introducing new flexibility to our relationships—and recognizing that while it's tough to change the world, we do have some flexibility in how we respond to it.

Improv encourages us to embrace surprise because it does a great job rehabilitating spontaneity in groups. The exercises discourage postmortems in favor of taking what is given as a given and moving forward. We spend less time arguing (either in our heads or out loud) and more time exploring new possibilities.

This isn't about getting rid of criticism, but it is about reminding ourselves of the value of suspending it. Running critical thoughts is a very effective way of not listening to people, not really showing up in relationships. Critical thoughts take us out of the present and into often futile worries about the future or regrets about the past. In this sense, improv is based on a philosophy of action.

I've chosen some simple exercises that may seem to be about talking and making pictures. But improv is a performance art and these drills are key to real live performances full of movement and engagement.

In organizations, we often worry about absenteeism—the habit of not showing up to work on some false pretext. Charles Handy suggested the deeper problem is presenteeism—the pervasive habit of coming to work and not really paying attention, engaging, or sharing. One of the great things about improv exercises is that they give us all a reminder that it's actually fun and energizing to engage with each other. When this happens, things get done—not because of orders or in response to incentives, but from a primal human urge to get along and move.

THIS IS NOT A REHEARSAL

I hope you've enjoyed trying out these exercises. I believe that if you engage with them for long enough, you'll learn the improv principles intuitively, without my possibly labored explanations.

I invite you not to spend too much time evaluating what I've said here. Instead, see what happens if you apply these ideas in practice. Instead of predicting what will happen, put them to the test by seeing what does actually happen.

In that way, you'll be treating these exercises not as some theoretical activity but as a living experience. I use these activities to help groups become more creative, to resolve conflicts and to build stronger collaboration. They work on more than one level; they

give people actual experiences of working together in a new way—which can be more useful than hours of analysis. At the same time, when people reflect on how they engage with these apparently lighthearted activities, they're often surprised by what they learn about themselves and their colleagues.

Sometimes these exercises can provide good warm-ups for meetings, but I think there is a lot more to them than that. If you pay attention, they can encourage lively discussions about how people work together, conversations that can lead to change where other, more literal, approaches fail.

Finally, in improv language, this essay is an *offer*, for you to respond to as you please. I'd be fascinated to hear what your experience is like. Feel free to *Yes, and* me—write to johnnie@johnniemoore.com.

FROM THE EDITOR

I first got to know Johnnie through his writings on Kevin Roberts's *Lovemarks*. Johnnie didn't have many kind words about the book. His rants created wonderful conversations around branding. I have been a reader of his ever since. Johnnie is another author with a background that zigzags across topics from political speechwriting to consulting on facilitation and marketing. Johnnie has lived within walking distance of St. Paul's Cathedral (London) for almost twenty years now.

In His Own Words . . .

What is it about your essay topic that made you want to write this chapter in *More Space*?

"I love using improvisation as a way to work with people and I love sharing it. Plus I wanted an outlet for my frustration with the mass of business books that make up complicated rules that miss the mystery and excitement of being a living human being."

Johnnie's blog:

www.johnniemoore.com/blog

Johnnie's favorite blogs:

www.gapingvoid.com

www.tonygoodson.com

37days.typepad.com

Recommended reading:

Improv

by Keith Johnstone

www.appliedimprov.net

www.smallpieces.com