



REALTOR®

**Association  
Executives Institute**

**February 17-21, 2007  
San Diego, California**

# Smooth Sailing: De-stress!

Presented by:  
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Chicago, IL

February 20, 2007

## STEPH DeWAEGENEER

**An enthusiastic speaker who's also an experienced business leader, a nurturing coach, and a talented entertainer. Steph DeWaegeneer is all of these, communicating ideas that have a powerful impact on audiences and organizations across the nation.**

### **A Speaker & Coach:**

Steph's infectious enthusiasm and applicable messages, delivered with genuine warmth and humor have made her a presenter in demand. Steph has trained hundreds of actors, executives, and students in improvisational and interactive theatre techniques over her varied career. She was named a Speaker of Merit by COMMON A Users Group for her presentation, "*Oh, by the way, YOUR WELCOME: How to Talk to Human Beings*".

### **A Businessperson:**

Steph has over a decade of experience successfully negotiating and executing strategic sales relationships in both the creative and corporate sectors. Since joining ComedySportz of Chicago in 1998, Steph has lead the company's sales strategy and revenue generating efforts and obtained key associations with many of the world's leading brands and Fortune 500 companies including: Macy's, ConAgra, Target, Edelman PR, Accenture, AT&T, Harrah's Entertainment, and the Chicago Tribune Companies. At the request of her clients, she developed the highly successful and flexible live talent service, *Creative Conceptz*; making it the top interactive entertainment program of its kind in Chicago. Prior to ComedySportz, Steph held the position of Manager of Radiology for Whitaker Medical, a leading healthcare recruitment firm that provides a broad range of professional staffing, where she lead the effort to expand the department's *locum tenens* service to serve physicians and facilities across the nation. She currently serves as the VP of Communications for the Chicagoland chapter of the American Business Women's Association.

### **An Entertainer:**

Steph received her BFA in Theatre, from Sam Houston State University. She is a long time veteran performer with ComedySportz (Houston '91-97, Chicago '97-present). She is an original ensemble member of *Whose Chorus Line Is It Anyway?* and directed productions of: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Wild Pecos Bill*, *Beneath the Music*, and *How to Eat Fried Worms*. Steph is a plus-size model, appeared in the Chuck Norris film, *Sidekicks*, and is an award winning Texas Renaissance Festival performer.

## SO, WHAT'S THE POINT?

After completing this session the attendee will understand the concepts of:

- The 120% Commitment
- Connection
- Mindful Breathing
- Zen and the Laser
- Yes, And!
- Okay to Play



## LAUGHTER: A clinical description

Modern neurophysiology states that laughter is linked with the activation of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, which produces endorphins after a rewarding activity: after you have a good meal or after you understand a joke.

Research has shown that parts of the limbic system are involved in laughter. The limbic system is a primitive part of the brain that is involved in emotions and helps us with basic functions necessary for survival. Two structures in the limbic system are involved in producing laughter: the amygdala and the hippocampus...

## ...BORING!

In this fast-paced and exciting session Steph worked with participants in a series of fun and funny exercises illustrating how to respond in a healthy and productive way to daily stress-inducing stimuli, rather than **fight** or **flee**.

“The focus on the benefits of laughter really began with Norman Cousins’s memoir, *Anatomy of an Illness*. Cousins, who was diagnosed with a painful spine condition, found that a diet of comedies, like Marx Brothers films and episodes of Candid Camera, helped him feel better.

He said that ten minutes of laughter allowed him two hours of pain-free sleep.”  
(WebMD.com 2006)

## The 120% Commitment

**Commitment** is how much of yourself you invest in a certain task. Do you walk to it or do you run to it? Commitment is giving 120%, and the more you commit the more fun you have in the process.

## Connection

**Connection** is how much of yourself you invest in the other people with whom you share a task. Do you make real, sustained eye contact? Do you listen with intent to understand, or do you just wait for your chance to speak?



## Mindful Breathing

Breathing \*. *Bet you didn't think you'd get a handout with notes on how to breathe.*

In our workshop we looked at stress and how stress sabotages the body and our sense of centeredness.

“Mindful” breathing can help to reduce stress in times of conflict.

Most people keep their shoulders up and tensed when under stress. Bringing the shoulders down and focusing on relaxing them while breathing can help fight the stressful feelings underneath.

Try this in the middle of any stressful interaction and you won't be sorry!



### \* Oh no! The Breath Police!

I'm not a doctor, a therapist, or a yogini. These statements on breathing aren't anything more authoritative than an improv coach's suggestion.

*Everything I else I tell you is reliable.*

However, if you find a health professional against calm breathing and relaxed shoulders, you let me know!

## Zen and the Laser

**Presence** is being where you are, when you're there.

Sounds a little **Zen** doesn't it? Placing great importance on moment-by-moment awareness and *seeing deeply into the nature of things* by direct experience. Remember the punch line about what the Zen master said to the hot dog vendor.

**Clarity** means saying exactly what you want to say with as few distractions as possible. Clarity is a laser.

Laser light is typically near-monochromatic and emitted in a narrow, coherent beam. Think about James Bond's confrontation with a decidedly on-target laser in *Goldfinger*.

## Yes, And!

No matter our area of expertise or specific profession, we all improvise. **Everyday.**

We all deal with stress. **Everyday.**

Can you count the number of times you've said, "I'm completely stressed out!" in the past week? The good news is that there are ways to reduce the negative impacts of stress. How? By embracing the power to find in positive responses - the **Yes, And!** principle.

In improv we must support our partners. If we don't the show falls apart, the audience loses any idea of what they're watching, and I have to go back to waiting tables at *Applebee's*. Their trust in the show is compromised.

Likewise, when we attack each other's ideas at the office or in a meeting, we see trust decline. On the other hand, when we determine to **make other's ideas look good** – when we look to celebrate what works and manage through what doesn't – we often come up with a better idea than what we started with.

## Okay to Play

"Smile early in the morning and get it over with." (W. C. Fields)

Laughter, joy, chortling, guffawing – it's all good for you. Not only does it reduce stress, it improves your overall health. You receive aerobic benefit from laughing. Call it, "internal jogging". When you laugh hard, just as when you exercise, your large muscles move, your breathing increases, your heart rate gets a boost.

Research consistently shows that laughter has both preventive and therapeutic value. Laughter is aerobic exercise that helps us stay healthy by enriching the blood with ample supplies of oxygen. According to Dr. William Fry at Stanford University, "One minute of laughter is equal to 10 minutes on the rowing machine." (Stanford University)

Author Katie Namrevo experienced laughing 30 seconds to 5-minutes as often as 10 times a day, and she no longer craved food. She began losing weight and she had more energy and a desire to exercise. ("Laugh It Off! Weight Loss for the Fun of It,")

**Wake up with a smile.** Cure *terminal tightness, cerebral stiffness, and hardening of the attitudes*. The minute your feet hit the floor, smile some more. The first time you look at yourself in the mirror smile, giggle – warm up your laugh for the day.

"...play's value among adults is too often vastly underrated. We would all agree that play lifts stress from us. It refreshes us and recharges us. **It restores our optimism.** It changes our perspective, stimulating creativity. It renews our ability to accomplish the work of the world. By anyone's reckoning, those are remarkably worthy achievements."

(Hara Estroff Marano, "The Power of Play")

## ComedySportz Creative Services in a nutshell

- Live, clean, interactive, **comedy shows** every week at our theatre
  - Internationally traveled **Touring Company**
    - **B.L.A.S.T. Corporate Training**
  - **Creative Conceptz** promotional live talent



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