

Joanna Nawrocka:
How theatre may help regain the lost solidarity



I want to give you some knowledge about theatre, in points. These facts are gathered to help you understand in what ways theatre brings people together and increases their social competences.

The most essential thing about theatre is that in its basics it consists of only two elements:

ACTOR and SPECTATOR

Both actor and spectator are **PEOPLE**, living creatures that develop a connection in a real contact – and that is very special in the times of spreading virtual reality.

When you're an actor, you must never forget that your audience is not a crowd, but a group of real people, of individuals. It's about responsibility and respect.

When you're a spectator, it's about risk and freedom and courage. You are to be confronted with images and words, with ideas and views. You may not like what you see and hear and you are always free to leave. But it is rarely to offend you – rather to open new worlds for you. So see it as an opportunity.

Theatre is a **GROUP ACTIVITY** – both in professional and amateur theatre there's a bunch of people that must **COOPERATE** in order to deliver a performance. It is often not visible for everyone, but the cooperation is necessary. Both on-stage and backstage.

There's no **DEMOCRACY** in theatre – once you get engaged in theatre activities, you understand that your role is inevitable, but at the same time you have to obey. You depend on others and others depend on you. It's about responsibility, accuracy and being part of a big thing.

Theatre is a great example of leader-based activity.

Theatre gives people voice – physically, by training their speech organ, making their words loud, clear and meaningful = UNDERSTANDABLE; and mentally, by helping them understand that while you're on stage, there are people watching you and listening to you, so you need to have a message and to deliver it.

Europe is old. And, similarly to many old people and structures, it is rather afraid of taking actions and risks. But there's one thing that improv theatre teaches us how to make the show go on:

NEW CHOICE

This is an improv exercise, but it may also be your daily practice: whatever you do, ask yourself for a “new choice” again and again, until you're satisfied with the result. And then try another new choice.