

Agency for Change Podcast: Gail and Bruce Montgomery, Co-Founders, ExperienceYes

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- Learn more about ExperienceYes at <https://www.experienceyes.com/>
- Check out Gail and Bruce's book, "The Improv Mindset: Change Your Brand. Change Your Business" at https://www.amazon.com/Improv-Mindset-Change-Brain-Business-ebook/dp/B083TQXNB7/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

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Gail Montgomery

Start with yes, because if we can start with yes, anything's possible.

Announcer:

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman:

We are going to kick off today's show with a question. What if I asked you to make up a scene on the spot using random details from the audience about what's happening, and it's up to you to act out this scene off the top of your head? Would you be able to do it, or would you freeze up in fear? I'm of course talking about improv, the form of comedy where you act out a situation without any preparation at all. So what kind of skills does one need to be good at improv? According to a journalist at The Tennessean, things like being able to quickly accept new conditions, knowing how to tell a good story, being a strong listener, knowing when a scene should end, and working well with others are all key to the art of improv.

In fact, says the article, these same skills are useful in the workplace where you probably already do them without realizing it. For example, when you receive last-minute changes to a project or when you're brainstorming with your team about how to solve a problem. That is improv. So if you're saying to yourself, "Yes, and... Where is this going, Lyn?" That was a little improv joke for you, then stay tuned for today's guests who believed in the power of improv so much that they started a business that uses its principles to help companies increase emotional intelligence and enhance innovative thought.

Find out how they lead experiential sessions with companies large and small, what it's like to start a business with your spouse, and how you can put improv to work in your own life. Hey, everyone, this is Lyn Wineman, president and CEO of KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. Today's guests are Gail and Bruce Montgomery, co-founders of ExperienceYes, which uses the tools and techniques of improv mindset to improve leadership skills, engage free flowing creativity, increase team productivity, and develop healthy business cultures. Gail and Bruce, welcome to the podcast.

Bruce Montgomery:

Woo-hoo!

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, I love you guys.

Bruce Montgomery:

Awesome. Thank you for having us.

Lyn Wineman:

Absolutely. Everyone can tell right now that this is going to be a ton of fun. And Gail.

Gail Montgomery:

Yes.

Lyn Wineman:

For people who may not have heard of you, which I can't believe that would be the case, there's one or two somewhere, tell us a bit more about the work that you do at ExperienceYes, and who you help.

Gail Montgomery:

Sure, absolutely. I am the CEO, and really, honestly, I'd like to rather say chief fun officer than chief executive officer.

Lyn Wineman:

That is such a great title.

Gail Montgomery:

I love that. And co-founder of ExperienceYes, so I am my husband's boss. Let that sink in for a hot minute.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah. Look, there is a real problem when you need to ask HR something, because it's just that there's nothing fun about that. There's nothing fun.

Gail Montgomery:

Let's see. So my background is in HR and in change management. I really have a strong passion for putting people at the center of all business because there is no business without people, and when people are happy and the culture is good, then great things happen for business. So I would say the work that we do is transformational. I'm going to say that. We're changing the world one business at a time.

Lyn Wineman:

I love that.

Gail Montgomery:

We are. We are aspiring to make every company an ExperienceYes company, and that is one which practices the shared language of improv, which I'm sure we'll dive into, and it all starts with saying yes, and... And knowing that staying curious and what possibilities might come are important. We work on culture. We help companies innovate and reimagine product and process. We help leaders and teams become more high performing through increasing empathy and emotional intelligence, and again, as I mentioned, teaching that shared language of improv. And we also bring an air of fun into the workplace. I don't think there's enough of that going on. It's one thing to have a great team building experience. It's another to have that great experience and laugh and infuse it with joy, and then find ways to thread that through the business as it moves forward to continuing to put people first.

Lyn Wineman:

Wait, what? We're supposed to have fun at work?

Gail Montgomery:

I know.

Lyn Wineman:

What?

Bruce Montgomery:

Never. We are never supposed to have fun at work.

Gail Montgomery:

This is kind of a new concept. I would like to say I coined it and I'm pretty sure I didn't. So, yeah, in a nutshell, that's what we do. It's creativity, innovation, emotional intelligence, and the improv mindset is at the core of that.

Lyn Wineman:

Okay. There's one little word there you've said I think three times-

Gail Montgomery:

Aha.

Lyn Wineman:

... that might strike fear into hearts of those of us who don't do improv.

Gail Montgomery:

Dah, dah, dah...

Lyn Wineman:

And so, many of us, our experience with improv is, A, completely avoiding it personally. B, maybe we've seen it on "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" A show that's been around for a while. Maybe we've seen an improv show at a bar, and once again, averted our eyes so as not to be called upon. But, Bruce, I'm just really curious, how did these examples compare with the kind of improv exercises you do when you are in a training situation?

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah. Well, first I would like to say, Lyn, you are a bald-faced liar because you do improv every day. Even this conversation that we're having right now, when you got up this morning and after you got your cup of coffee, I guarantee you things were completely different than they were yesterday.

Gail Montgomery:

I am not kidding when I tell you, you can't see my face right now. This is exactly what I was thinking. And then you asked this question, I was thinking, "I hope Bruce says that. She's improvising right now."

Bruce Montgomery:

You were hoping I was going to call her a bald-faced liar.

Lyn Wineman:

I don't get called that very often, Bruce, and still smile and laugh about it.

Bruce Montgomery:

We are all improvising every day, and we assume that when put in a situation like what you see in "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" or what you might see in the back hall of a college campus where a bunch of people are doing improv, is that it's really awkward, it's really uncomfortable. Where we like to focus and where we like to really spend our time is that understanding that the brain is a system, and that is a system that can be changed. And we'll probably delve into it in more detail when we talk about neuroscience behind improv.

But the idea is, in our sessions, is to get your brain out of the way using this framework of improv and guidelines or rules of improv that we like to focus on. We like to focus on four core rules, yes, and...; listen with the intent to serve; support your teammates at all costs; and trust your instincts. That is the framework, that is the foundation for a high-performing team. That's the framework to get your brain out of the way and really create and collaborate together.

Lyn Wineman:

Honestly, I love those four rules and I want to co-opt them as KidGlov core values. I mean-

Gail Montgomery:

Woo-hoo, I like this.

Lyn Wineman:

... and listen with intent to serve and protect your team at all costs. I may not have said that one quite right, but I love those two things. Amazing. Just amazing.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah, we're pretty big fans of that, and I think when we get to talking about the neuroscience of things, the disruption piece, the getting the brain out of the way will make a bit more sense. And I think we just get so caught up as we grow into adulthood and then get into the mundane, everyday working of our life that we forget how to be playful, how to be creative, and we take less risk and we are more inclined to say no and to just stay safe in our little box as we know it and move through life. And that, while it may keep you safe, is to me not a life well lived.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, for sure. For sure. So let's talk about the neuroscience of things. You both mentioned it a couple of times, because those things don't necessarily go together in my brain, right? Improv, neuroscience, work culture. How do we get our hands around all of this?

Gail Montgomery:

I'm going to tee it up for my husband because he's going to get really excited about this and he might come out of his chair. So I'm going to attach that seatbelt, keep him in, because I know one thing he's going to say is that I am not as interested in data as he is. And the truth is, when we first started, I wasn't. And now I am. So I've already said yes.

Bruce Montgomery:

I've converted her. I've converted her.

Gail Montgomery:

I'm a converted data geek. Yeah. Go for it.

Bruce Montgomery:

I'm a nerd at heart, Lyn, I'll be perfectly honest. After being in New York as an actor, I cut my teeth as a management consulting in IT. I ran the IT organization for one of the largest theaters in the country. I worked for a sports and entertainment company in data and analytic. So I kept coming back to data and-

Lyn Wineman:

Nerd alert.

Bruce Montgomery:

... I know, total nerd. Total nerds. And so I was getting my MBA at DU, the University of Denver, and I had an entrepreneurial class and they kept asking, "What do you love to do, and can you turn that into a business? What do you love to do, and can you turn that into a business?" And I kept coming back to... Gail and I were introduced to improv around 2006. I wish we had done it when we were actors in New York. That would've been great. But we didn't find it until later. And-

Lyn Wineman:

And that's awesome.

Bruce Montgomery:

And my brain immediately went, "Wow, this is my jam. I love this, not just a little bit, I want to embody this at all times." And so-

Gail Montgomery:

And that's not to say there isn't fear and self-loathing and lots of self-judgment. All of that comes with it too.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes. So I sat there in 2013 going, "I love improv. I understand management consulting and how it works and how businesses work. Can I somehow combine that?" And I simply Googled, while class was going on, so I was sitting there, the instructor was...

Gail Montgomery:

Don't tell the professor.

Bruce Montgomery:

... don't judge me! So I Googled neuroscience and improv, and this study came back with a researcher named Charles Limb, who at the time was out of John's Hopkins. And he studied jazz musicians under functional magnetic resonance imaging. FMRI.

Lyn Wineman:

A mouthful. Oh, wow.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah, that is it. He studied their brains, basically. And FMRI is really cool because it takes a look at where the blood goes, and when the blood goes there, they know that what's happening is, basically your body is accessing that part of the brain, or your brain is accessing... Well, things are happening in the brain.

Lyn Wineman:

Things are happening.

Bruce Montgomery:

So-

Gail Montgomery:

He's not a neuroscientist.

Lyn Wineman:

It's very scientific.

Bruce Montgomery:

That's right. Yes. But I play well on TV.

Gail Montgomery:

He plays on TV.

Bruce Montgomery:

So basically what happens is, what they found with jazz musicians in FMRI, if you put them in there and you have them play a memorized piece of music, a certain part of the brain activates and having to do with working memory and listening. When you play jazz, which requires a whole different set of things, a very specific part of the brain, I'm going to say it out loud, the dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, yeah. That part.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes. The DLPFC, it's the executive judge. It sits right on the forward part of the left part of your brain, and it's responsible for judgment. It's responsible for risk and analyzing risk and saying no. It really is responsible for saying no.

Gail Montgomery:

And it's so important. So we don't step out into the street and get hit by a car.

Lyn Wineman:

Right. Right.

Bruce Montgomery:

But for collaboration, for something like jazz, basically what has to happen is that part of the brain needs to go away because you're going to collaborate and listen and do something new. I saw this TED talk, which everybody should look up, just type in Charles Limb, L-I-M-B-

Gail Montgomery:

L-I-M-B.

Bruce Montgomery:

... and neuroscience-

Lyn Wineman:

L-I-M-B, all right.

Bruce Montgomery:

... or jazz, and it'll come back. And I went, "This is what happens with comedic improvisers." A hundred percent. There'd been no studies about it.

Gail Montgomery:

He took a huge leap. We based our business off an assumption.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes. Well, what's exciting is in 2018, Charles studied us, so we actually got our brains analyzed from a comedic improviser standpoint. He's now at the University of California San Francisco. And we had our brains studied and they basically proved that the same thing happens. This DLPFC gets suppressed. It basically gets shut down a little bit, and the rest of these connections, these neural pathways of something called the default mode network, just light up having to do with collaboration and listening.

Gail Montgomery:

Creativity.

Bruce Montgomery:

Creativity.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow.

Bruce Montgomery:

All those things. So what we know is, you don't need 15 years of musical theory to get to this point. You can do it in 45 minutes with comedic improv interventions and get to a creative state very, very fast. Sorry, that was a lot of words.

Gail Montgomery:

It was a lot of words.

Bruce Montgomery:

A lot of words.

Lyn Wineman:

Improv works better than a whack on the side of the head.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah. Well, and it's funny you should say that because there is also proof that universities have done where they have zapped people-

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah, where they put-

Gail Montgomery:

... with wet sponges and-

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah, and lemon juice.

Gail Montgomery:

... lemon juice and batteries-

Lyn Wineman:

Does that work?

Gail Montgomery:

... and they found... They've been able to create the same kind of temporary suppression of this DLPFC. And all we say is, "Look, guys, ours is a lot more fun."

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow.

Gail Montgomery:

You don't need to use batteries, lemons and sponges.

Bruce Montgomery:

There's a whole bunch of DIY stuff where people are just like, "That's terrifying. Just do improv. Just do improv. I promise--"

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. We do a lot of creative work at KidGlov. If my team members start seeing me bringing in sponges and lemon juice, they should worry, huh?

Gail Montgomery:

Definitely.

Lyn Wineman:

Improv does sound better than that.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. Yeah.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah. Yeah.

Lyn Wineman:

All right. I love it. Hey, Gail and Bruce, I want to take a quick break here because I do want to share something from one of our podcast partners, and then we'll be right back.

Mark:

As a podcast listener, you already know the power of the human voice to take messages from the ear, to the brain, to the heart. I'm Mark, a creative coach, dedicated to the study of what motivates people to take action. In my podcast, I chat with leaders who think beyond marketing, who are building long lasting connections with people who will pay them lots of money to do the important work the world needs. You can follow the podcast and check out previous episodes at earbrainheart.com. That's earbrainheart.com.

Lyn Wineman:

All right. Gail and Bruce, let's get back to this fantastic conversation.

Lyn Wineman:

So you guys have actually written a book on this.

Gail Montgomery:

Yes.

Lyn Wineman:

What was that like? Tell us a bit more about the book. Tell us, and make sure you tell us the name of the book and where we can find it and we'll link that in the show notes today.

Gail Montgomery:

Well, and first of all, a shout-out to anyone out there who has written a book, is writing a book, wants to write a book. It is a very difficult thing to do. A lot of people would say, "Oh, no, it's easy. Just start putting pen to paper." It's tough. Your whole ego gets in the way. I don't think it's the same as it used to be in terms of finding publishers to be able to support you and launch it. If you're already famous, that's easy. If you're like us, you self-publish. So it's called "The Improv Mindset," and it is on Amazon. It is in English and in Spanish.

Bruce Montgomery:

And an audiobook.

Gail Montgomery:

And an audiobook.

Bruce Montgomery:

Recorded by yours truly.

Lyn Wineman:

I love it when people record their own books. That's my favorite.

Gail Montgomery:

I think it should always be the author's voice. And, oh, my gosh, the next time we see you, Lyn, and you come to our house in Colorado, we must show you the tiny little cupboard under the stairs, Harry Potter place where we recorded it. Because-

Bruce Montgomery:

It was tight. It was tight.

Gail Montgomery:

... it's super tight. We were very sweaty while we were recording that. There was a lot of sweat.

Lyn Wineman:

I'm going to listen to this book over the weekend and imagine the two of you in the cupboard under the stairs.

Gail Montgomery:

It's not an easy thing to do, especially when you have different voices and you have different writing styles.

Bruce Montgomery:

And you're married.

Gail Montgomery:

And you're married.

Lyn Wineman:

And you work together, which is so impressive also.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah. And I think that what it did more than anything, we never set out to write it to be a best seller. If it becomes one someday, yay. I feel like our by-products of that experience are multitudes. One is, it got us really crystal clear about what our message is and what it is we wanted to do with the knowledge that we had and the experience that we had. That's one.

Two, it became instant credibility for us because people realized, with the data side, it gives people more than just a, "Oh, this is fluffy," kind of a perspective about us. And then I think the third thing is that we are able to use it as a support tool for when we come into sessions. We can say to people, "Hey, there's more of this great stuff in here. Use this. Dive in." Because to change behavior and to change the way we speak to one another and show up for one another takes time.

Bruce Montgomery:

And the focus... It's funny, if you think about how we created it, we started from the academic side. I think we reference 45 or 50 different academic studies-

Lyn Wineman:

Wow. Yeah.

Bruce Montgomery:

... in improv, in communication, in listening, in culture, just really trying to bring in not just our own credibility, but the credibility of others who've actually studied this, who really take a look closely at all of these things. And that's the way the book's organized. It starts with you and yourself, your personal, your own brain, if you will. And it looks out at the team, then it looks out at an organizational culture and kind of builds from there.

Lyn Wineman:

I love the way you bundle this all together from the foundation of science and data into improv and fun. So what does it look like when clients engage with you? What do these sessions look like? What does it feel like?

Gail Montgomery:

When we first started we thought, "What's this going to be? What does this content look like?" We knew we wanted to do some kind of disruptive experiential interventions that were very activity based because we knew that was going to get people to disrupt that part of their brain and get thinking differently. And so it started really as a means of innovation and creativity, which we still do. Companies bring us in when they're stuck, when sales are plummeting, when they have really bad process and they want to re-engineer and rethink the way their process is. And that's been really fun. That has actually been the basis for a few case studies that we've done.

And then it's kind of morphed into, as we have spent time with clients in their own space, we've started to see, "Oh, they're attracted to the emotional intelligence piece." And I'm certified as an emotional intelligence practitioner. So we designed an emotionally intelligent leader course and teams course. And then Bruce got certified in design thinking because he realized, "Wow, we want to take the innovation thing a step further, not just from a design thinking standpoint. We want to wrap that up in this new language that they can speak going forward."

And then we also started talking to a lot of people who were customer-focused and realizing that not only did they, as teams and leaders within the company, need what we were talking about. They wanted to increase and deepen these complex relationships with their customers and their clients. So we've just put the final touches on our customer relationship ninja program, which involves the improv mindset, emotional intelligence, empathy and influence. And we've had a really great time putting that together.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah, the response has been great.

Gail Montgomery:

So we engage in half-day sessions, we do keynotes, we've done half-day sessions, we've done full-day and we've done multi-day.

Bruce Montgomery:

And multi-month.

Gail Montgomery:

And multi-month.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Bruce Montgomery:

It really depends-

Gail Montgomery:

It just depends on the client and what their final goal is. What is the deliverable they're looking for? What do they want to see happen with their team or themselves?

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. It would seem weird if a company with your background and premise would deliver very tightly defined in the box solutions. I imagine everything you do is based in the science and your process, but also highly customizable as well.

Gail Montgomery:

I just want to say for the record, one of my huge pet peeves, and we're working on this as a business too, to show up in this way for our clients. It makes me crazy when people send their teams to a one-off, or even a two-day or conference, and they come back from this conference or they come back from these sessions, they're pumped, they're inspired, they tell each other what happened. And then that little notebook or that little digital guide goes in a file or a folder and is gone forever. And no one holds each other accountable for changed behavior or new ways of looking at things and being inspired. It makes me nuts.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Bruce Montgomery:

It's why we use a lot of metaphor. Sports metaphor is one of the ones that we use quite commonly. If you think about sports teams and what they do exceptionally is that they practice, and they practice together. If you think about a business team, when have you ever practiced as a business team?

Lyn Wineman:

Never.

Bruce Montgomery:

As a matter of fact, when I was a management consultant, usually a business team was formed like this. "You're breathing, you're breathing, you've got free time, you're breathing, go solve this problem." And then you've got all this fear, uncertainty, and doubt working against you to then get to being a team and then start working. It just takes a long time. So by practicing these rules, by practicing this framework, your ability to form a team faster goes up exponentially.

Lyn Wineman:

I love that. And I want to go back to, if you become a ninja, what does that look like? I want to be a ninja.

Gail Montgomery:

I do, too, and I'm working on it. That's actually one of the best things that I feel like... So I ascribe to the company Genos, G-E-N-O-S. That's the company that I am certified through with emotional intelligence, as are a couple of great friends of ours, Cristina and Alex. And they talk about how no one's emotionally intelligent 100% of the time and you cannot be a ninja 100% of the time with your clients. So even Bruce and I are on a lifelong journey to continue to increase these skills.

Our goal is really to take people or teams who are forward-thinking about going to that next level. I know that sounds very cliché. They're serious about getting out of their ego, like stopping all of their impulse conversations and their desires from an ego base and moving more towards a servant base. How can I stay connected to, as a client, how can I continue to provide value to you? How can I listen to you better? How can I create space so you can share with me? And how can I provide the right, not forced influence and guidance? More along the lines of subtly invited guidance and nuance influence. So that's what I'm thinking.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes. You build on these belts, improv being kind of the first belt-

Gail Montgomery:

You're white belts.

Bruce Montgomery:

... emotionally, emotional intelligence being the next belt, up into empathy, up into influence. Those bring you to that ninja status.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. What a great idea and a great program. So I'm curious, somebody who does as much free-flowing work as you do, have you ever been in any really crazy situations that you can share?

Bruce Montgomery:

Sure.

Gail Montgomery:

Oh, my gosh.

Lyn Wineman:

Never, huh?

Gail Montgomery:

Well, let's start with this week.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah. So two days ago-

Gail Montgomery:

I'll give you two days ago.

Bruce Montgomery:

Two days ago, we went to go work with a law firm. We've got a program around the emotionally intelligent lawyer, which they would tell you freely that that does seem like an oxymoron, that is their words, not ours.

Lyn Wineman:

I'm shaking, nodding my head.

Gail Montgomery:

And that they want to be.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes. We've been working with them, getting together and figuring out what we were going to do for them. And we were excited. And their room that they had reserved fell out. For some reason they couldn't get it and they said, "Well, just come to our offices and we'll do it here."

Gail Montgomery:

Oh, okay, sure.

Bruce Montgomery:

And we'll say to ourselves, "We're an improv company. We should be able to flex pretty easily."

Gail Montgomery:

We can't flex, we can't teach it.

Bruce Montgomery:

And usually we'll also have our clients go, "Well, you're improv so you'll do this." We're like-

Gail Montgomery:

Hilarious.

Bruce Montgomery:

... okay. Well, we get there, and I'll let Gail take it over.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah. Let's just say it's one of those older homes in Denver that's been taken over by a law firm with those small 1940s and '50s rooms-

Lyn Wineman:

They're all doors. Yes. And they're creaky.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah. So we walk in. I'm guessing this was like the salon, the welcome room in one of these old homes. It probably is, I'm going to say, 12 by 10.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah.

Lyn Wineman:

I'm feeling claustrophobic already.

Gail Montgomery:

Oh, yeah.

Bruce Montgomery:

20 people.

Gail Montgomery:

20.

Bruce Montgomery:

Two zero.

Gail Montgomery:

And they had those big ginormous office chairs that have the huge arms on the side and they're just clunky. And we walk in, and they are pushing these chairs in rows there where we have seriously enough room to stand in front of them. They're spilling out into the entryway. We're hoping that they can see our very limited PowerPoint deck. And then we are thinking to ourselves, "Okay, every time we do a session, it's experiential. Where are we going to go?"

Bruce Montgomery:

We need to stand up and go somewhere.

Gail Montgomery:

We have to get in a circle. We have to have them in different teams. We have to do these activities where... So luckily, thank you, Colorado, we had one of our 325 sunny days-

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, you went outside.

Gail Montgomery:

... we stepped outside. The porch was beautiful. We had people on the porch, in the front yard. I mean, the neighbors must have been wondering what the heck was going on.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes, they must have.

Gail Montgomery:

And we had more fun. And they have a trial that's coming up in a couple of weeks that they were really, I guess, focused on, and it was difficult to get them present.

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah, especially the partners who were managing this particular case. And so we took it upon ourselves as a solid mission. We got to not look stressed. We've got to do this. We've got to say yes, and... to every single thing we're experiencing right now. And we did it. We did it, Lyn.

Lyn Wineman:

I love it.

Gail Montgomery:

And celebrated with a beautiful, fabulous lunch.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes. We did. We had a good lunch.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, good for you. That sounds fantastic. Fantastic. So are there any misconceptions about the work that you do that you would like to straighten out while we're talking here?

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah. One of the things I'd like to say is, the misconception about what we do is that it's scary. I think even you, Lyn, at the top of this, is like, "Oh, I don't do that. That's scary." And what we would say, again, back to the top of our conversation, "You're doing it every day. You are already improv. You're already there. It's just a process of getting that part of your brain that's saying no, that's scared of failure, out of the way that you can then be performant. You can then get into doing something that's really special."

Gail Montgomery:

In fact, I would say that is where the people who say out loud, "I'm scared," who have their arms crossed at the beginning, who are engineer minds, operations minds, IT minds-

Bruce Montgomery:

Psychiatrists.

Gail Montgomery:

... psychiatrists.

Bruce Montgomery:

We did a room full of psychiatrists.

Gail Montgomery:

They are the ones that have the largest growth because... And they'll come to us after and say, "I'm going to tell you, I almost left." Or, "I almost had to go to the bathroom. I almost... I just was... I didn't want to do it." And they will tell us at the end. In fact, one of the people at the law firm said, when we asked for, "What was your aha for today?" said, "It wasn't as scary as I thought it was going to be." And we practice an exercise that's basically called got your back, and it immediately, I think, connects everyone in a way and brings down that temperature in the room in terms of anxiety so that everyone feels like we're in it together. No one's filming. This isn't going on the evening news, and we're all in it together.

Bruce Montgomery:

Well, and one of the things that we stress is, this is fun. People are better connected when they're laughing. Laughter is so unique to the human condition. It is something-

Gail Montgomery:

Contagious.

Bruce Montgomery:

... that we do and is contagious. It's a phenomenal thing. So if you can laugh together, you can move mountains. You just got to remember to laugh. And it's that constant reminder of, "Okay, guys, no matter what we're going to do today, we're going to laugh a whole bunch."

Lyn Wineman:

I love that. Honestly, as a business owner, I love it when I hear laughter in the office because I know then that the energy is flowing, that people are connecting. I love hearing laughter in the office. But going back one more time to talk about things that are scary, I'm going to tell you guys a secret. My greatest fear is singing in public. And you do this thing called dashboard improv.

Bruce Montgomery:

We do.

Gail Montgomery:

Yes.

Lyn Wineman:

Can you tell us about dashboard improv? And I'm just going to say to everyone, they should follow you on LinkedIn so that they can experience dashboard improv. We'll put the links in the show notes.

Bruce Montgomery:

Awesome.

Gail Montgomery:

Oh, my gosh. Oh, gosh. Well first of all, thank you for bringing that up. We love it. We love it. I was really reticent to... This is what's crazy. Singing is actually my superpower.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow.

Gail Montgomery:

You wouldn't know it. You wouldn't know it from the dashboard improv.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, yes, though. You're so comfortable with it.

Bruce Montgomery:

Look. Gail has a gift. I worked really hard for my voice. I took lessons and stuff. Gail came out of the blue-

Gail Montgomery:

Yes, yes.

Bruce Montgomery:

... being able to sing like she does.

Gail Montgomery:

At any rate, you wouldn't know it by dashboard improv. I was reticent to do it. Bruce said, "You know, Gail, I really want to show people that improv happens all the time."

Lyn Wineman:

In your car, driving in the store.

Gail Montgomery:

... in your car. And there's one of them, I don't know if you've seen it where... We're not always singing along with the radio. Sometimes we're making a comment about someone who cuts us off on the road or about a car we see, or about somebody's hubcaps, whatever it is. And that's what we do in the car all the time. This is how Bruce and I are in the car. And he said, "We just need to throw something on the dashboard, and we'll just record each time we're in the car, and we'll probably find some gems in there." I mean...

Bruce Montgomery:

Yeah. It's funny, this came out of... Last November, I had a dream about dashboard improv, and I've been thinking about it. So then I did some experiments and I was like, "Well, it's a little more difficult. I'd have to learn." And then I kept pressing myself. I think this is really fun for us because it's us being us, and let's just put it out there, right? Let's just do it. It's amazing how many clients have come to us.

Gail Montgomery:

Oh, my gosh.

Bruce Montgomery:

Even new clients, like, "Well, hey, can we tell you a little bit about ourselves in the..." No, no, no, no. "We've watched all your dashboard--"

Gail Montgomery:

"We know who you are."

Bruce Montgomery:

"Yeah, we've watched it all. We know who you are."

Gail Montgomery:

We were so surprised by that. It doesn't show up on YouTube unless you're logged in, and so we don't always know how many views there are. And then, yeah, I mean, that's been the most surprising thing. So it's fun. And you know what, Lyn? You have a personal invitation--

Bruce Montgomery:

To come sit at the back of our car.

Gail Montgomery:

You don't even have to think. You can just make comments or facial expressions and we'll put little bubbles above your head to pretend we know what you're thinking.

Lyn Wineman:

I think sweat is breaking out on my forehead.

Bruce Montgomery:

Today is a good example. Today's was a Gloria Gaynor sign.

Gail Montgomery:

Hey, "I Will Survive."

Bruce Montgomery:

"I Will Survive." And most of it is us just riffing off each other. It's not even singing the song.

Gail Montgomery:

We're taping. We're talking a lot of the time. We're going back in time and talking about our 1970s selves. That's how old we are, people.

Bruce Montgomery:

Exactly.

Gail Montgomery:

We are old.

Bruce Montgomery:

That's not pretty.

Lyn Wineman:

I remember my 1970s self, so...

Gail Montgomery:

Yay.

Lyn Wineman:

Well, you two are so inspiring that I have been really looking forward to asking you this next question because everybody who listens knows this is my favorite question because I love positivity. I love to be inspired. I feel so lucky to get to talk to people like you on the podcast.

Gail Montgomery:

Aww.

Lyn Wineman:

I do. I sincerely do. I want a Gail Montgomery and then a Bruce Montgomery quote for our listeners.

Bruce Montgomery:

I've got one.

Gail Montgomery:

You do? Is it different than you think the one I'm going to-

Bruce Montgomery:

I'm positive it's different than the one that you-

Lyn Wineman:

Okay. Because the one that goes first might get to steal the other one's quote. It's just part of the game.

Gail Montgomery:

Yor know what? I'm going to say, and we know our number one rule with the improv mindset is yes, and... My dear, dear friend Cristina Amigoni, who you know as well-

Lyn Wineman:

And she was on the podcast, she and Alex.

Gail Montgomery:

I know.

Lyn Wineman:

So much fun from Siamo.

Gail Montgomery:

I love those guys from Siamo. I love them. And they just had Kelly Ollendorff join, which is awesome.

Lyn Wineman:

Yes.

Gail Montgomery:

Cristina gave me this block that I keep very close to me, and it says, "Start with yes." And I keep it close to me all the time as a great reminder about how I want to welcome the day, is to start with yes. Because if we can start with yes, anything's possible.

Lyn Wineman:

So good.

Gail Montgomery:

Thanks, Lyn. Thanks.

Bruce Montgomery:

I love it. I love it.

Lyn Wineman:

Bruce, you got to live up. That's a good one to live up to.

Bruce Montgomery:

So, to go back to fun and laughter, I think this is the frame of mind that I try to come at. There are times to be serious and let's be honest, there are a lot of times to be serious.

Gail Montgomery:

We got plenty of those.

Bruce Montgomery:

And there are plenty of them. So my argument would be, if you're not laughing, it's not worth it. You've really got to bring that whole laughter mindset, that improv mindset to how you live, how you breathe, and how you think.

Gail Montgomery:

I love that, Bruce. I love that.

Bruce Montgomery:

Laughing, laughing, laughing.

Lyn Wineman:

That is so good. If you're not, start with yes. And if you're not laughing, it's not worth it. You guys. You guys.

Gail Montgomery:

Look how profound we sound.

Bruce Montgomery:

That's deep. Wow. That's deep.

Gail Montgomery:

It's so profound.

Lyn Wineman:

Very deep. Very deep. So, for everyone who is now so impressed with those amazing quotes, how can they find out more about you?

Gail Montgomery:

Well, you can find us on LinkedIn, Gail Montgomery and Bruce Montgomery, for sure. And we have an ExperienceYes page, although I must admit I'm not as up-to-date on that as I want to be. You can visit our website at experienceyes.com.

Bruce Montgomery:

You can go to our YouTube channel, ExperienceYes YouTube channel, which has all of the dashboard improv videos if you're interested in that, and along with some other stuff like trailers and teasers and-

Lyn Wineman:

Nice.

Bruce Montgomery:

... and copies of our stuff from our last book.

Gail Montgomery:

And you can reach out to us by email, too. We're open to that. Gail@experienceyes.com and Bruce@experienceyes.com. It looks like Experience Eyes.

Bruce Montgomery:

Yes, it does.

Lyn Wineman:

For everyone who's listening, we'll get all of those links on the KidGlov website in the show notes as well so people can connect with you. All right, Gail and Bruce, such a fun conversation. As we wrap up today, I'd love for each of you to tell me, what is the most important thing you'd like our listeners to know about the work that you're doing?

Gail Montgomery:

For me, I would say there is not nearly enough investment, financially, timewise and emotionally in developing our teams and our leaders in our companies. And I would like people to start focusing more on that, recognizing that the by-product will be all of the things that make businesses wonderful.

Lyn Wineman:

Bruce?

Bruce Montgomery:

Well, I have a challenge.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, a challenge.

Bruce Montgomery:

I'll give them an exercise that they can do that I think is really, really critical.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, I'm getting nervous again.

Gail Montgomery:

Don't be nervous, it's not singing.

Bruce Montgomery:

No, it's good.

Gail Montgomery:

It's not singing, Lyn. It's not singing.

Bruce Montgomery:

I'll use you as the example, Lyn, and this is true.

Lyn Wineman:

Okay.

Bruce Montgomery:

So this is not just you, but everybody. You are exceptional at saying no. Your brain based on that DLPFC, is gifted at saying no. And you say no in a variety of ways. You might say, "Yes, but," or "however," or "still..."

Gail Montgomery:

But is the big one.

Bruce Montgomery:

But is the big one. But, yes. But, I don't think we can do it because of this, rather than, yes, and... Right? Coming back to that yes, and... mantra. So my challenge to you today would be to take a week and count every single time you say the word "no." And it might be, "no," "still," "however," but however you say "no."

Lyn Wineman:

Maybe.

Bruce Montgomery:

Count it for a week. Just do it day by day by day. How many times did I say the word "no"? And then, next week, try to reduce that number by 10%.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, wow.

Bruce Montgomery:

Just see what happens. It will-

Gail Montgomery:

Yeah. Find an accountability partner, Lyn, to help you count, too, and call you out.

Lyn Wineman:

Such a great idea.

Bruce Montgomery:

It will dramatically change your life. It will dramatically change how you operate in your business. It'll change everything.

Gail Montgomery:

The first listener who sends us the correct number of times I said but, and Bruce said but in this entire podcast-

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, wow.

Gail Montgomery:

... because I heard us say it.

Bruce Montgomery:

We still do it.

Gail Montgomery:

Will get a free copy of both the improv mindset and our new book "CHANGE! A Leader's Guide to Fixing Sh*t."

Lyn Wineman:

Ooh. Super smart.

Gail Montgomery:

The first person who correctly gets in touch with us and sends us those numbers. I like it.

Bruce Montgomery:

Love it.

Lyn Wineman:

And you know what? Here is a secret. The whole transcript is going to be on the website so you can count.

Bruce Montgomery:

All right.

Gail Montgomery:

They still have to go through the transcript.

Lyn Wineman:

They still have to go through the transcript. Okay. So, my takeaway-

Lyn Wineman:

My takeaway from this is more ands, less butts.

Gail Montgomery:

Yes. Less butts. I think we can all agree we'd like less butts.

Lyn Wineman:

Less butts. Oh, this has been... Obviously this has been worth it because there has been much laughter, so-

Gail Montgomery:

Yay.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. Gail and Bruce, what a fun time together. I fully believe the world needs more people like you. So thank you so much for taking time. Yeah.

Bruce Montgomery:

Back at you.

Gail Montgomery:

Right back at you, Lyn. We appreciate the interest and the care that you take to find out about who we are and what we're doing. And I'm very, very thankful. Filled with gratitude.

Bruce Montgomery:

Thank you for having us.

Lyn Wineman:

Ah, thank you both.

Announcer:

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities, or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from, visit KidGlov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch. As always, if you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe, and share. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.