Greg Koch's Improvisation Manifesto

12 Keys to Break the Repetition Curse and Unleash Endless Improvisational Mischief

July 12th Masterclass Take Home PDF

1. Let What You Just Played Dictate What Comes Next

Whatever unholy noise you're about to unleash should relate to the unholy noise you just unleashed.

2. Don't Play More Than 3-4 Notes Without Some 'Guitarry' Sauce

Slides, bends, vibrato, slurs, squeals–if more than a few notes go by with no articulation, you're typing
instead of preaching the Gospel of Gristle.

3. Speed Is an Exclamation Point, Not the Entire Language

Shredding is delightful, but it's a condiment, not the entrée. Deploy speed like a shout at the end of a
sentence, not as the whole conversation.

4. If You Think You're Leaving Space, Leave More

Your perception of space is a filthy liar. Wait longer. Awkwardly longer. Then it becomes musical.

5. Attitude and Tone > Speed and Note Count

Given the choice between playing a thousand notes or one note dripping with swagger and tonal
righteousness–go with swagger. People remember attitude, not spreadsheets.

6. People's Opinions Are Worth Exactly What You Paid for Them

You paid nothing? That's what they're worth. Carry on, pilgrim.

7. Want to Play Over Changes? Memorize the Chords and the Melody

No mystical shortcuts. Know the tune deeply -chords, melody-then improvise like you know where
the bodies are buried.

8. Licks Are Words

Use Them in Sentences, Not as a Stutter

A good lick is like a spicy adjective. Sprinkle it in when appropriate. Repeat the same one 40 times and
even your dog will critique you.

9. If You Feel Tension Creeping In. Relax

Both hands should exert force only when needed. If you're clenching like you're opening a stubborn
pickle jar, your tone will revolt. Relaxation breeds fluidity.

10. Dynamics Are King

Your Volume Knob Exists for a Reason
Your guitar should whisper, bark, roar, and testify. Use your hands and volume knob before reaching
for more pedals. Gain is dessert, not breakfast.

11. Tone Is 95% Hands and Attitude

If you don't like your tone, don't buy something–practice something. Your hands are the biggest tone
pedal you will ever own.

12. Vibrato, Bending, and Phrasing in Roots Music Are the Final
Boss

BB King vibrato, Roy Buchanan bends–this is the lifelong pursuit. Record yourself, judge without
mercy, tweak, repeat,