

Joel Zeff

National Speaker/Work Culture Expert/Author/Emcee/Humorist

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Comedians
- Emcees & Hosts
- Innovation & Creativity
- Leadership
- Navigating Change & Uncertainty
- Teambuilding & Collaboration

About Joel Zeff

Joel Zeff creates energy. He is a dynamic speaker, work culture expert, improvisational humorist, and author. His interactive performances invite members of the audience to participate in hilarious improvisational exercises that illustrate Joel's central message: That organizations and individuals should CELEBRATE their successes to increase collaboration, productivity, passion, and innovation.

Since 1997, Joel has inspired audiences from Wells Fargo to Samsung to KPMG and even the IRS. Yes, the IRS. Joel is a masterful keynote speaker and a nationally renowned motivator, humorist, and improvisational actor. His spontaneous humor and vital messages have thrilled audiences for more than 25 years, and he has shared his insight at more than 2,500 events.

His career is a search for fun and passion. He quickly realized the importance of both at his first jobs delivering the hometown newspaper and cleaning up trash at a suburban movie theater.

He started his professional career as a newspaper journalist and public relations executive. In 1994, Joel went out on his own as a corporate communications specialist. He helped clients with their internal communications, media relations, strategy, and customer marketing. Throughout the consulting process, Joel realized his clients -- many of them high level technology and telecommunications firms -- needed more than marketing and public relations strategy. Many of his clients' employees were starving for fun, passion, and a new perspective on finding success.

At the time, Joel was having fun on the weekends as a comedian. Through friends, he discovered improvisational comedy. One of his clients (a large technology company) knew Joel performed comedy on the weekends. The client invited him to entertain and speak to a group of executives before dinner. A corporate speaking career was born.

He connects to his audience with humor that has them laughing so uncontrollably that their mascara runs, their cheeks hurt, and their bellies ache. And he does not do it alone. Volunteers from the audience join him on stage and play an integral role in an improvisation game in front of hundreds or thousands of people -- something the audience members have never done. He expects nothing less than success. He expects the volunteers to focus and work together as a team; communicate effectively; positively support each other; and take responsibility.

Joel makes his audience laugh so hard that they forget about the corporate nonsense of conference calls, "strategic deliverables," PowerPoint presentations with upside triangles, or "paradigm shifts in a cross-functional organization." Joel will make you laugh, and he will make you think. His keynotes deliver a combination of inspiration, essential business knowledge, and significant ideas to help audience members reconnect with their own passion and success.

As discussed in his book, "Make the Right Choice", Joel believes that we all encounter choices in our careers. We always can have the opportunity to make the right choice to live a more creative, passionate, and productive life. How do you "make the right choice?" You can choose to provide opportunity. You can choose to provide positive support. And along the way, you can choose to have fun.

He has appeared on CNBC and featured in The Dallas Morning News, The Houston Chronicle, The Kansas City Star, and many other media outlets.

Select Keynotes

- **The TA DA of Teamwork: Succeeding During Change and Disruption**



We are all improvising. We face challenges, disruption, change, and obstacles without a script or rehearsal. To find success, we need to work together, build trust, and create opportunity. During this session, Joel will discuss how the tenets of improvisation create successful teams during change and disruption. Joel has spent the past 30 years performing and teaching the lessons of improvisation. This interactive, engaging and hilarious session will focus on staying in the game; facing fear; building trust, and asking the important question, "How do I help the people around me be successful?" Joel will also bring his famous TA DA energy as he discusses the importance of opportunity, positive support, and active listening in collaboration. Yes, you will have fun and laugh during this session. You will also learn how to collaborate more successfully as a team, and navigate change. Are you ready for the TA DA?

This session will focus on:

1. Creating opportunity and positive support for your team.
2. Making the choice to "be in the moment."
3. How to Stay in the Game when faced with challenges, change and disruption.
4. Thrive during change by making the choice to be prepared and open and flexible.
5. Fueling your passion and reducing stress.

- **The Spirit of TA DA: Watch What Happens When Work Becomes Play**

How do your employees and managers *embrace the Spirit of TA DA*? We all must take ownership of our work environment and create a foundation of opportunity and positive support. We can choose to be patient, supportive, and more flexible to change. We can choose to have fun in the workplace and still be productive. Joel teaches us just how easy it is to make these choices.

In The Spirit of TA DA, Joel shares his experience and insight on creativity, communication, teamwork, passion, and fun. With wit, a sharp observational eye, and playful irreverence, he discusses the choices we all encounter in our careers. We each have the ability to take initiative and make the right choice to live a more creative, passionate, effective, and productive life.

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Joel makes his audience laugh so hard that they forget about the corporate nonsense of conference calls, "strategic deliverables," PowerPoint presentations with upside-down triangles, or "paradigm shifts in a cross-functional organization." Yes, Joel will make you laugh, but he'll also make you think. This presentation delivers a combination of inspiration, essential business knowledge, and significant ideas to help audience members reconnect with their own passion, creativity, and success.

Seven Lessons Learned:

1. Learn to celebrate work and create a positive environment.
2. Learn to improve teamwork and help all partners find success.
3. Learn the three keys to leading change: be prepared; be focused; be open and flexible.
4. Learn the key to success: staying in the game and keeping your passion.
5. Learn to promote ownership and accountability.
6. Learn to encourage innovation by creating opportunity.
7. Learn to enhance communication.

- **The TA DA of Change: Leading Teams during Change with Passion and Success**

Change and disruption are constant. Your teams must navigate the chaos and disruption to find success. Too often, we become stressed, frustrated and impatient. Improvisation is finding success during that constant change, chaos and disruption. How do managers continue to motivate and energize employees during difficult times? Managers must help employees stay in the game; work in the moment; and take ownership of their happiness.

Joel leads the audience through a series of exercises that demonstrates how easy it is to continue working creatively, effectively and productively while dealing with change. Improvisation teaches us to embrace change. Joel will focus on the key choices that improvisation teaches us: be prepared for change; be open and flexible to change; be present and in the moment with change.

In improvisation, there is no script, no plan and no rehearsal. Joel focuses on the famous TA DA spirit of creating positive support and opportunity during change. Just as important, managers must allow employees to create ownership. Ownership and responsibility will allow the employee to care. And once the employee starts to care, the next step is passion.

Change happens. We can either be open and flexible to it or let it steamroll us. Most change is completely out of our control. We only control how we react to change. We choose our attitude. We choose to stay in the game. We chose to be positive and supportive.

The session will focus on:

1. Embracing change and finding success.
2. Creating opportunity to lead change.
3. Being open and flexible to change; being prepared for change; being in the moment during change.
4. Making the right choices to be an effective leader during change
5. Asking the most important question of a leader: How do I help the people around me be successful?

- **THE SPIRIT OF TA-DA: A Virtual Experience of Fun, Energy, and Passion**

Sometimes we just need to laugh, recharge and refuel. Joel's session will bring the energy and fun. And hopefully, he will make you laugh.

Joel is a national speaker, author, workplace expert, emcee, humorist and improvisational comedian. He has presented more than 2,000 keynotes to companies, organizations and associations. Thousands of audience members have joined him on stage to improvise, create and collaborate. The volunteers faced their fear, dealt with change, and found success.

During this virtual program, he will share the secrets that improvisation has taught him. We will explore dealing with change; facing your fears; creating opportunity and positive support for your team; staying in the game; being in the moment; and successful collaboration.

He focuses on the simple choices to increase passion, reduce stress, and overcome the challenges of change.

He also just wants you to laugh. Yes, we are virtual. We still need to laugh, connect, and have fun with our peers, friends and colleagues. Joel promises this will probably be the greatest virtual event you have ever attended or the most recent.

- **EVENT EMCEE OR ENTERTAINER (COMEDIAN)**

Joel uses a unique blend of improvisational and traditional comedy for his event entertainment. His comedy is clean, relevant, interactive, and suitable for any corporate audience. Joel uses the same dynamic energy and audience interaction for his entertainment performances as for his keynotes. Joel can also customize his presentation to include custom themes, key ideas, or specific products and personnel. His entertainment is ideal as a quick energy burst in between conference sessions, or after dinner to reinforce the key messages of the day.

Not just an emcee, but a KEYNOTE EMCEE.

Joel also uses his humor, improvisation skills, and entertaining games as an emcee for award programs and general sessions.

As an emcee, Joel creates energy and fun with his humor, wit, and audience engagement. Joel connects with the audience and sets the tone for the event. He partners with his clients to create awesome events.

One option is including his interactive improvisation games and messages as part of the emcee package. Think of it as splitting up a powerful keynote into small modules spread out during the event. Some of the modules can be short (5 minutes) or a little longer (10+ minutes). Each module includes some short message, but nothing too extensive.

Joel brings a different perspective on the emcee experience. Using his messages and improvisation exercises, he delivers more in the same amount of time. As the emcee, Joel engages, entertains, motivates, inspires and delivers powerful messages. Yes, he does all of the typical emcee duties. He does more. Joel has the ability to add message, engage the audience with interactive experience. He partners with the client and use his meeting expertise (2,500+ events) to create a memorable event.

For awards presentations, there are two goals: recognize and reward the award recipients and entertain/motivate the rest of the audience. During award programs, his humor comes from the moment, audience, surroundings, and everything that is happening. Joel customizes each emcee award experience with the client to create a fun, energetic and memorable event.

Select Book Titles

- **2024:** Make the Right Choice: Lead with Passion, Elevate your Team, and Unleash the Fun at Work

Select Articles

- [The Master of TA DA](#)

Global Leaders Today wrote a profile about my speaking career.

- [General Outline of my Messages/Presentations](#)

This is a general outline of my messages.

- [Seven tips to encourage more fun and passion at work](#)

Seven tips to encourage more fun and passion at work.

- [Six Sprinkles on the Leadership Cupcake](#)

Six sprinkles on the leadership cupcake.

Select Testimonials

"The meeting was a great success!!! Joel was a major hit! Below are a few comments that I have received thus far via e-mail: 'You've done it once again!! Joel was hilarious. But, more than anything he provided practical application to help me become a stronger leader with my team. I LOVED learning about creative ways to engage my team, taking advantage of opportunities and providing positive support to my employees to show they are heard and valued. I will also be using the communication improv and 'Mr.-Know-It-All' during my next team meeting. Keep listening and demonstrating you hear us by doing all you can to provide the tools necessary for us to be stronger and more effective leaders. Thank you!' '...I want to thank you for your recommendation for the speaker. I really enjoyed laughing and tcoming out of our comfort zone together while also getting a good message from Joel. He was the perfect combination of comedy, motivation and inspiration. Thanks for all you did to maketoday successful.' 'I have received numerous more comments verbally, but everyone had a wonderful time and was able to walk away with a message and ideas for their own teams.'"

— *AFLAC*

"Thank you for captivating our Corporate Relations team during your engaging performance and discussion at our department kickoff meeting. You created a memorable event. I will never forget seeing my colleague, Sari, imitate a ballerina and a kangaroo! Your messages of passion, energy and teamwork struck a chord with our department. These lessons will be helpful to our company as we focus on reinventing protection and retirement for the consumer. Your improvisation games highlighted that we as a department need to take risks, deal with change, and positively support each other as we face our corporate challenges. Again, thank you so much for your wonderful presentation."

— *Allstate Insurance*

I have never seen such a positive response from any meeting. Actually, I'm now advertising for you with my recap of the event. There has been some fallout, however. Now everyone leaving our bathrooms are yelling "TA DA" in celebration. We've posted a hand washing expert outside to make sure that the celebration is actually warranted. And today in a presentation to a group which was composed of many outsiders, I used both the TA DA and "bunny, bunny, bunny". Our team members were amused; the other team members, bemused. Thanks for the energy and the lift. I look forward to the LDI. Thanks, David Thank you for making our LDI such a success. We will remember you for future jobs. I did receive your articles, and we have posted them on the LDI intranet site. Your part of our program was rated a 4.9 out of 5 score on the evals -- this is the highest score anyone received. 172 people wrote "Joel Zeff" as the answer to the question on the eval that asked, "What did you like best about this LDI?" You exceeded our expectations, Joel! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

— *Baylor Health Care System*

Your keynote session was exceptionally relevant to the central themes of our meeting, and you managed to energize our participants around these topics through your dynamic delivery. Thank you for a fantastic session that sent our attendees back into their workplaces with fresh perspective and renewed passion.

— *Capital One Bank*

TA DA - you rocked it! Your "top 2" score was the highest (at 98%) and matched only by Jackie's. (Frankly, between us, I'd discount hers. It's my experience that employees always give the boss-man or boss-lady really high scores!!)

— *Cigna*

I wanted to let you know that the feedback from everyone was overwhelmingly positive. I would say that in my 20 year sales career it was

perhaps the most enjoyable (and appropriate) presentation I've been a part of in a sales meeting. Your competition for that top spot is John Cleese, so you're in very good company.

– *Convergys*

Thanks again for a fabulous performance. Thought you'd like to see one of the many positive comments we received. Hans was one of the suit volunteers. "The guy last night was one of the most entertaining I ever recall from a national sales meeting. Russell said his tear-ducts had no tears left. He was hilarious."

– *Fujitsu*

Thank you so much for joining us this year. You were quite a hit and you certainly added the fun and energy we were looking for. Thank you so much.

– *Kaiser Permanente*

Congratulations again for your success in delivering an impactful message in a memorable and entertaining way. You and your message were a hit with the Restaurant Managers, Regional Trainers and Consultants and USTL&D Leadership. Once we have our debrief meeting, I am hoping to find out if McDonald's has a database for highly recommended presenters and vendors. If it does, we will be sure to add your name and contact information to it along with the positive feedback that we have received. Thank you again for your professionalism, wisdom and humor.

– *McDonald's Corporation*

I just wanted to send you a huge THANK YOU!!!! Thank you for coming to NJ and making all of the associates in Medical Services laugh, relax, bond and communicate with your interactive games and improvisational humor. We saw talent that we never knew existed in many of our colleagues!!! Even microphone issues and fire alarm strobe lights could not affect the enthusiasm and energy that you produced with the group. Your presentation was truly wonderful. We have been getting so much positive feedback about the event, I just felt compelled to pass on the appreciation. Thank you again for an outstanding event.

– *Novartis Pharmaceutical*

I would definitely give Joel 5's across the board! He was just hilarious and I don't think that I have laughed that hard in a long time! I spoke with him about the possibility of working with our company again for a different group. I will keep you posted as I believe he would be just perfect! Also, just a delight to work with!!!

– *Securian*

Thank you so much for a great presentation and memorable close for the conference. You exceeded all of my expectations! And, the feedback that I received from attendees was outstanding. Finally, you can be certain that we will look for ways that we may be able to use you in the future for other company meetings/ events. Again, thank you!

– *SunGard Higher Education (Users Group)*

I am so pleased we were able to have you present to our sales team. I am hearing nothing but rave reviews from the attendees and you received the top scores on our post meeting survey. You not only entertained the audience but you provided an incredibly powerful and useful message that resonated with our sales team and successfully incorporated the themes of our meeting.

– *Wells Fargo*