



“Most crowd work boils down to juxtaposing two dissimilar ideas. It’s a workout in incongruity. Master that and you master crowdwork.”

Crowd Work Part 2: Connecting with Your Audience

CROWD WORK: PART 2

Connecting with Your Audience



What You’ll Learn in This Course

In this course you’re going to learn why crowd work is so exciting. What works what doesn’t and how you can better prepare yourself for this exciting part of your stand up craft.



Why You Should Do Crowd Work

Most people are bad at crowd work. It just starts out that way, when you first start doing it you're probably going to suck at it. It's nerve wracking, but with practice you learn how to do it.

That's what they tell you at least, but having a few insights as to how most crowd work actually works will give you a leg up and help you to prepare for it.

Benefits of Doing Crowd Work:

- Builds Community (Makes the audience feel like they are part of the show and makes them feel special)
- Adds Tension Excitement, Energy, Spontaneity
- Makes it personal
- Crowd Work is a new way of Building a Viral Audience
 - The unpredictability of doing comedy "without a net" makes people want to watch.
 - This could be exciting
 - This could be a train wreck
 - Schadenfreude
 - Vulnerability

Disadvantages of Doing Crowd Work:

The audience develops an expectation that that's your show.
You could epicly fail
It could turn sour fast.

2 Main Categories of Crowd Work

1. Planned Crowd Work



- a. Where you have planned jokes and you set up an audience member to be a part of the gag.
 - b. You move your written material forward by engaging the audience to make the audience feel like it's spontaneous. Also to create community with the audience.
2. Spontaneous Crowd Work

5 Most Common Types of Crowd Work

1. Riffing
2. Engagement
3. Q & A
4. Surveys
5. Audience Participation

Hannah Berner: “I actually thought that crowd work was this magical thing that only a couple comics did and I never thought I was wild enough to do it,”
Now crowd work makes up about 50 percent of Berner’s act.

Hannah Berner Viral Crowdwork Moments

Let’s watch a little Hannah Berner, then deconstruct what she’s doing.

Here’s a link to Hannah Berner’s Bit with the transcript. When you study the crowd work make sure you stop and analyze the mechanics of the writing. Just watching is one thing, but watching, deconstructing and learning to apply it to your own persona is the key to making it part of your skill set.

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Andrew Schulz

📺 **NEW! Top 14 Crowd Work Moments Of The Year (2021 BES...**

Crowd Work is as Simple as Having a Conversation

Don't pre-think your answer, but here are somethings to look for in the moment:

1. Irony
2. Opposites
3. Incongruity
4. Visual Jokes

1. **Irony:** Irony comes up often when you're doing crowd work. But you have to be aware and open to it.

I had a guy in the audience once who said he worked in politics. I said, "What kind of experience do you have to have in order to work in politics?"

He said, "I dunno. I got out of jail and they gave me that job."

So you're a convicted felon.

You were at the interview and they were like, "You've got just the qualifications we're looking for... You could even be the candidate."

2. **Opposites:** Sometimes people look like they fit a certain category of person and they might say they have a job that is completely opposite from their image.

"I just finished a recital."

"What did you sing?"

"Over the Rainbow"

What opposite could that present that is risque or shocking?



3. **Incongruity:** Sometimes the audience will give you the two dissimilar ideas in advance. Basically pitching you a meatball to hit out of the park.

How did you meet?

We met at a Bakery...

4. **Visual Jokes:** That's when you can use something that looks interesting in the audience. Either a person looks (age, weight, body parts, jewelry, painted nails, etc.) to create a site-gag. The key with this type of humor is to keep it playfully positive.

Man who looks rugged.

"I'm a lawyer."

"Wow, really? That is the last thing I would've guessed."

You look like a lumberjack. You look like you should be clear-cutting trees in an Oregon Forest... Saving the planet by removing the very thing that turns Carbon Dioxide into Oxygen." Thank you for what you do sir."

A woman who's wearing a large wedding ring or beautiful jewelry.

I work as a financial advisor for Wells Fargo...



Enjoy the Party

Don't be afraid to laugh if someone in the audience says something funny. Enjoy the party.

Remember: The audience is in whatever state the performer is in.

If someone says something that is funny and you pretend it isn't funny, then the audience is going to think you're a jerk and they could start to turn sour on you.

You Don't Have to Be the Star

Sometimes the audience says something that is such a coincidence that you just have to accept that you're not going to top it. You can allow the audience to thrive in those moments, you don't always have to be the star.

It's okay to say, "I have nothing to say to that."

Every comedian should have a little bit of crowd work experience under their belt.

How to Get Good at Crowd Work

1. Write a lot of jokes.
2. Watch People Do Crowd Work
 - a. An audience with Joan Rivers
 - b. Jimmy Carr
 - c. Joe List
 - d. Matt Rife
 - e. Hannah Berner
 - f. Ian Bagg
 - g. Marc Maron
 - h. Dave Atell
 - i. Sam Morill
 - j. Stavros Halkias



3. Practice Listening in your crowd work. Often the material writes itself.
4. Listen for the coincidences and irony.
5. Ask more questions. Allow yourself to let the story build itself.
6. You're funny. They're not.
7. Go and watch some improv shows.
8. Join an Improv Class to get better and working on being fast on your feet.

Cliche Reformations

Taking a Concept and Breaking it down further

C: You guys are married?

A: For now!

Buy time: I love a savage girl.

Inner Monologue or Subtext - Break it down to it's simple truth and say and create dialogue to mimic what she might actually say, given the comedic circumstances based on simple truth.

C: We have kids, a house, a mortgage, but I'll leave his ass I don't fucking care.

Using Incongruity

Incongruity is where two dissimilar ideas are converging. Once that happens you can use your skill set with incongruity to come up with material.

Eventually during a conversation someone is going to include two or more ideas that are converging.

We met at a funeral.

Story: This couple married for 12 years met at a funeral.

Two ideas? Relationship (Sex, Marriage, Dating)

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS, WORDS, PHRASES, CLICHES, EVENTS



RELATIONSHIP / SEX / MARRIAGE	FUNERAL
Horny	Last rights
Dating	Coffin
Hook up	Wake
Netflix and Chill (Funeral and Chill)	How did he die
Positions (What's the funeral position)	Ashes to Ashes, dust to dust
Dating, First Date, Flirting	Cremated
Flirting at a Funeral	Mausoleum
Kissing	Open Casket
First Kiss. Did the first kiss come after the last rights?	Food
Sex positions	Cemetery
Doggy style	Memorial service
Missionary	Tombstone
What would be the position you would use if you met at a funeral? (depends if the deceased was buried or cremated)	Did you know the deceased
Good night kiss	What do you want them to say about you at your funeral
Saying goodbye	Sign the guest book
Hugging	Condolences
Caressing	Rest in Peace
Fondling	RIP



First base, second base, third base	Final Farewell
Get her top off	Body's getting cold
Get into his/her pants	Gone but not forgotten
Stiff	Time of Grieving
Erection	Closure (Open)
Laying down	They're in a better place now
Spooning	They're at peace
Cuddling	Time heals all wounds
Dirty Talk	It's part of God's plan
What's the pick up line?	They're watching over us
How do you seduce someone at a funeral	They'll always be in our hearts
Get them into bed	Everything happens for a reason
Foreplay	Funeral service
Intercourse	Cadaver
Top	Mortician
Bottom	Funeral Director
Go deep	Dead and buried
Thrust	Six feet under
In and out	Stiff
Fornicate	Corpse
Let's get naughty	"He touched so many lives in so many ways."



One-night stand	"I'm here to support you in any way I can"
STD	Flirting at a funeral
	"Remember the first 3 letters of Funeral are F-U-N"
	Rigor Mortis

Ask more questions: Then Mimic or Imitate their thoughts with an act out.

Did you guys take your time or were you like, "Let's fuck before the body gets cold."
"Hey remember the first 3 letters of funeral spell FUN"

Exercise

Write 1-3 Pick up lines someone might use at a funeral.

Use a Story Swap or Pivot

A common question with couples is where did you guys meet?
After they answer you can pivot to a story about a unique situation.

I met a couple that met at a funeral.

Did you know in a recent poll, funerals were the 5th most popular place to hook-up?

It's like "Please feel me up because I don't want to feel this anymore."

Or it's like "Let's hook-up because after being around death I just want to feel alive."



What are the common interactions that occur in most crowd work?

Are you guys dating?

How long have you two been together?

What do you do for a living?

How many people have been to a comedy club before?

Do you have kids?

How long have you been dating?

Who's Celebrating Something?

Most Common Things People Celebrate

- Birthdays
- Getting Married
- Graduation from School
- Getting an Advanced Degree
- Retiring
- Anniversaries
- Promotions (Career advancement)
- Holidays
- Birth of a Child
- Divorce
 - Divorced a husband or wife that was a doctor
 - That was a Colonel in the Army
 - USPS
 - Divorce - Airline
- Retirement
- Buying a New Home
- Losing Weight
 - Weight Watchers
 - Fasting
 - Slimfast
 - Divorce
- Sober Anniversary



- Baby Showers
- Moving to a New City
- Sports Victories (Favorite Team Winning or Being on a Winning Team)
- Personal Milestones: Getting a Driver's License, Becoming a citizen
- Cultural or National Days
- Reunions

Take these subjects and write some jokes about each one. You can use those jokes for pivot jokes or pseudo crowd work.

Questions to Ask to Start to Get Started

1. "Where are you from?"
2. "What do you do for a living?"
3. "Are you celebrating anything tonight?"
4. "How did you two meet?"
5. "Any interesting hobbies or talents?"
6. "What's your favorite thing about [the city or venue]?"
7. "Got any embarrassing stories you're willing to share?"
8. "What's the most outrageous thing you've ever done?"
9. "What's the worst job you've ever had?"
10. "Tell me something about yourself that nobody would guess."
11. "Any strange phobias or irrational fears?"
12. "What's the craziest thing you've ever witnessed?"
13. "Do you have any pet peeves?"
14. "What's your guilty pleasure?"
15. "If you could have any superpower, what would it be?"
16. "What's the most ridiculous fashion trend you've ever followed?"
17. "What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?"
18. "Any memorable experiences from traveling?"
19. "What's the most embarrassing song on your playlist?"
20. "Have you ever been mistaken for someone famous?"
21. "What's the last thing you Googled?"
22. "Someone who looks like a celebrity"



2 Types of Pseudo Crowd Work

1. Talk about something that happened the night before and it feels to the audience like it's happening now.
2. When you have material you have used or plan on using and you find someone in the audience that fits into the scenario of the situation that you've already written about.