

## MILIEU

### RENAME THE SPACE

There is no point in limiting the stage to be merely a stage. Make it a circus; make it a billiard ball; make it the tip of a ballpoint pen. Just make it something other than a theater and something that opens the audience's hearts and minds a little more fully than when they entered through the door.

Elaine Stritch, in her recent Tony award-winning show *At Liberty*, was both literally and figuratively on stage because for most of her life she was on a stage. For my show, *Into the Belly*, I was on a cruise ship in the future. What metaphoric milieu coordinates with your previous M's – with your mission, your methods, your motive and your message?

Renaming the space will help the audience quickly suspend disbelief, and it will open the door for plenty of dramatic options. Once I renamed my space a cruise ship, I had something to say if someone left ("Man overboard!"); I had an obvious opportunity for audience participation (Russian safety drills); and I had additional stage business (wobbly walking due to the giant ocean waves).

In order to create a milieu, it helps to simultaneously create a mask – a world and a character within that world. Think about the previous M's, especially your **mission** and your **message**, and then experiment with different ways to match them to both a **mask** and a **milieu**. Think of all the various perspectives from which you can state your message and hence stake your claim.

MASK	MILIEU	OPENING LINE
Construction worker	Construction site where I'm building a _____, which is a metaphor for a _____.	"Watch your step!"