

In Your Face
The Process Of Becoming An Actor
Actors Workshop
F1104
Scene Study Workbook

1. The difference in film & stage/ Film is more instant! Stage allows for a maturing process that evolves from scene(s). Film is not scene-to-scene; it is moment to moment. The creative process between actors reflects what they bring to the moment. It must appear to be spontaneous and their actions or reactions must be natural. Stage is staged.

2. ACTING: DEFINITION/ THE STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE

Is communicating a story, true or false, through the personalities (characters) events, expressed through the emotions within the character and around the events within the story. Emotions resulting in new and or old emotions within the life of the character(s). ACTING IS ALWAYS IN THE PRESENT TENSE.

3. It starts with you. If you never believe in yourself, then how could anyone else? You must have confidence in which you are before you change into another character. Your new character must be an extended dramatization (extenuation) of reality (WHO YOU HAVE BECOME) DO YOU BELIEVE IN YOURSELF? WHY? WRITE IT DOWN

4. It starts with focusing. FOCUS/IS concentrating and becoming a part of actions and reactions that surround your character and learning to react NATURALLY the way your character would react to these events. Forget everything but the time and space occupied by you and your character. The only issues in life exist only in the moment of time

Your (YOU) character is on camera. (ALIVE)

5. Your character is an ATTITUDE. The DIRECTOR is there to direct it. However, you must allow events or persons within the story change your ATTITUDE and responses when responding to actions towards, with or against your character. DO YOU HAVE AN ATTITUDE? _____ WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR ATTITUDE? ATTITUDES COME FROM SOMEWHERE

6. Don't pretend to feel it & feel it! In order to feel it, you must in REALITY, EXPERIENCE IT. (WITHIN). WHAT ARE SOME EXPERIENCES YOU CAN BRING TO A CHARACTER? PAIN? WHEN? ANGER? WHEN?

7. Have a servant's heart. Servants LISTEN more, talk less. ARE YOU A LISTENER OR TALKER? _____

8. In rehearsals and on the set, be responsible for yourself and your character. No one else. In the story it may become the responsibility of your character to be responsible for other characters, but don't confuse the two. You are only in charge of one person (CHARACTER). YOU.

9. Two of your challenges are to BE NATURAL AND SPONTANEOUS. In order to be NATURAL in response to actions within the story, the actor must mentally experience the reality of responding to real emotions. In order for it to be SPONTANEOUS, don't mentally plan responses to emotional inputs.

10. Your tools for acting are VERBAL & PHYSICAL. (a) Verbal-Voice w/ words & or sounds. (b) Physical-Any movement w/body (face- hands-etc. AS THE CHARACTER CHANGES DURING THE JOURNEY (STORY) SO DOES THE USE OF VOICE (VERBALS) & APPEARANCES. DO YOU USE YOUR VOICE MORE TO EXPRESS FEELINGS, DO YOU USE BODY LANGUAGE OR BOTH? EXPLAIN.

11. The viewers (cameras) perception of any character is:
(1) Visual/ what do you look like? Clothes, hair, location.
(2) Sound/ what you say. Tone of voice, diction, accents, etc.

The final impression of a character is based on how the character responds to acts or actions with, for, or against the character. Keep in mind that viewer's interpretation has a lot to do with his or her own person (who they are). Everybody is turned on or off by different events and actions. No two actors will express any emotion the same way. BUT IT MUST BE THE EMOTION THE DIRECTOR WANTS HOWEVER YOU EXPRESS IT!

DISCUSS EXAMPLES OF HOW YOU'RE EXPRESS EMOTIONS.

12. There is only ONE POV. (POINT OF VIEW) The camera. It becomes EVERYBODY'S POV. However, you must forget it exist and rely only on your own POV (characters) within the scene.

13. The first thing we notice about a character is the EYES.

The EYES direct the viewers (cameras) attention to the action or the source of the action and events.

The second thing we look at is the MOUTH. The reason we look at the mouth second, is that we're waiting to hear what YOU (your character) has to say about anything.

The third is WARDROBE. If the shot is a long shot, we can't see the eyes, so the entire body appearance is considered FIRST.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK AT FIRST IN A PERSON (CHARACTER)?

14. Before you (actor/character) can justify reactions, there must first be action or evidence of having happened, which gives you a reason to react. An event that requires & affects your character. There are moments of emotional expression, which can support unknown story lines (THE PAST). You must also be conscious of expression and reaction resulting from thoughts, which are EMOTIONS as a result of previous events in the characters life. Response to any and all acts should be expressed MOMENT-TO-MOMENT. LEAVE YOUR PAST AT HOME.

ARE YOUR PRESENT DAY THOUGHTS AFFECTED BY WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE PAST? EXPLAIN.

15. YOUR CHARACTER: Understand the character that is now YOU.

The extent of your actions and reactions to people and events, are determined by a predetermined character analysis of the person you represent at that moment. Know your character, in order to react accordingly. It is important to know the difference responses and expression of emotions your character has and how YOU in response to actions or events. Discover the similarities and use the ones that work for your character.

TAKE A SCENE FROM YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE AND A CHARACTER THAT YOU THINK YOU COULD BECOME AND COMPARE SIMILARITIES OF YOURSELF AND THAT CHARACTER.

16. It is important to understand the character (s) you are interacting with because you're emotional response is based on your character's relationship with other characters. If your character does not know the other characters in the story, then your responses will be solely based on the validity of your character. (TRUSTWORTHY, ETC.)

17. Peoples (characters) personalities will not support a major story (script) in its entirety. In order for it to work, the character must be face with reacting to other people and events. The story line justifies your life (story). Characters can act independent of present danger, but cause and reason must eventually be revealed in the story line. (script) THERE MUST ALWAYS BE CONFLICT!

WHAT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE COULD SUPPORT IN A SMALL PART, A STORY (SCRIPT)? HAS YOUR LIFE BEEN A BORE?

18. The CHARACTERIZATION of a character is seen through the personality of the actor. Your way of expression. You must be aware of the freedom you have to determine the personality of your character. You and the DIRECTOR must be on the same page. When the character (role) you're playing is totally different than you are, your boundaries of knowledge and experience will determine the reality of your character. EVERYBODY CANNOT GO EVERYWHERE WITH DIFFERENT EMOTIONS OR CHARACTERS & EVEN THE BEST OF ACTORS HAVE

LIMITATIONS. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR OWN LIMITATIONS (EMOTIONALLY)?

19. The camera (viewer) will look to you to find what part you play in the events (action/story), and what contribution and involvement you have in the stories beginning and end. You are only one source (character) in expressing the INTERPRETATION of the story.

20. EMOTIONS; In order to express EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY, OR BEHAVIOR, you must first understand your own. You have to know what changes take place when you express your inner motions, both physically and verbally inside yourself and be able to compare any differences with your characters response. This will also help you personally to be able to express yourself more effectively in life.

YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION OF HOW YOU REACT IS NOT ALWAYS FACTUAL. WE'RE ALL PERCEIVED DIFFERENTLY THAN WE SEE OURSELVES. WHEN YOU SEE YOURSELF ON TAPE FOR THE FIRST TIME, YOU'LL SEE WHAT THE WORLD SEES.

PUT YOURSELF ON TAPE (DVCAM OR VHS) AND WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU SAW DIFFERENTLY THAT YOU IMAGINED. (DO A SCENE/MONOLOGUE)

21. All scenes require character emotional PIVOT POINTS of expression. Expressed by: voice change, words, and physical movement/expression, and action. Some people naturally speak and move with varied expressions, but in most cases, they have to be creative expression.

22. Discipline yourself to accept moments of emotions and when the scene ends, allow them to go away. CAREFUL! This is not a mechanical process. You're dealing with controlling inner emotions with mental ATTITUDE. Don't treat them lightly. The DIRECTOR knows that everybody handles different emotions in a different way, because all emotions affect each of us differently. Know your limitations and the expectations (requirements) of your character.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE THE MOST DIFFICULT EMOTIONS FOR YOU TO HANDLE WITH A CHARACTER?

23. Transformation. An actor (person) must go through a process of transformation from one character (person)(in part) into another character (person). It is done in part by changing (1) Voice (tones, accent, diction,) (2) Physical (dress, posture, movement). The biggest transformation is mental. The mental process of expressing emotions through the characters countenance and demeanor as he or she reacts to persons and events within the story is the most important.

24. Discipline yourself to practice at least 15-30 minutes five days each week. TOOLS. The two tools used to practice scenes with are MIRROR and or VHS camcorder. ALWAYS do a scene that you've memorized. It's not fun to watch someone read parts. If you're looking at the paper, how can you watch yourself in the mirror to play to the camera? When video taping you, don't look directly into the camera. Always look off (to one side) about three feet from the camera. Always from yourself on a medium or tight shot. No wide shots & cant see your expressions up close.

Never allow unqualified opinions or instruction. Be sure your coach understands on camera acting and can offer you more input than you can give yourself. A big part of your scene study work is to learn how it works, what works, and if it don't work, how to make it work. The second part of your scene study work is to EXERCISE your tools and to exercise your mentality in understanding different characters.

Repetition with direction & correction results in self-confidence that will result in NATURAL & SPONTANEOUS moments.

During an audition or filming, never turn your back to camera unless blocking (positioning) request it.

The microphone is the ear of whom you're talking to and the camera is the eye of whom you're talking or listening to.

DIRECTORS aren't hard to please. They're content with perfection.

Always be respectful of crew & talent. Everybody is there for the same reason. TO DO THEIR JOB!

Keep an average of 75% to 95% eye contact with other character. It depends on objective of dialogue and your character.

31. When doing lines, your posture also represents you and your character.

Don't stand with bad posture. Stand up straight unless physical movement or gestures represent an emotional response.

32. When being taught or directed never respond with reasons, excuses, or apologies for your actions. Never give references to past instructions, teachers, or experiences. LISTEN & do it again. Shut up & do it again.

33. Changing some of the dialogue (script) is not your decision. In time, your experience and proven talents may give you that privilege. Until then, stick with the script.

34. When you go on auditions and or scene study, don't dress to impress.

Wear clean and soft colors. Avoid clothes with logos and writing. Solid colors are the best. Always take breath mints. No one wants to do a scene with someone with cigars

or cigarettes breath. And please, take a bath and smell clean. IT DOES MATTER, because the crew and talent must work (physically) close to you.

35. The only time opportunities for actors can justify giving up jobs and other careers, is when an on-going opportunity (contractual) exists. NO career (ANY KIND) is worth giving up your family and or loved ones.

36. Very few agents have the integrity of only listening a certain amount of talent for booking. It's sad, but most agencies make their monies off selling portfolios and or some modeling/acting class. If you get an agent, be sure your agent has watched YOU act, dance, sing, or do whatever you do. If they don't know your talents, how can they represent you? You're more than a face and name.

ACTING IS INSTINCTIVE

The impulse to act appears to be instinctive in humans. It relates to the natural development of our imaginations and of social skills in children. Learning to pretend and mastering different roles allows us to find our place in the family and society (among peers).

Since acting is the representation of a character, we tend to experiment with different characters to see which one our peers accept. What were doing is transforming ourselves into something or someone else. That's called ACTING.

Acting is a complex art. The actor must master voice projection, elocution (speaking style), diction (clarity of pronunciation), gesture, movement, and other abilities in order to bring reality to characters. Other artistic qualities, often difficult to describe or define, are charm, depth of feeling, originality, countenance and demeanor, and physical attractiveness.

The controlled creative expression of emotions is the actor's biggest challenge.

The Actor V's Character

There are certain things about you, the actor that the viewer will see in the same light.

THE CHARACTERS THOUGHTS WILL BECOME THEIR WORDS

This is not totally true in real life, because our IMAGINATION has thoughts of being rich, being beautiful, and being stronger. Most of us have realized in REALITY that some things are not possible in our lives. However, our words come from our thoughts. We must think it before we say it. In film, the viewer never knows all the thoughts that are in the mind of the character. We just assumed by what they say, that's what they think.

THE CHARACTERS WORDS BECOME THEIR ACTIONS

In film, the viewer is usually informed by the dialogue (words) as to the intent of the character (good or bad). It is confirmed by the actions. In some instances, we see actions before words, which then reveals the characters thoughts of good or bad. In real life situations, it has become fact, that thinking about something continuously can and will motivate actions. Good or bad.

THE HABITS (ACTIONS) OF A CHARACTER IS WHO THEY ARE

The characters daily habits (actions) reflect who they are. In the real world, this is always proven to be fact. The efforts of the writer/director are to change the habits of evil or to allow the good habits (actions) of other characters to change events in the lives of other characters. In reality, we can do the same thing every day. Through our habits (actions) we can change other lives for eternity.

WHAT ACTIONS IN YOUR LIFE HAS DETERMINED WHO YOU ARE?

WHO THE CHARACTER IS, BECOMES THEIR DESTINY:

The viewer watches as THOUGHTS BECOME WORDS, WORDS BECOME ACTION, ACTION BECOMES HABITS, HABITS BECOME CHARACTER, and CHARACTER BECOMES DESTINY. It is the responsibility of the actor to know the difference between acting out characters and being one in real life. Understanding the difference and being aware of ones thoughts, words, actions, and habits, your real character (who you are), you'll control your destiny.

THE ACTING ZONE/REAL OR UNREAL

HOW DO I TAP INTO DIFFERENT FEELINGS?

(1) USE OWN EXPERIENCES RESULTING IN DIFFERENT EMOTIONS

One year, I was conducting a workshop in Jackson, Tennessee and our class was given the task of doing a scene from a movie, where the woman cries. That morning one of the young women approached me and said, I can't cry. My life has been very happy and I don't even remember ever crying, she said. Nobody has ever experienced every emotion, but remember actors must be able to express ANY EMOTION. If you've not experienced it, research real life characters that have.

(2) DRAW FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS

This reflects back to #1 when you've no idea how the people feel when going through certain events in life. In your research, you can talk with persons who have gone through or may be going through (LIVING) these emotions, you can also reach true stories of persons who have experienced events in their life, shared by your character (ROLE).

(3) FROM INPUT AND DIRECTION OF THE DIRECTOR

Some directors are able to give you input that will help you with certain emotions. Most of us have an idea as to what we want to see in the characters actions & reactions. That's why its important for the director to be able to communicate to the actor the personality and character of each part. Your part is to make it real by bringing it alive. The best thing you can do for the director and yourself is to LISTEN.

(4) FROM THE CHARACTER (SCRIPT)

As a scriptwriter, I don't spend a lot of time writing character profiles in my scripts. Most writers will use written direction like ANGRY, WARM, SAD, LOUD, EMOTIONAL, ETC. These terms indicate the type of emotion felt, but not how that character would express it. Like real life, each and every character (person) is different. Some of us are very verbal when angered. Others get very quiet and want speak. Etc. The only thing in the script that would give you character analysis would be the dialogue, which in some cases would reflect how the character was re-acting to action.

Acting has no UNIFIED METHOD or standard of direction for the actor. However, a scene study/acting coach should direct and stimulate your creative process of finding within you, your instinctive abilities, trained skills, and learning process. Don't allow who

you are, get in the way of who you could become. Don't stay in one place.

SOME ACTORS CAN'T ARTICULATE ABOUT BEING IN THE ZONE. In some instances, its a natural mental gift and to the actor, cannot be explained. What

is real for some characters could never be for others. It starts with a word or line in the script, how you feel that day, a feeling you may have from present or past experiences. The idea could come from the director; a fellow cast member, or the writer. But it has to come from somewhere.

When preparing for a role or character, **ALWAYS LEAVE ROOM FOR SPONTANEOUS MOMENTS** that become natural responses from YOU. (YOUR CHARACTER)

In some characters lives, its dangerous to go (mentally/emotionally) where some of the Characters lives will take you. They're times, when going to these places **MENTALLY** with a character may act as therapy for some people and should always be looked upon as being (in the end), **NOT REAL. HOWEVER**, during the moment is has to be real to the actor in the process of becoming that character. The first movie opportunity is the **EASIEST**. The hardest is the second, third, fourth, and more.

In an actors scene (s) there will always be a line, look, and or exchange with another actor (s) that will be **THE TURNING POINT** of the scenes purpose. With it, **THERE MUST BE CONFLICT.**

In every part, the actor will have one thing that will **TEST THEIR SELF-CONFIDENCE** in their ability and skill. It could be lines, confrontations with characters, actions or direction.

WELCOME TO MY WORLD

The safest and easiest world to live in is our **IMAGINATION**. A place where we can go and be anything we want to be. Do anything we want to do. From the simplest of minds to the most complex, our limitations of imagination have no boundaries. It is a freedom given to man at birth? Priceless. Knows no gender, race, or worth. It is your passport to the world.

Scripts are an interpretation from writer's life experiences and his gift of imagination. Although gifts and skills enable the writer to put these experiences and his imagination in some sort of sensible sequence, the gift of imagination remains the most important. Scripts made up of imaginary stories should appear to be no different from scripts written from reality (real events/past or present) from fiction scripts.

Our imagination plays a vital part in our daily life. We must learn to filter out and separate the positive from the negative. In our daily schedules everything we do is a reflection of our creative interpretation of ourselves. Our morals and values of life direct our imaginary thought process. Wrong from right. Red or blue. The way you dress.

Likes and dislikes. What we eat. Etc. We can imagine evil or we can imagine good. Through the interpretation of our imagination, it is our choice what we create around us. These creative actions represent who we are and determine how the world sees us. When we create good or evil in our scripts, the characters interpret the reality of our imagination.

Every imaginary character carries three objectives in life.

- (1) TO AVENGE. Anything or anybody who has caused or is the reason for conflict.
- (2) TO PLEASE. To do everything right for those that mean anything to us.
- (3) TO FIX. To make things right. Give the story and or the characters life conclusion (happiness).

All of this is because the character has unfinished business. Garbage from the past. Positive or negative. Most writers (the life of the character) decide to keep the positive and get rid of the negative. In most cases, the writer blames someone or something from the past. The writer's wisdom (or research) is part of the creative process and use of his IMAGINATION.

Without your imagination and the creative process of your mind, you would never see anything as it could be. We interpret our imagination through creativity.

The actor's role is to interpret the life & emotions of an imaginary character. The process involves three people.

- (1) The writers IMAGINATION.
- (2) The directors INTERPRETATION.
- (3) The actors INTERPRETATION of characters. Based on what's written, what's directed, and the emotions that drive the actor.

INTERPRETATION

- The ACTOR -

What are you interpreting? You are interpreting the expression of a characters feelings/emotions for or against another person or act in which conflict and resolutions are always a choice. **TWO KINDS**

(1) Internal

This represents how you feel emotionally inside about actions and or persons in your presence. (OTHER CHARACTERS) It is your internal interpretation of feelings.

(2) External

This is the outward expression of your emotions (feelings). You have two tools to interpret with: (1) Verbally/speech or sounds, which are both, expressed through levels and tones of your voice. (2) Physically/which is the use of your facials, hand gestures, or any body language.

What determines your thinking process in making these decisions?

- 1) You're own experiences in life.
- 2) You're research of the character(s).
- 3) The directors input.
- 4) Scriptwriters notes.
- 5) Your imagination.

STUNT ACTORS/STUNT PERSONS

In the first day of films it was common for the actors to do their own stunts. Fights, simple falls, and even some of the more dangerous stunts. In films today, we use stunt persons (MALE OR FEMALE). In years past, I have worn wigs, colored my skin, and even dressed up as a woman. **TIMES HAVE CHANGED.**

Several established stunt associations on both the West Coast and the East Coast represent STUNT PERSONS. The stunt coordinator is considered the 2ND. Unit director of action sequences. In some films, directors still maintain control of camera set-ups, action blocking, etc. This was my first opportunity to direct. It was great learning how to fight on camera. For you as an actor, these are some of the major differences.

1. Fight action (punches, etc.) is usually not done FULL SPEED.
2. All punches or strikes with weapons are telegraphed in order for the view (camera) to know what is about to happen.
3. Lot of the fight scenes are cut quicker in order to hide the lack of execution of techniques by the actor (s). For example, with the right edits, music, sound effects, an actor can be made out as a karate expert, when in reality they know only the techniques

used in the fight sequence.

4. Pads are worn under clothing to prevent injury.

5. Cuts and bruises are nothing but make-up. Although I have been hit in various parts of my body by amateur actors (fighters).

6. When your actions in a scene endangers your safety, ENTER THE STUNT DOUBLE. Stunt doubles will wear the same wardrobe you have on, etc.

7. In order to hide the different identity of your stunt double, different angles or wide shots are used to hide the stunt doubles identity.

Stunt persons are highly trained and organized professionals who research and prepare for the stunts used in films. However, many stunt persons are seriously injured and some have even lost their life. Don't put STUNT PERSON on your resume just because you've studied some martial art, ride motorcycles, scuba dive, or do gymnastics. It could cost you your life.

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