

NEURO ACTING™



WORKBOOK

by Bryan Bounds

A companion for your Neuro Acting System course

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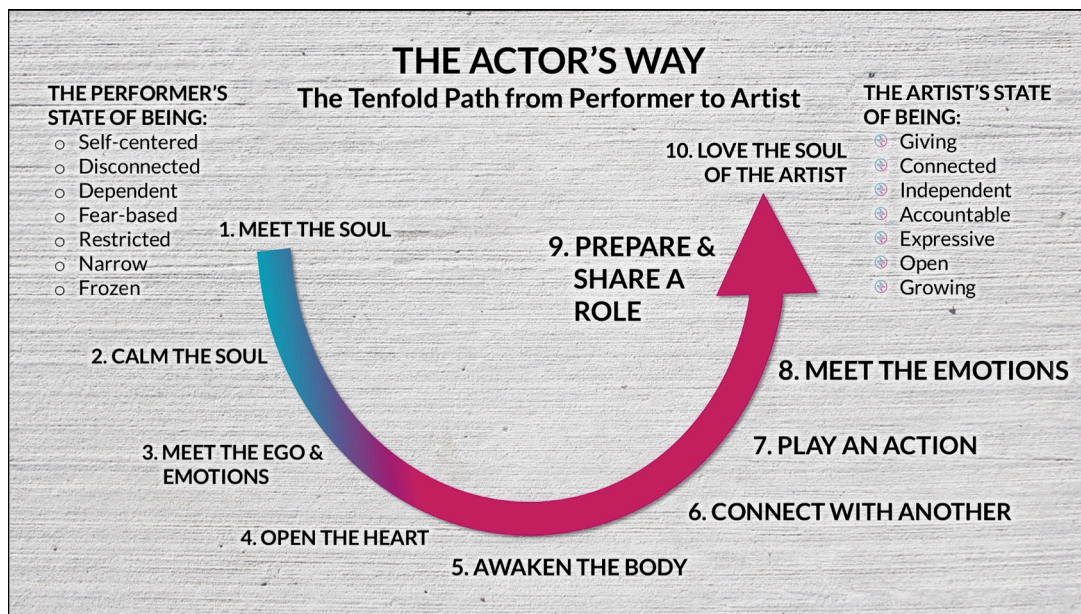
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WELCOME!

Thanks for joining The Actor's Way. You're going to learn a vast amount about your craft and yourself. Learning the craft of Acting is **experiential** – **not theoretical**. So in each lesson, please take the time to complete each and every task before going onto the next lesson, as they will all help build your skills.

Be gentle and patient with yourself – even if it seems that you're not making huge breakthroughs, trust that you will be. Some of these concepts may take a while for you to fully 'get' them.

But trust the flow...



...and get ready to dig deep and work hard.

If you have ANY questions along the way, please get in touch!

ORIENTATION



What kind of Acting do I want?



From the list below choose your favorite words that mean True & False.

True

False

True

- Genuine
- Authentic
- Honest
- Real
- Sincere
- Open
- Natural
- Actual
- Realistic

False

- Fraudulent
- Counterfeit
- Artificial
- Unconvincing
- Sham
- Rip-off
- Bogus
- Phony
- Fake

False acting is...

- Boring after a few minutes
- Makes you admire the actor showing off.
- Doesn't move you
- Looks like a lot of work.



True acting is...

- You can't take your eyes off it.
- You don't see the actor. You only see a person.
- Makes you feel something
- Looks natural - as if they're not acting.

QUESTION: When you act, which list do you want your acting to be most related to?

LESSON 1

Meet the Soul



My ultimate self... and my real self:



Brainstorm your ultimate self in acting. What would it look like?

What is holding you back from your ultimate self?

Brainstorm a recent situation where you ranted and raved, and then felt guilty about it. How were you justified in that heat of the moment?

Imagination Exercise: The Last Walk:



Describe what you discovered during the exercise. Any new commitments toward your soul or your craft?

Elliott's Journey as a character

Watch the film E.T. The Extraterrestrial (without first looking at the table below!) then study the table closely. Elliott's soul and character are revealed by his behavior in the first thirty minutes. Pay close attention to the colors in the table – we'll see them again! Notice how they're changing from Day 1 to Day 3. What do you think the different colors mean?

What happens?	What does Elliott want?	What's in Elliott's way?	What does Elliott do?
DAY ONE			
Elliott is the outsider.	He wants to play.	He's young and afraid.	Elliott obeys and gets the pizza.
He hears a strange noise.	He wants to investigate.	He has to deal with the pizza.	He drops the pizza and explores.
He's thrown the ball into the shed.	He wants to investigate.	E.T. throws the ball back.	He runs back into the house.
Elliott is still a loser for ruining the pizza.	He wants to investigate.	He comes face to face with E.T.	He runs back into the house.
He's terrified.	He wants to save himself.	Something about the experience stops him.	He hangs on the swing and looks up.
DAY TWO			
Elliott is intrigued by E.T.	He wants to find out more.	A strange man is lurking around.	Elliott runs.
Elliott's family doubts that E.T. exists.	He wants to prove himself and be more mature.	His family belittles him.	He insults his mother.
He's destroyed the family peace.	He wants to seem mature.	Michael tells him to grow up.	He cleans the dishes and looks up.
Elliott is alone and rejected.	He wants companionship.	He's terrified when E.T. comes	He stays, even though he's afraid.
E.T. has returned the Reece's pieces.	Elliott wants to bring E.T. in.	Everyone's asleep.	He entices E.T. with more candy and introduces his toys.
DAY THREE			
Elliott's siblings don't know about E.T.	Elliott wants to persuade them to let E.T. stay.	They'll be terrified and want to tell mother.	Elliott forces Michael to say, "I have absolute power," and forces him to close his eyes.
Elliott feels proud of himself.	He wants to persuade Michael to let E.T. stay.	Gertie comes in and screams. Mother comes in.	He tries to silence them and herds them into the closet.
Mother is suspicious.	Elliott wants to protect E.T. from her.	Gertie is still mental.	He announces that he's keeping E.T.
Gertie is being difficult.	He wants to persuade Gertie not to tell anyone.	Gertie is street-wise.	He reasons with her, jokes with her, threatens her doll.

Soul Review



For the next five days think over the changes that occurred in your 'sense of self' within the day. Did you react in a way that you wish you hadn't? Did your actions contribute to someone's wellbeing?

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Day Four

Day Five



Do you now know yourself better? How so? What surprised you? The greater your awareness of your strengths and weaknesses, the greater the truthfulness and versatility in your acting.

Take a walk



What tiny details did you notice when you opened your senses (both inside your mind and outside in your body)?

The person I am



"The person you are is a thousand times more interesting than the best actor you could ever hope to be."

Reflect on Stanislavsky's words. What do they mean to you? Do you believe them? What might be holding you back from believing them?

The Uta Hagen Acting Exercises

PART 1: General Information about Hagen Exercises

- These exercises are extremely useful in learning truthful acting.
- With each exercise, you will define and then recreate two seemingly routine minutes of life when alone at home. These two minutes are spent in the doing of a simple task in pursuit of a normal objective.
- Your exercise is based on a thorough examination of six essential questions (see next page). These six points are always in our minds in real life, so the more specifically you answer these questions, the more natural the exercise will feel.
- Remember to define the physical and psychological sensations of the circumstances.
- The exercises will all take place in your re-created room - where you live now. Do not set them in any other environment.
- When rehearsing in the privacy of your own home, you should already be making considerations for your selected actions, avoiding those that cannot be transferred to the classroom.
- Use real objects, endowing them with the physical and psychological properties that will make them your own. Avoid anything that will force you into pantomimed actions. Be sure to use these objects as tools to further your actions, not as empty "props." Bring a suitcase on wheels if necessary.
- As in all art, you will need to be highly selective about what you incorporate into your exercise. Choose only what you need to communicate your intention. Learn how to select pertinent behavior, finding meaningful actions.
- The exercises are not intended to be mute. If you discover that you sigh, grunt, or groan, use expletives or otherwise verbalize your wishes, don't hesitate to include such responses in your exercise. However, keep it true to your own behavior under the given circumstances. Do not use language to explain what you are doing.
- Keep it simple by avoiding melodramatic situations.

* * * * *

PART 2: Directions for the Physical Destination Exercise

The challenge with this first Hagen exercise is to NOT PERFORM. It's you – the real you – not a big stagey version of you, just you doing something that's difficult. Bit by bit, you're going to learn that's what acting really is.

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to explore those things that send us from one place to another, that determine the logic of physical life.

"The purpose of movement is destination." Uta Hagen

What you'll do:

Explore two to three minutes of your behavior in the pursuit of a simple task at home, taking into account the details earlier in **General Information**. Choose circumstances

that make you enter from outside the playing area into the playing area and eventually exit again (which should be purposeful as well).

How you'll prepare it:

1. Watch your behavior and select an everyday situation, which takes 2-3 minutes.
2. As in all of the exercises, your story should have a clear beginning, middle and end.
3. Once you've chosen the situation, begin making deciding your selected activities.
4. In the examination of your selected actions, put your activities under a microscope to discover how many are consciously motivated, how many occur by reflex, and which of them are subconsciously instigated.

How you'll present it:

- If you present it to someone, prepare another space away from your original living space and use as many props as you can to recreate your home space. This will challenge you to focus on the tasks in a different environment.
- While occupied with the task on stage, you may choose to leave momentarily to get or leave something in another room before reentering the playing area.
- If possible ask a person to watch you present the exercise. Give them the list of items to watch for on page 12. The most important criteria for the other person in evaluating the exercise will be the question of belief: "Was the execution believable?"

* * * * *

PART 3: Worksheet for Physical Destinations Exercise

1. WHO AM I?

What is my present state of being?

How do I perceive myself?

What am I wearing?

2. WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

What time is it? (The year, the season, the day? At what time does my selected life begin?)

Where am I? (In what city, neighborhood, building, and room do I find myself? Or in what landscape?)

What surrounds me? (The immediate landscape? The weather? The condition of the place and the nature of the objects in it.)

What are the immediate circumstances? (What has just happened, what is happening? What do I expect or plan to happen next?)

3. WHAT ARE MY RELATIONSHIPS?

How do I stand in relationship to the circumstances, the place, the objects, and the *other people* related to my circumstances?

4. WHAT DO I WANT?

What is my **main** objective (in other words, what do I want)? What is my **immediate** need or objective before I even come into the room?

5. WHAT IS MY OBSTACLE?

What is in the way of what I want? How do I overcome it?

6. WHAT DO I DO TO GET WHAT I WANT?

This is probably the most important aspect of your storytelling, for these are the actions that drive you toward achieving your objectives. This is what you **do**, moment by moment, in pursuit of your objective. It should also take into account how you **adjust** to what happens as you pursue your objective

PART 4: Example worksheet questions for Bryan's interview with a new agent.

WHO AM I?

What is my present state of being? *I'm apprehensive about meeting the new agent.*

How do I perceive myself? *I feel old and insecure about not achieving as much in my career as I think I should have. I feel clumsy for having cut myself shaving.*

What am I wearing? *Dress shirt, dress trousers and socks.*

WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

What time is it? *11.15am*

Where am I? *In my bedroom, sitting at a small Vietnamese table near the window.*

What surrounds me? *Table, chairs – the seat under me is broken and unsteady. Wooden blinds cover the windows, there's a picture frame on the table and a shoe polishing box.*

What are the immediate circumstances? *I'm apprehensive about looking good for my new agent, so that I don't look so old. I've just cut myself shaving and my cheek is bleeding. I just realized that my shoes are scuffed so I need to clean them in two minutes before I have to make a 45-minute drive in a city at lunchtime. I have 15-minutes to spare.*

WHAT ARE MY RELATIONSHIPS?

How do I stand in relationship to the circumstances, the place, the objects, and the other people related to my circumstances? *I have no time to spare to get this done.*

I'm wary that I might get shoe polish on my clean shirt and really look like a moron. I'm also thinking about the agent, as I don't know what kind of person she is.

WHAT DO I WANT?

What is my main objective (in other words, what do I want)? *I want to get completely dressed and out the door in two minutes.*

WHAT IS MY OBSTACLE?

What is in the way of what I want? How do I overcome it? *My dirty shoes, my fear about the shoe polish*

WHAT DO I DO TO GET WHAT I WANT? *I spread a cloth over me so that I can stay clean. I arrange the shoe polish kits so that I can use them. I polish the shoes as carefully as I can, constantly looking at my watch because the information is not going into my head each time I check it.*

PART 5: QUESTIONS FOR THE OBSERVER:

- Did the actor appear to come into the room with a purpose?

- Was their focus entirely on the task at hand? When were they aware of you?

- Was their behavior natural? Which moments did they seem to be performing?

- Was there a sense of spontaneity, as if they didn't know what was happening next? Which moments seemed planned?

LESSON 2

Calm the Soul



Meditation tips

- **FACT:** Meditation helps decrease anxiety, reduce blood pressure and boosts the immune system.
- **“ARE WE THERE YET?”:** Set a timer, double check that it’s working and then let go of thinking about the time until it sounds.
- **“MY MIND WON’T STOP!”** Give up the idea that you must clear your mind during meditation. Minds like to think. Just keep coming back to focusing on the breath. Enjoy having a focused – but undirected – mind.
- **COMING BACK:** After your meditation, your emotions may be sensitive, so allow several moments to slowly open your eyes and chill before resuming your day.

Reflective task



After your first meditation exercise what did you discover about yourself?
Who entered the ‘scene’ in your Default Social Cognition Network?

Take a Soul Break

FACT: Deliberately slowing down is a powerful way to wake up our brains and get in touch with our feelings so that they guide us in new, creative ways that work best for us. Harmony in our thoughts, bodies and emotions will follow.

FIRST: Silently say to yourself, "There is nothing in the world I would rather be doing at this moment than spending time this way."

SLOW OPTIONS:

- shampoo your hair in a nice, hot shower, experiencing the smoothness of the lather
- brush your hair or put on your makeup
- do chores outside while feeling the wind on your face and enjoying the sounds
- cook, and pretend that you're experiencing the aromas for the first time
- play a musical instrument with complete focus on the form
- enjoy some slow stretching exercises and breathe into your tight muscles
- play with a pet, look in their eyes and find their sweet spot
- draw or paint, celebrating the creative energy coursing through you
- write whatever pops into your mind once you sit down. Go with the flow.



After your Slow Break, how did you feel? Did you discover anything new? You can always treat yourself to a slow break whenever you need it.

* * * * *

Homework: The Uta Hagen Acting Exercises

Exercise 2: The Fourth Side

What you'll do: You will prepare and present an imaginary one-minute phone call.

Why you're doing it:

This will get you ready for the experience of presenting a monologue onstage or screen acting, where the camera is naturally distracting. In this exercise you will discover and test ways of creating the imagined fourth side of the playing space, one that is logical to the playing space even as it embraces the audience area (or camera). This will ultimately help you feel comfortable on stage, and replace fear with a focus.

How you'll prepare it (prep time: 1 hour)

1. Read Hagen's Six Essential Questions to refresh your mind about what needs to be included in each Hagen exercise. Brainstorm a reason why you might phone your mum or dad, brother or sister, or a friend...and where you might go after the chat.
2. Find a comfortable place in your home where you might have this phone conversation. You need to be standing or sitting, not looking up at the ceiling. The room needs to have objects that you see everyday: a window, a picture, a plant, a clock or a lamp.
3. Then, while looking at these objects, and while having an objective for the chat, pretend that you're having a phone conversation. Say your words out loud and allow time to really listen to their responses. Don't be too worried scripting what they're saying – just be comfy with the beginning, middle and end of the chat.
4. Practice the conversation several times so that you're familiar with the flow.
5. Make a mental note of where your objects are and write them below.

List of objects:

1.
2.
3.
4.

How you'll present it:

- With your 'Moment Before' and your Objective in mind, you will enter the playing area, dial the number, look out at the room, summon up your imaginary objects in your mind and begin the chat.
- When you present the exercise, anchor your objects to something that you can actually see in the room. This will save you becoming cross-eyed in the wild attempt to bring your objects into focus.
- After your conversation, get up and leave the space.

Worksheet for the Fourth Side Exercise

1. WHO AM I?

What is my present state of being?

How do I perceive myself?

What am I wearing?

2. WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

What time is it? (The year, the season, the day? At what time does my selected life begin?)

Where am I? (In what room do I find myself?)

What surrounds me? (The immediate landscape? The weather? The condition of the place and the nature of the objects in it.)

What are the immediate circumstances? (What has just happened, what is happening? What do I expect or plan to happen next?)

3. WHAT ARE MY RELATIONSHIPS?

How do I stand in relationship to the circumstances, the place, the objects, and the *other people* related to my circumstances?

4. WHAT DO I WANT?

What is my **main** objective (in other words, what do I want)? What is my **immediate** need or objective before I even come into the room?

5. WHAT IS MY OBSTACLE?

What is in the way of what I want? How do I overcome it?

6. WHAT DO I DO TO GET WHAT I WANT?

This is probably the most important aspect of your storytelling, for these are the actions that drive you toward achieving your objectives. This is what you **do**, moment by moment, in pursuit of your objective. It should also take into account how you **adjust** to what happens as you pursue your objective

Homework: Taking stock of breathing

At three points during the day, take a few moments to take stock of what you're feeling and how your feeling is connected to the way you are breathing. During these moments, look at:

- Emotion: what am I feeling and what just happened to make me feel that way?
- Breathing: how has my breathing changed during that emotion? Is it deep and relaxed, or quick and shallow? Am I holding onto the breath?

In Lesson 8 you will learn a powerful way of using your breathing to help induce emotions. For now, know that body, mind and soul are connected; when we feel something it affects our body. This gives us a future opportunity to change our feelings and reactions.



LESSON 3

Meet the Ego & Emotions



If I want to be a better actor, I must learn to be a better person.

1. The Natural Instincts:

Biological fixtures which are necessary for our survival.

SOCIAL INSTINCTS

The desire for:

- Companionship
- Self-esteem: what I think about myself
- Prestige: what others think about me
- Ambitions to increase all these

SECURITY INSTINCTS

The desire to feel safe by getting:

- Material security: food, shelter
- Emotional security: emotional comfort and peace
- Ambitions to increase all these

SEX INSTINCTS

The natural drive to:

- Reproduce
- Enjoy a physical intimacy
- Ambitions to increase these



When the satisfaction of our instincts takes over (when we want more than our fair share) we feel threatened and we engage in wrong, **DRAMATIC** behavior.

Threatened Instincts:

RESENTMENTS

(Wrong Thinking)



Feelings of anger or bitterness at what others have done to you, with the idea that if you continue thinking about it you'll find a way to get back at them.

FEARS

(Wrong Feelings)



Feelings of worry, anxiety, agitation or depression about the past, present or future

HARMS

(Wrong Actions)



Behavior from us that results in hurt feelings for other people, and guilt, shame and remorse for us – but often projected onto them



SOCIAL INSTINCT: how does this instinct affect my life in a big way today?



SECURITY INSTINCT: how does this instinct affect my life in a big way today?

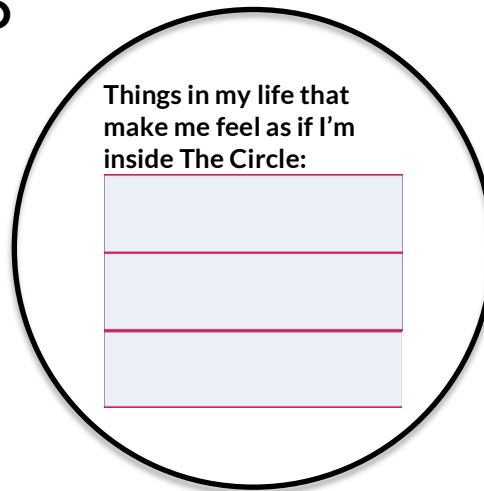
2. The Ego



EGO: its purpose is separation.



My Ego



My inner thoughts that push
me outside The Circle:

Now you can use your imagination to brainstorm how any character that you play has been forced out of their circle, so that you can feel exactly what it's like to be in their situation.



Brainstorm about your own Instincts over the last week. Which instincts were being threatened and what did you do to get back into your 'circle'? The tactics listed on the next page might help. Hint: if you were really fearful, angry or worried, that's the sign there was a threat to your instincts.



Think about your current **AMBITIONS** for getting your Instincts met. How are they helping you (or causing you suffering) ?



Watch your favorite film character again and look for the Instincts at play. Which instincts were being threatened and what did they do to get back into 'their circle'?

1. SITUATION	2. THREATENED INSTINCT	3. EMOTION	4. RESPONSE
Example: In <i>Jaws</i> an old man challenges Chief Brody for not going swimming.	Brody's Social (self-esteem)	Shame	Brody insults the old man.

The Ego's tactics:

Just like any character that you play, the Ego likes to:

- Emotionalize
- Demonize
- Hypothesize
- Dramatize
- Victimize
- Intellectualize
- Criticize
- Catastrophize
- Romanticize
- Idealize
- Rationalize
- Glamorize
- Moralize
- Fantasize

Why? Because the Ego gets a payoff: the wonderful feeling of being right.

PUT THIS TO WORK:

IN YOUR WORK...

1. **Become aware of your own INSTINCTS and EGO.** Then you can identify the **OPPONENT** or **OBSTACLE** facing any character.
2. **Make your character NEEDY.** This will draw the audience in because they will instinctively identify with your own neediness.
3. **Make your scene partner an OBSTACLE to getting your needs met.** The more needy your character is, the easier it will be to define your **OBJECTIVES, OBSTACLES** and **ACTIONS.**

IN YOUR LIFE:

- Make friends with your own **EGO and INSTINCTS.** Awareness can help you begin to reduce their power over you, and awareness will definitely give you more compassion for others, who have the same instincts as you.

"The only sin is ignorance."
The Buddha

3. The Emotions:

There's more to Emotions than being 'bored' or 'annoyed'. Here's your palette:

EMOTION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Shame, guilt, remorse	Awful, depressing feelings that come when I harm someone else by acting on my instincts in an out-of-control way.	I sabotaged somebody's future by gossiping about them.
Jealousy	I have something (an object or relationship), and I'm afraid that you're going to take it from me.	"You looking at my girlfriend?"
Envy	I want what you have.	"Nice car."
Fear & Insecurity	I'm afraid when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think I'm going to lose something I already have; I think I'm not going to get what I really want; I feel I'm in a situation I can't control. Fear always leads to manipulation of other people, which is a powerful fuel for the actor.	Fear of flying School Exams AUDITIONS!
Anger	A momentary reaction where I react negatively in a situation because somebody has done something which goes against my expectations of how they should behave. This is also sometimes our reaction to fear, especially in men. Lifespan: one hour.	My daughter forgot to take her gym bag into school.
Resentment	This is anger which has settled into my mind, which I then rationalize to absolve me from any responsibility on my part! If I can't handle the shame, guilt and remorse from my own actions, I'll project them onto you to make me look good and you look bad. We're entitled to be angry for one hour - after that it becomes a resentment.	"Okay, I did it! But she did something to me two weeks ago!"
Pride	This is a feeling of superiority coming from the belief that something outside of me that I've achieved or acquired makes me better than you.	"Oh, yeah? Well I got the lead in High School Musical."
Humility	A position of neutrality and peace where I don't feel the need to react to or achieve anything.	A good session of meditation.
Compassion	This is when I identify and relate to others' Instincts and Ego, and I forgive them for their hurtful behavior that was beyond their control, because I'm capable of the same behavior myself.	Road rage in the supermarket.
Joy	A comfortable feeling that comes when all my needs are being met and I'm in the circle with the rest of humanity.	Wrestling with my dog on the floor.



Observe other people closely for a day and look for a situation where **THEIR** instincts were being threatened – resulting in a big emotion. What was their objective (i.e. what did they want or expect), what was their obstacle and their response? Can you see how you might react the same way?

OBJECTIVE / EXPECTATION:

OBSTACLE:

RESPONSE:

The Uta Hagen Acting Exercises

Exercise 3: Changes in Self

Here's our second exercise from Uta Hagen. You're still living truthfully, still grounded in your reality, you're still not playing a character, but you're exploring how you change with each relationship that's in your life.

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to expand your sense of how your 'Self' changes each time you speak to a different person, and put into practice the idea of 'threatened instincts.'

What you'll do:

Find circumstances under which you will make a phone call or calls during which you speak to three people – one of these people should pose a distinct threat to one of your Basic Instincts. Make sure that your relationship to each of them is markedly different from the others. In other words choose people who are:

1. on the same level as you (students, friends, etc.)
2. who are older or more authoritative than you (a parent, teacher or boss)
3. younger than you (younger sibling or a child).

Your changing sense of Self, and how it changes with each person, will show in:

- what you are saying to each other
- the words you choose
- your tone of voice
- bodily adjustments.

How to prepare it:

- Reread the General Information for Hagen Exercises from Lesson Two.
- Use your imagination (Don't say: "I'd never talk to my younger brother on the phone.")
- It doesn't matter whether you talk to three people in the course of the same call, make three separate short calls, or are interrupted by incoming calls.
- Remember to answer the Six Questions from the General Information for Hagen exercises.
- Find a comfortable place in your home where you might have this phone conversation. You need to be standing or sitting, not looking up at the ceiling. The room needs to have objects that you see everyday: a window, a picture, a plant, a clock or a lamp. List these objects below.
- Then, while looking at these objects, and while having an objective for the chat, pretend that you're having a phone conversation. Say your words out loud and allow time to really listen to their responses. Don't be too worried scripting what they're saying – just be comfy with the beginning, middle and end of the chat.
- Practice the conversation several times so that you're familiar with the flow.
- Make a mental note of where your objects are and write them below.

List of objects:

1.

2.

3.

4.

How you'll present it:

- You'll present it in the same manner as the other Hagen exercises:
- You're coming from one environment into another. With your 'Moment Before' and your Objective in mind, you will enter the playing area, dial the number, look out at the room, summon up your imaginary objects in your mind and begin the chat.
- When you present the exercise, anchor your objects to something that you can actually see in the room. This will save you becoming cross-eyed in the wild attempt to bring your objects into focus. The more you focus on these objects – the better your acting.

Worksheet for Sense of Self Exercise

BEFORE THE FIRST CALL:

What is my present state of being?

How do I perceive myself?

WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

What time is it?

Where am I?

What surrounds me?

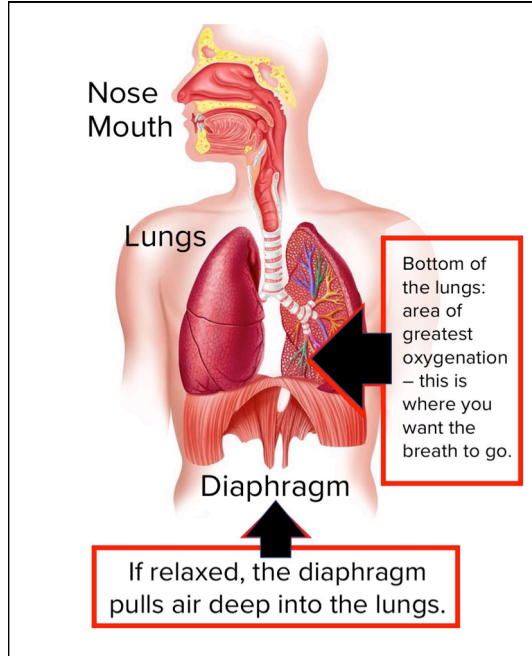
What just happened immediately before the first call?

QUESTIONS	PHONE CALL 1	PHONE CALL 2	PHONE CALL 3
What is my relationship to him/her?			
How do I perceive myself with them?			
What Basic Instinct does one person threaten? How?			
What do I want?			
What is my obstacle?			
What do I do to get what I want?			

LESSON 4: Open the heart, Focus the mind

Your acting and emotions will be frozen until you warm up the body, and you can only warm up the body with healthy breathing.

DTG VJ RP I "GUUGP VK NU



VJ GUE KPE GE j gu"dtgc j kpi "uwemD

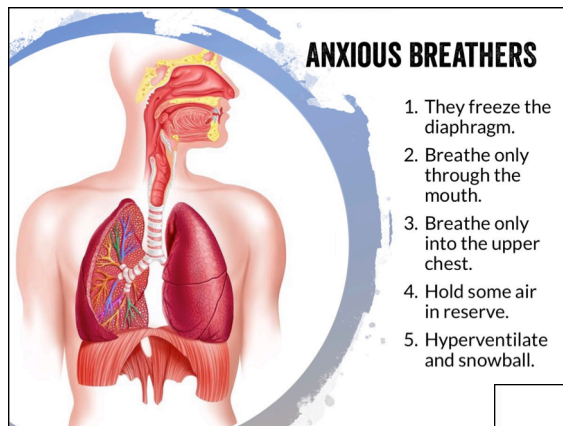
CHEST BREATHING (BAD)...

- goes hand in hand with anxiety.
- Anxiety freezes the diaphragm in order to contain fears of aggression and to keep other feelings out of consciousness.
- How? Emotions centered on fear, aggression and sex have strong associations with lower parts of the body, so stiffening the diaphragm isolates these feelings to the lower body, pushing them out of awareness. Thus **the actor can't feel them.**

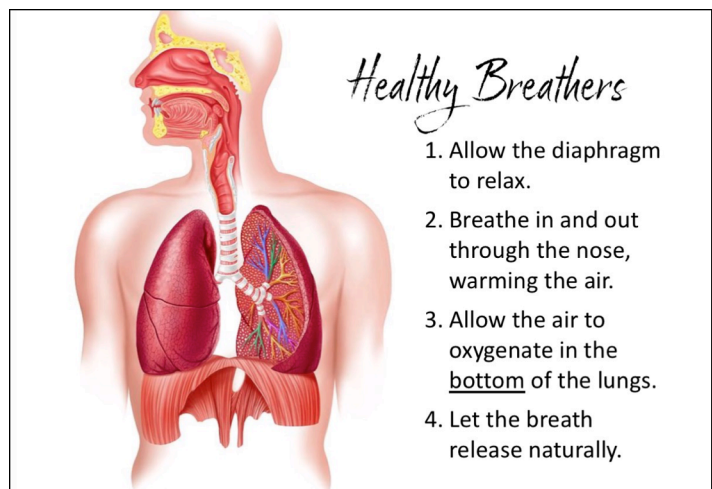
DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING...

- decreases anxiety, and with more relaxation comes more emotional sensitivity.
- Breathing through the nose is even better: it releases nitric oxide which increases levels of carbon dioxide in the blood (that's actually good because it opens up the airways) which in turn makes us use oxygen more effectively.

VJ GE J QKE GKU" QWT UK



1. They freeze the diaphragm.
2. Breathe only through the mouth.
3. Breathe only into the upper chest.
4. Hold some air in reserve.
5. Hyperventilate and snowball.



1. Allow the diaphragm to relax.
2. Breathe in and out through the nose, warming the air.
3. Allow the air to oxygenate in the bottom of the lungs.
4. Let the breath release naturally.

Breathing exercises to reduce anxiety

Use these exercises whenever you feel symptoms of anxiety starting to come on. If you feel yourself doing anxiety quite often, practice at least one of these exercises for five minutes per day for at least two weeks. Practice for one month or longer if you wish to change your breathing pattern from your chest downward toward your abdomen.

1. Abdominal Breathing Exercise

- 1) Note the level of tension that you're feeling. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen right beneath your rib cage. The ideal is to have a relaxed chest and a moving abdomen.
- 2) Allow the chest to relax and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into the "bottom" of your lungs. Your hand should rise away from your body. (Breathing through your nose slows down the breath, warms the air and relaxes your body.)
- 3) When you've taken a relaxed, full breath, pause for a moment and then exhale slowly through your nose or mouth. Allow your body to just let go.
- 4) Repeat, doing ten slow, full abdominal breaths. Count to four on the inhale, pause, count to four on the exhale and pause again.

2. Calming Breath Exercise

- 1) Breathing from your abdomen, inhale through your nose slowly to a count of five.
- 2) Pause and hold your breath to a count of five.
- 3) Exhale slowly, through your nose or mouth, to a count of five (or more if it takes you longer to exhale fully).
- 4) When you've exhaled completely, take two breaths in your normal rhythm, then repeat steps 1-3.
- 5) Keep up for the exercise for 3-5 minutes, keeping your breathing smooth and regular.
- 6) Each time you exhale, you may wish to say, "Relax," "Calm," "Let go" or any other relaxing word or phrase silently to yourself.

Source: Bourne, The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook, p. 91

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Read the following essay and take a few moments to reflect afterwards.

'Bravely Living with an Open Heart', by Jodi Chapman

"Last week something happened that hurt me deeply. Because of this incident, I was faced with a choice: I could either close off my heart in order to protect myself from being hurt in the future, or I could feel my anger, hurt, disappointment, pain, and sadness. I could allow myself to be there and take as long as I needed to work through these feelings. And then I could come through to the other side of them feeling stronger and even more committed to living openly and truthfully and honestly and lovingly.

"I will be the first to admit that when faced with these choices, my first inclination (like many of us) was to pull away. No one likes to be hurt or feel betrayed or put themselves out there only to be mistreated. I certainly don't. And, for a brief moment, I began to wonder if being

so publicly open and honest was worth it. I began to question if it would be easier to just pull the shades and pull back from it all and take a completely different path. I considered putting my walls back up and closing my heart to the world.

“And then I remembered that I spent most of my life living this way, and it wasn't much fun. I felt alone, sad, and completely disconnected from all of life. Yes, my heart was protected from being hurt by others, but it also was prevented from feeling love and from letting others in and from being connected. I remembered how this painful incident that occurred was such an anomaly in my world. I remember that in the many years that I've been sharing openly, it's only been a handful of times that I felt hurt or betrayed. And every single day, I hear from several beautiful souls telling me how my living with an open heart inspires them to do the same. And that means so much to me. That is evidence that this matters. It matters for me, and it matters for you. So, after spending some time seriously considering pulling away, I decided to come back even more open (if that's possible) and even more loving (if that's possible) and even more emphatic about how important it truly is that we each do the same.

“We are the brave ones. Those of us who choose from one moment to the next to live with open hearts. Those of us who have decided to share honestly and vulnerably. Those of us who have consciously taken down our walls and who have chosen to show up in the world as ourselves – our true selves. We are the brave ones. And I believe that we are protected and have the universe and love on our side. I believe that our bravery, vulnerability, and love will have such a beautiful ripple effect that will be felt around the world. I truly believe that.

“It doesn't mean that we won't be hurt. As part of the deal, openness means exposing our hearts to the good and also the bad. But I believe that there is much, much, much more good than bad. And that's what I'm choosing to focus on. I will not allow one little bit of hurt to cancel out years of open-heartedness. I won't. I will not allow any amount of darkness to dim my light, and I hope that you won't either. Please join me in focusing on the light and the love. Please join me in staying open and continuing to share our truth. It's essential that we do this together. We truly are the brave ones. And filling in the world with love is a noble cause. I'm so glad we're in it together.”

Source: Chapman, Jodi. *Soul Bursts*, p.24



Did Jodi's feelings and commitment touch you? How? We actors are in a beautiful position to fill the world with love in our art and our lives. How are you showing up in this world with a brave and open heart? Any character that you play will have these same challenges.

LESSON 5

Awaken the Body




Neck stretches:

Don't let a young body fool you into thinking you're free from neck problems. Work these exercises into your neural pathways and your movements and emotions will be freer, and you'll prevent a lot of future pains and immobility.


NECK PAIN & TENSION RELIEF

DAREBEE WORKOUT @ darebee.com
3 sets | up to 2 minutes rest between sets


www.nhs.uk **NHS** choices




10 back and forth tilts *




10 side-to-side tilts




10 neck rotations




10-count press



10-count press



10-count alternating side press



10-count alternating chin press

* An effective alternative to this standing 'back and forth' tilt is:

1. Lie on your back.
2. Curl your head up off the floor.
3. With your chin still tucked in, replace each vertebrae at a time on the floor.
4. Return your chin to its neutral position. Requires effort but it strengthens the neck!

Meet the Vagus Nerve, a must for the actor:

“Not many of us know that a nerve called the Vagus helps regulate most of the bodily functions necessary for health and emotional well-being. This nerve must function properly in order for us to be healthy, feel good emotionally, and interact positively with family, friends and others.”

[Accessing the Healing Power of the Vagus Nerve](#), p. 36.



When the Vagus is 'toned':

The body can return to a 'rest and digest' state after stress: the stomach is calm, the heart rate is slow and breathing is normal.

When the Vagus is 'untuned' (and why would an actor want these?)

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Poor memory and focus
- Difficulty breathing
- Balance and coordination problems
- Nutritional deficiencies > weak immune system
- Abnormal heart rate
- Stomach problems: the vagus 'tells' the food in the stomach to 'Move along.'

Activities to tone the Vagus nerve:

- Loving-kindness meditation
- Slow breathing exercises, especially 'Alternate nostril breathing' (5 minutes)
- Humming breathing (Bhramari pranayama)–practice for 5 minutes. The easiest way to do this is simply to breathe in through your nostrils then hum as you exhale slowly. There are many variations but this is a good way to start.
- Singing
- Eating slowly and mindfully

- ❑ Exercise: especially swimming, as it forces deep, regular breathing
- ❑ Immersing in ice water:
 - Washing your face with icy water – remember this the next time that you're feeling really stressed out
 - Putting your face in a sink full of cold water
 - A burst of cold water at the end of a shower if you're feeling adventurous. It's startling but you'll feel great afterwards.

There is a reason why we groan when we're in pain, why birthing women moan deeply. Instinctively we're activating our vagus nerves by stimulating the vocal cords. Regular practice of the techniques mentioned above will raise your vagal tone, boosting your immune system, reducing any inflammation and contributing to feelings of well-being and contentment.

* * * * *

NEURO GESTURES: raise your game in...

1. Auditions

- 🌀 Drama school auditions: study the script and create a strong neuro gesture as a springboard into performing the piece. It will get the performance into your body and out of your head.

2. Full performances

- 🌀 For key moments or long speeches, create the images by studying the text and place them in the audience.
- 🌀 Use them to add intensity to a scene – with the appropriate physical intensity for your character in this moment, the emotions will follow.

3. Musical auditions

- 🌀 Singing is a heightened form of expression. A character sings because what they're feeling is too intense for the spoken word. If you add neuro gestures through your song, it will transform your work from 'singing' a song to 'performing' a song.

* * * * *

The Robert De Niro Face Game

Purpose:

To activate the facial muscles for greater powers of expression. Many actors 'feel' the emotion but miss out on the job because the casting director didn't 'believe' them. Cruel fact: if your audience didn't see it, it didn't happen. And yes, this even applies to screen auditions!

Instructions:

With a partner choose a scenario and tell a story without using words. Gestures can and should be used, but your primary tools lie in your face.

Commit 100% to the reality of your story and tell the story from beginning to end. Don't just make faces.

Afterwards, ask your partner to describe the situation, the environment and your sense of being during the story. Did they 'get it'?

Trade places.



Possible scenarios:

- ❑ Your most embarrassing moment.
- ❑ Your proudest moment.
- ❑ Your favorite childhood vacation.
- ❑ The day you met your first love.
- ❑ The day you felt most in danger.
- ❑ Your most surreal dream or nightmare.

Source: Levy, Shawn. *De Niro: A Life*, p.58.

The Uta Hagen Acting Exercises

Exercise 4: *Moment to Moment*

This exercise may bring a watershed moment to your acting. It addresses an extremely difficult technical problem: how to repeat actions at every performance from moment to moment, as if **for the first time**. Everything you do as an actor is happening right now. It needs to have the feeling of spontaneity. If you don't have that quality in your work, your acting will look mechanical and both you (and your audience) will get bored.

The main skill that you'll learn:

You will learn to have a suspension of knowledge of what is to come, by 'forgetting' everything, except what is needed *at the moment*. Once you grasp this technique, your brain will become rewired into seeking this immediacy in every future scene you play.

What you'll do:

With a partner, (or on your own if necessary) select specific circumstances for a one-minute event, during which you will search for – and eventually find – an object that you have mislaid or believe to be lost. You can easily adapt this exercise if you're working on your own.

Step 1: Prep work

- Read the excerpt on the next page from Uta Hagen's book, Respect for Acting
- Find a small object that is important to you (i.e. keys, phone, necklace, etc.). It must be an object that would stress you out if you couldn't find it.
- With your partner, decide who is partner-A and partner-B.

Step 2: Partner A

- Partner-B will then hide the valuable item of partner-A and give them one minute to try and find the item. Partner B must be absolutely silent during the search. See yellow-highlight text below for tips.
- After partner-A has found their object, partner-B puts the valuable in the exact same spot and have them try to recreate their search process.

Step 3: Partner B

- After partner-A's second search, partner-A hides and times the search for partner-B's valuable.

While you're doing the exercise:

- 🕒 Be sure that the missing object has meaning to you, so that your stakes remain high while looking for it.
- 🕒 Believe in the time constraint. You must find this object in one minute or something terrible will happen.
- 🕒 Focus on really experiencing the search; not anticipating or planning ahead.
- 🕒 Direct your full attention to one need at a time. Make yourself believe in the existence of each new moment.

- 🚫 Commit to REALLY “doing things” (i.e. really looking through the drawer, or really looking at the shelf)

While you're observing the exercise:

- 🚫 Really pay attention to their process as they look for the valuable.
- 🚫 Observe mannerisms, patterns, train-of-thought etc. in detail.
- 🚫 Look for moments when you forgot the actor knew exactly where the item was.
- 🚫 Look for moments when you could tell the actor knew where the item was.

Step 4: CLOSURE

- When both partners have had a chance to search for their item, discuss their process in doing this exercise.
- Ask yourselves these questions:
 - 🚫 What did this exercise do for you?
 - 🚫 How did it help you?
 - 🚫 What parts did you find challenging? How could they be solved?
 - 🚫 How do you think it can help the performance overall?

‘IMMEDIACY’, from Uta Hagen’s book Respect for Acting

The fight to prevent anticipation, to prevent thinking and planning ahead, to prevent launching yourself into an action already knowing what its consequence will be ***is a struggle that seems to go on and on***, for established actors as well as for those just beginning. We know that we shouldn't anticipate. We know that when we do, our actions become mechanical, and we start to concern ourselves with the outer form, and bad acting always results. We even *know* that we *should* give ourselves with innocence and trust to the moment and allow it to evolve into the next.

In life we think ahead and have expectations about what will happen but even when we are right, we never know *how* it is going to happen. And, of course, we *never* know if we will succeed or fail in fulfilling these needs. And when the action we are involved in is unsuccessful, we make future plans of action and think ahead to the other possibilities.

In order to isolate the problem of anticipation and search for the immediacy of a moment, and go from theory to practice, I suggest an exercise in which you will test immediacy by hunting for something you have lost or mislaid. Misplacing or losing something is an almost daily occurrence. Become aware of what you do and what happens to you. Find the human logic behind what may seem outwardly illogical in the stages of your hunt. (I have looked for purse under a single sheet of paper on occasion!)

I don't mean that you should select only irrational or idiotic behavior but if you discover it, don't eliminate it from your score, but give it the human cause. After a few days of self-observation you will probably get ideas for the exercise – the circumstances under which you would look for a lost object. Give yourself high-stakes in this object – a treasured earring or watch, a love letter, money. Even a lost comb can have importance if your hair is a mess, and you're on your way to an audition and have no brush.

Do not preconceive or shape the psychological or emotional effect of your inability to find it, or the moment of discovery. Most of you have the mistaken idea that emotions rise upward and increase on an even curve until they reach a peak. On the contrary, our anxieties, frustrations, disappointments, angers and joys may be

charted like the fever of a patient when his temperature jumps up, drops down, levels off, drops and climbs again. Leave room in your work for this. If a sudden calm settles over you, don't judge it as wrong for your circumstances – it may precede the storm.

Let's say you're on your way to an important engagement, putting on your gloves as a finishing touch. You check your bag for your house key. It's not in your bag where it ought to be. You know that you will be returning late, and the superintendent will be asleep, unable to let you in. Your roommate is away for the weekend, you will be able to get back into your apartment without your key. You empty your bag and look through the contents. You replace them. You check your pockets. You look in other places where the key ought to be, where it might be, where it ever was, and if all else fails, where it couldn't possibly be. You methodically rifle your bureau drawer, run to your closet, grab your raincoat, put your hand in the pocket, and the key is found.

After improvising on your circumstances until you have found many possibilities for objects to deal with in the hunt, places to search through, and the endless variations of behavior which result, make precise decisions about your course of action and *give yourself a cause* for needing it, as well as to your *expectations*. If your plan remains too loose, you will still be improvising when you present the exercise, and you will only be testing the technical problem of anticipation at a minimum.

Anticipation does not present itself as a problem only at the moment of finding the lost object (which you yourself have concealed) but at *every* moment of the search. Go through the bag where you *expect* your key ought to be with faith and conviction; *really* examine the contents until you are certain it isn't there. *Really* look into the bureau drawer and *know* that it might be there, because it has been on several occasions. Go to the next logical or possible place with the faith that you might have left it there and really give your full attention to it so that, if anything, your need to find the key will strengthen. The expectancy and speculation as to where it could be or should be, the trying to remember where it was last or where was yesterday, is inherent in every search.

If the exercise succeeds for you, a genuine sensation of relief or joy or perhaps rage will come over you when you finally put your fingers on the key in the corner of your raincoat pocket. And this process of genuinely getting caught up in each moment can reoccur while you are following a specific plan which you may have repeated for the tenth – no, the hundred – time.

A few mechanical problems should be considered which haven't arisen before in the other exercises. In order to keep your faith high, you must take even more care in reconstructing the place. Be sure that you have enough places to look. If at home you look through drawers which were crammed with belongings, make sure that the drawers in your studio have makeshift things in them. Nothing will break your faith more quickly than yanking open and empty drawer and having to pantomime groping through it or having to indicate looking around and under imaginary clothing or other objects.

Let what you are looking for be a small object. A large object, such as a shoe, may take half an hour to locate at home, but will be difficult to lose in a smaller and barer confines of the studio. Or if your eye goes to your coffee table, which at home was piled with litter but is now bare, you will have a big gap in your 'immediacy.'

When you have conquered and understood what it was that held you and involved you in each moment of your task, and what allowed you to proceed without anticipation in this exercise, *you can apply the same principle to any scene or play*. You can also apply it to *sending and receiving the words of a play*. Someone once said, "A fine actor forgets what's coming." He forgets even the line he has learned until he needs it!

This exercise is easy to understand. It is difficult to execute. Start doing it.

* * * * *



Now that you've come this far on the Actor's Way, take some time to record the progress and discoveries that you've made.

- 🕒 Have you broadened your sense of self and what you have to offer?
- 🕒 Have you grown in your technical skills as an artist? In what way?
- 🕒 How has this helped in your goal to reach your Ultimate Self (Page 3)?
- 🕒 And where do you need to continue growing?

RECAP OF THE NEURO ACTING SYSTEM: RELAX, RECEIVE, EXPERIENCE, EXPRESS

So far we've been learning **PERSONAL SKILLS**:

- Accepting my role: a channel for the storyteller
- Learning that we're all the same (so there's no need to hide)
- Learning what creates my desires: instincts
- Trusting that it's safe to open my heart (the audience will identify)
- Awakenning my body to be used as an instrument.

Next we learn **RELATIONAL SKILLS**:

- Reaching out to connect with others
- Learning to define and play an action

- Connecting with and releasing my emotions
- Preparing and sharing a role
- Creating an acting score.

LESSON 6

Connect with Another



NEURO NUGGET

WHAT BORES AN AUDIENCE? When there's no connection between the actors. It's what happens when performers try to con the audience by staring and talking 'at' each other. Audiences want to see honest and vulnerable connections – and they can instinctively tell when it's not happening. It looks fake and unrecognizable. So connecting is a huge part of our job.



Think of a moment from a film or TV program where two characters were really connecting. Was it a fast scene? Probably not. When did that scene occur in the story? What did it make you feel afterwards? Allowing an open-hearted relationship to blossom with another person is crucial in acting. It starts with giving your attention.

Connection Essentials

STEP ONE: Remove blockages.

DEVICES:

Free yourself from the social crutch of your phone. When you're with someone and you have the opportunity to connect with them, give them your undivided attention. Don't let your phone be a crutch so that you can stay isolated - even though it might feel safer. Giving someone you know the gift of your attention is one of the most precious gifts you can give both them and yourself.

FEARS:

Sort out your fear of connecting with another person – especially another actor. With all the discoveries that we've made, there's no need for you to

be afraid of being yourself with them – no matter their gender, personality, prestige or the head games that they play with you. You are their equal – and probably more courageous than they are because you're committed to growth. Contemplate this before your next audition or performance.



STEP TWO: CONNECTION ALERT!

When blockages happen, practice **AWARING**:

- Slow down
- Aware your feelings: What am I feeling?
- Aware your thoughts: What am I thinking?
- Aware your instincts: What instincts are being threatened? (i.e. self-esteem, fear of not getting the job, ambitions?)
- Aware your body's response: What is my body doing in response?
 - Fight-or-Flight response in the neck and shoulders?
 - Quick, shallow breathing?

Then ADMIT and ACCEPT these feelings. Don't fight them – trying to control them will generate more anxiety. Surrender to them. CELEBRATE this moment of awareness and be open to choosing a different energy – knowing that you are rewiring your brain even as you do this.

STEP THREE: CHOOSE

-  Choose acceptance and tolerance of the situation, and a love for the writer's creation and for the other actor.
-  Join the other actor in this unself-conscious moment of creativity.

NERVES THAT FIRE TOGETHER, WIRE TOGETHER

From the first moment you try this, neuroplasticity will kick in and make you more effective in your auditions and your work. But it takes continual practice on your part.

* * * * *

The Slow Listening Exercise

Find a partner who is willing to be adventurous with their heart. Take this game SLOWLY. Some people find this exercise challenging, but some, wonderful. It will certainly help your acting.

- 1) Decide who will be Person A and Person B.
- 2) Sit opposite your partner, and take some moments for both of you to close your eyes and notice any chattering going on in your minds; slow it down by taking a few slow, deep breaths. Person B makes a conscious decision to shift all your attention to Person A. This may be a new sensation – but allow yourself to enjoy the connection.
- 3) Person B asks Person A about their favorite holiday. Person A takes all the time in the world to tell their story, knowing that there's no need to rush and they have the complete attention of their partner. Go into every detail.

During this, Person B makes their partner the complete center of their attention. Let there be nothing more important to you at this time than hearing what the other person has to say. Put on hold your own point of view and any judgment you might have about what he or she is saying.

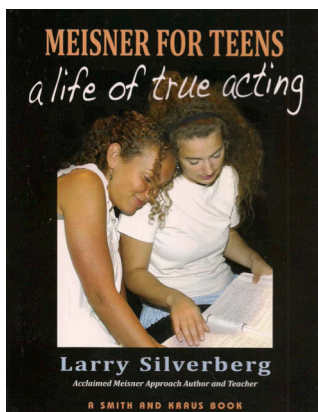
- 4) When Person A has finished sharing their memories, Person B asks questions and, as your partner answers, take all the time in the world not just to hear their words, but to notice their gestures and expressions, the music of their voice, their emotional tone, and their level of energy; take a genuine interest in them. Take it Slow. Listen for what they are wanting to communicate with you. As you slow down and listen, remember that you are not a passive spectator. Good communication is always give-and-take.
- 5) Listen to your gut about when Person A's story is finished – then switch, with Person A giving Person B their complete attention until Person B is finished. Person A then follows up by asking questions. Remember to COMPLETELY absorb every expression of their soul with a feeling of kindness: absorb their energy, each change in their tone of voice, each gesture.
- 6) When this encounter is complete, close your eyes and take several moments to enjoy this connection that you shared. Contemplate the wonder of this immediate moment, and express a quiet intention to carry this connection into your relationship and your future work.



SLOW gives your brain space to take in new information, discover something new about the other person and release your feelings. Describe your experience of doing that.

* * * *

Meisner techniques



Sanford Meisner's exercises are the best way to learn how to connect with another person, as I found at graduate school. And acting teacher Larry Silverberg presents these exercises in a clear and beautiful way. Great for newcomers of any age.

I am not affiliated in any way, but I strongly recommend getting this book (no matter what your age) and working through the exercises with a partner. Meisner actors are the most believable, and you can begin learning the style here.

LESSON 7

Play an Action



THE DEFINITION OF ACTING:
"ACTING IS LIVING TRUTHFULLY UNDER IMAGINARY CIRCUMSTANCES."
 Sanford Meisner

Approaching the Cliff Edge



Knowing that acting is 'living truthfully under imaginary circumstances', what might be holding you back from stepping off the cliff?

I've always thought of acting as being about _____

I think of myself as being _____ .

People might look at my work and think I'm _____ .

FOUR LEVELS OF ACTIONS & THEIR USES

1. **TALK:** informational, impartial, uninvolved
 - talking with someone you don't know or are emotionally hiding from
2. **CHAT:** light, neutral (and so enjoyable), impersonal
 - a pleasant conversation to kill the time
3. **DISCUSS:** fearless, subjective, focused, involved with the other person
 - to persuade someone to see things from your point of view
4. **ARGUE:** confrontational, passionate, non-listening
 - you are locked into changing someone and resist their views



Always choose DISCUSS & ARGUE as soon as possible. If you choose TALK & CHAT you will only create a low energy atmosphere for yourself, your partner and your audience.

* * * * *

SPOT THE ACTION WITH A PARTNER

Remember: in acting we don't play moods or emotions; we do something to our scene partner. We don't fake it, we don't imitate it or indicate it, we simply do it.

RULES:

1. Show your scene partner the list of possible actions in the box so that they can spot your action after you play it.

2. Take the following line: "Do you have any money?" and play the following actions at a scene partner.
3. **SCENARIOS:**
 - **COMMAND** them into giving you the money so that you can feed your starving mother.
 - **DESTROY** their selfishness so that you can feed your starving mother.
 - **TEASE** them into sharing their money by showing them how selfish they are.
 - **AMUSE** this person into seeing that money isn't everything
 - **EXHAUST** them into giving you the money
 - **ADVANCED: DECEIVE** them into thinking that you want the money, but you're actually trying to lure them into a trip with the police.
4. Put the energy of that action into your behavior towards them so that you get what you want. You don't have to stick completely to the text - you can add some words, as long as it suits the action.

RECAP: What did we learn?

"If the audience didn't see it, I didn't do it." Why didn't they?

1. I wasn't connecting to my partner and doing something to them (i.e. my action.)
2. My wants (my objective) were not important enough.

Many actors think: I have to feel the emotion and then I can act. NO: you play the Action and then you will feel the emotion.

LIST OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- **COMMAND**
- **DESTROY**
- **DECEIVE**
- **TEASE**
- **AMUSE**
- **EXHAUST**

REFLECTIONS ON ACTION ACTIVITIES:

- **Emotion is like sweat, but you must first put in the ACTION.**
- **Acting is never about the results. It's always about the ATTEMPT.** So long as you **throw yourself into trying to accomplish** whatever it is you must accomplish onstage, **you will have the audience's full attention** - whether you manage to achieve the goals or not.
- **If you insist on playing a 'character' then here's your future:**
 - You will continually perform clichés of how you think your character would 'say a line'.
 - You will neatly and safely retreat from yourself in your acting - while being self-absorbed about 'not breaking character'.
 - You will fear the audience.
 - You will reduce down the infinite possibilities of behavior and adventure.

- You will arrive at that which has already been done and which is now **lifeless**.

THE EMOTIONS / ACTIONS CONVERSION TABLE

Use this table to convert an unplayable emotion into a playable action that you can do to your scene partner.

EMOTION	ACTION
AFRAID	I SUPPRESS my fear.
ANGRY	I CRUSH you.
ANXIOUS	I ORGANIZE my chaotic thoughts.
ARROGANT	I BELITTLE you.
ASHAMED	I HIDE from you.
EMBARRASSED	I REPLAY my mistakes in my mind.
BORED	I FORCE you to see how boring you are.
CONFIDENT	I WIN you over.
CONTENT	I BATHE you in my warmth.
DEPRESSED	I BOMBARD myself with reminders of my failures.
DISAPPOINTED	I PUNISH myself for my mistakes.
DISGUSTED	I CRUSH your self-esteem.
EXHAUSTED	I CONSERVE my exhausted energy.
FRUSTRATED	I JUGGLE several things at once.
GUILTY	I FORCE myself to think of how awful I am.
HAPPY	I IGNITE feelings of joy in you.
HESITANT	I DISARM your power over me.
HOPEFUL	I AWAKEN possible beautiful happenings.
HYSTERICAL	I CONTAIN my uncontrollable excitement.
IMPATIENT	I SPEED you along.
JEALOUS	I HURT you for hurting me.
JOYFUL	I DAZZLE you with my brilliance.
LONELY	I OVERWHELM myself with self-loathing.
LOVING	I TAKE CARE of you forever.
LOVESICK	I BATHE myself in the awfulness of impossible love.
MISCHIEVOUS	I TEASE you.
PASSIONATE	I DEVOUR you.
PROUD	I SHARE my brilliance with you.
SHOCKED	I OUTRAGE you with your mistake.
SHY	I PERSUADE you to help me open up to you.
SUSPICIOUS	I PUSH you away from me.



ACTIONS BRAINSTORM: List below the actions that you found yourself 'doing' to another person. The more aware we are in our daily life that these actions are natural, the more natural this style of acting will be in our work.

Action:

Action:

Action:

LESSON 8

Connect with your Emotions



THE NEURO ACTING EMOTION TOOLKIT

This toolkit uses various resources to give you a technique to quickly generate heightened emotions, and it gives you a procedure to 'step out' of the emotion. It incorporates the Stanislavski concepts of 'Objective, Obstacle and Action'.

Who does it work for?

This technique works very effectively in young actors who are emotionally open and free.

Who does it not work for?

From my teaching experience, this technique will not work for people who first feel a heightened emotion, then reject this state of being 'out-of-control' and deflect it with humor. Please set aside this neural pathway and be open to feeling a raw, genuine emotion.

First, the Science

Emotions are physical responses created by the nervous system (i.e. limbic and sympathetic). A stimulus, like a surprise or threat, will make your body change in a specific way:

- *you will breathe differently*
- *you will stand differently*
- *you will hold your face differently.*

This physical change in your body generates the emotion. We will use the ALBA technique to physically INDUCE an emotion by manipulating **breathing, posture** and **facial expression**.

ALBA was created by research psychologist Susana Bloch in order to help patients access trapped emotions. Her work is covered in her book 'ALBA Emoting.'

Secondly, the Art

Humans resist feeling heightened emotions, so we actors are going to use that same instinct to **SUPPRESS** the emotion. Paradoxically this will have the effect of **intensifying it** so that we can fully EXPERIENCE it. However we won't self-consciously stay in the emotion; we will then engage with our scene partners, reconnect with our intentions and ACT upon them.

So, the Four Steps of Inducing & Using Emotions are:

1. **Induce:** using the steps from ALBA Emoting
2. **Suppress:** make a deliberate effort to suppress the feelings, while still remaining 'in the zone'
3. **Experience:** don't censor the feelings but allow them to happen
4. **Act:** re-engage with your scene partner.

ALBA EMOTING Instructions

Source: Bloch, Susana. [ALBA Emoting](#).

The Five Basic Emotions we'll induce are:

1. Joy/Laughter
2. Tenderness/Love/Friendship
3. Fear/Anxiety
4. Sadness/Crying
5. Anger/Aggression

With practice, you will develop a 'muscle memory' of these emotions, so that you need only change your breathing and it will summon the emotion!

Read this before going into the steps of inducing:

- **ORDER:** The order must always be: breathing – posture – facial expression.
- **INTENSITY:** In the early stages of training, give **maximal** intensity to the exercise (i.e. with the maximal muscular activation or relaxation) in an **exaggerated** mode. This is called the Robotic phase, as the patterns are produced to their greatest intensity, with attention to technical precision. The appearance of the emotion will be stereotypical, oversized and usually fake. Trust wherever your feelings take you, as you're in a safe, supportive and tolerant environment.
- **TIME:** Allow time for the exercise so that you may enter fully into the particular emotion. The effector patterns induce a genuine experience of emotion in the actor (*this may or may not involve the emergence of memories and/or images*). The patterns merge with the organic experience and subtly individuate without losing their basic integrity; the appearance, and experience, of the emotion becomes genuine.
- **REPETITION:** Each emotional pattern should be repeated two to three times, immediately followed by the Step-Out procedure (page 13) after each pattern is worked.
- **MIX IT UP:** Alternate the patterns with other general body work such as stretching, postural changes, a quick game, reciting a brief text, and then

coming back for some more work with patterns. It is very important to work with care and individual attention since controlled respiration and voluntary muscle movements are very tiring and at the beginning very emotionally demanding exercises.

- **MODULATION:** Once the pattern has been well practiced at such a level, *the intensity should be reduced*. This should be done by modulating (decreasing the intensity of the breathing pattern) and diminishing the amount of muscular tension and/or the number of body and facial muscle groups involved, in a very controlled manner. *Three levels of intensity should be practiced:* (1) minimal (2) moderate and (3) maximal, until you are able to reproduce each at will.

1. Inducing 'Joy/Laughter'

1. **Baseline state:** standing in a centered posture, begin breathing very calmly, with a regular rhythm. Relax all your facial muscles, with the eyes open looking straight to a point on the horizon.
2. **Inducing:**
 - **Breathing:** inhale sharply through the nose and exhale the air through the mouth in quick short out breaths.
 - **Posture:** allow the body to be very relaxed, the head loosely hanging backwards.
 - **Face:** raise the corners of your lips and your cheeks, relax and narrow the eyes.
3. **Finish** with the Step-Out procedure (page 13).

2. Inducing 'Tenderness/Love/Friendship'

1. **Baseline state:** standing in a centered posture, begin breathing very calmly, with a regular rhythm. Relax all your facial muscles, with the eyes open looking straight to a point on the horizon.
2. **Inducing:**
 - **Breathing:** breathe very evenly through the nose.
 - **Posture:** Slightly tilt your head sideways. Keep your body very relaxed.
 - **Face:** put up a little smile; keep your eyes open with relaxed lids.
3. **Finish** with the Step-Out procedure (page 13).

3. Inducing 'Fear/Anxiety'

1. **Baseline state:** standing in a centered posture, begin breathing very calmly, with a regular rhythm. Relax all your facial muscles, with the eyes open looking straight to a point on the horizon.
2. **Inducing:**
 - **Breathing:** take sharp in-breaths through the open mouth, 'holding' as it were, your breath; keep the breathing shallow and irregular.

- **Posture:** tense the body, inclining it slightly backwards, as if trying to avoid something.
- **Face:** open your eyes wide, raise the eyebrows and draw them together, raise the upper eyelids and tense the lower eyelids, tense the lips and stretch them down.

3. **Finish** with the Step-Out procedure (page 13).

4. Inducing 'Sadness/Crying'

1. **Baseline state:** standing in a centered posture, begin breathing very calmly, with a regular rhythm. Relax all your facial muscles, with the eyes open looking straight to a point on the horizon.

2. **Inducing:**

- **Breathing:** Breathe through your nose, with short, quick intakes of breath until your lungs are filled, followed by a long exhale like a sigh through your open relaxed mouth.
- **Posture:** Relax your body, feeling a heaviness with your arms hanging; let your head droop forwards.
- **Face:** point your gaze downwards and let the eyelids droop; lift the inside ends of your eyebrows. Let the lip corners turn downwards. Let the breathing guide you.

3. **Finish** with the Step-Out procedure (page 13).

5. Inducing 'Anger/Aggression'

1. **Baseline state:** standing in a centered posture, begin breathing very calmly, with a regular rhythm. Relax all your facial muscles, with the eyes open looking straight to a point on the horizon.

2. **Inducing:**

➤ **Posture:**

- a. Stand with one foot in front of the other, almost crouching
- b. Hold your arms at your sides with your palms up as if to protect you
- c. Bend your body and head slightly forwards
- d. Clinch your fists

➤ **Face**

- a. Tense your eye muscles, pull your eyebrows down and together
- b. Tightly close your lips and clench your teeth.
- c. Spread your nostrils
- d. Focus your eyes on the object that you hate

➤ **Breathing:**

- a. Breathe through the nose only with fast, abrupt intakes of breath and exhalations.
- b. Continue this breathing and start to tighten your shoulders, arm muscles and neck.

- c. Continue the breathing, the posture and the facial expression for the next one or two minutes.

3. **Finish** with the Step-Out procedure below.

Instructions for the Step-Out Procedure for Alba Emoting

Stand in an upright position with feet parallel, aligned with the hip bones. Relax your facial muscles, and in a relaxed way, focus your eyes straight ahead at the level of the horizon.

In this posture, breathe through the nose and out through the mouth with a quiet, easy and relaxed rhythm, without forcing the breath, trying to keep each breath-in the same length as each breath-out.

Now, interlace your fingers in front of you, and on an inhale, raise your the arms above your head, bend the elbows and reach behind the neck, breathing in all the way through the movement. Pause, then breathe out the air gently as if you're blowing out an imaginary candle, while bringing your arms down to the initial position, breathing out all the way down.

Let's repeat this two times, very mindfully.

Now gently massage your face from the center of the face outwards. Smooth away all the tension. Rub down the shoulders and the arms, rub down the rib cage, rub down the thighs, the back of the legs, down to the calves. And massage the face one more time.

Now shake out the whole body and return to an upright posture. Your face is relaxed and your eyes are looking straight ahead in a relaxed way.

Slowly and evenly, breathe in and out three times, with each breath-in the same length as each breath-out.

* * * * *

THE SEVEN UNIVERSAL EMOTIONS by John Sudol

Source: Sudol, John. Acting: Face to Face.

Although these exercises do not replace the concept of playing actions, this resource has helped many actors with 'frozen faces' to have more dynamic expressions. Like ALBA Emoting, it can actually help to induce emotions. Try practicing in front of a mirror – paying close attention to each muscle group in the face.

1. SURPRISE

Surprise uses three muscle groups: the brows are raised, the eyelids are raised, and the mouth drops open in a relaxed manner.



Surprise has a fairly large family - within it you'll find: awe, wonderment, amazement, being dumbfounded, questioning, and doubt, to name a few. It's a neutral emotion, meaning it's neither positive nor negative. It's the briefest of all emotions because this expression doesn't stay on your face long before it is followed by another expression that shows your evaluation of the surprising event.



- Triggers: something sudden, unexpected or novel.
- Sensation: a moment of disorientation or uneasiness.
- Actions to play: to understand or obtain more information

2. FEAR

Fear uses three muscle groups: the brows are raised and drawn together, the upper eyelids are raised/the lower eyelids are tensed, and the lips are tensed/stretched back or down.



Although fear and surprise share the same muscle groups, if you compare them, you can clearly see the difference. Surprise is brief and there's no tension in any of the muscle groups. In the fear family you will also find worry, apprehension, horror, and terror.

- Triggers: a threat to physical or psychological well-being.
- Sensations: The breath quickens and the heart beats faster. Warm sensations are felt in the legs. It's hard to swallow.
- Actions to play: to run away, freeze, avoid, or minimize the threat.

3. DISGUST

Disgust can be expressed in two areas. The upper lip raises toward the nose or the nose makes wrinkles. When both muscle groups come into play, the cheeks rise and the brow pulls down.



In the disgust family you'll find everything from dislike, distaste, disapproval, and revulsion.

- Triggers: contamination, something offensive, rotten objects.
- Sensations: mild tension in the stomach to wrenching, gagging and vomiting.
- Actions to play: to avoid, to eliminate the contaminated object or thought.

4. CONTEMPT

Contempt: tightening and lifting of the lip corner on one side of the mouth.



Contempt is the only emotion that is asymmetrical and moves toward the side of the mouth. If you're judging someone (or their actions) to be stupid or below you, you're more than likely experiencing contempt. Contempt can also be a fun emotion to experience, like when you're feeling a little cocky, or thinking you're superior to someone.

- Triggers: immoral action, a feeling of intellectual superiority
- Action to play: to assert superiority.

5. ANGER

Anger uses three muscle groups: the brows are pulled down and together, the upper eyelids are raised/lower eyelids are tense, and the lips are tightened.



Anger is a very complex emotion and has a big family. Parts of this emotion appear when we are thinking, confused or perplexed. They also appear when we are determined to do something. Other emotions you will find in anger are annoyance, irritation, frustration and rage.

- Triggers: a goal that's obstructed, injustice, perceived violation of society norms, disappointments, someone else's anger, self-preservation
- Sensations: heart and breath speed up. You may feel slight tension in your jaw, warmth in your hands, and/or the hair on the back of your neck stands up.
- Actions to play: to remove the obstacle, control, punish or retaliate.

6. SADNESS

Sadness uses two muscle groups: the inner corners of the brows are raised, the eyelids droop, and there is a downturn of the lip corners.



The Sad family includes helplessness, hopelessness, disappointment, and longing to name but a few. For the actor, sadness can be a black hole you will sink into because when you are sad for a while, you no longer have any impulses. You don't want anything.

- Triggers: any meaningful loss
- Sensations: an overwhelming sense of heaviness in the body. It might even be difficult to swallow.
- Action to play: to bear with the loss or surrender.

7. HAPPINESS

Happiness shows with raised lip corners and cheeks, crow's feet wrinkles, and narrowing of the eyes.



Happy covers all the positive emotions from sensory pleasures, amusement, and contentment to pride in an accomplishment. It's the most recognized of all the emotions. We smile for many reasons: to break the ice upon meeting someone new, to seem more agreeable or submissive. However, there is a difference between a cordial smile and a genuine smile of happiness.

- Triggers: goal attainment, accomplishment, pleasure or excitement
- Sensations: an overall sense of well-being
- Actions to play: to share your joy or to seek more of it.

EMOTIONAL BAROMETER EXERCISE

Think of a person in your life with whom you have recurring difficulty, with some emotional intensity on your part. It might be with your child about his or her homework. It might be with your spouse about helping with housework, or any particular difficulty you have with a friend, or a colleague at work. Create in your imagination a challenging situation you have with that person and let yourself feel the emotions that you usually experience in that situation. Then reduce the intensity of these emotions – remembering that it is all in your imagination. Pause, and let yourself experience this feeling of lowered intensity. Now deliberately increase the intensity of your emotions, perhaps even exaggerating what you usually experience with that person. Pause and experience that feeling for a moment. Then reduce the intensity again. Repeat this emotional involvement of increasing and decreasing intensity four or five times. Now that you have done this mental rehearsal as described above, you are ready to apply it in real life. When you do, you will notice the two things begin to occur: as you reduce your emotional intensity, you will be able to become more attuned to the other person and better hear what he or she is trying to say. You will be more alert and vital, able to come up with new ideas, feelings, behaviors, and solutions. When you're also likely to find is that the other person will feel more at ease and less defensive in your presence.

* * * * *

HOMEWORK FOR LESSON 9: READ THIS SCENE

EXCERPT FROM DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Arthur Miller

Read the following scene to prepare for the video in part 2: Create an Acting Score.

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES: In this searing look at 'the American Dream', Willy Loman, an elderly salesman, is exhausted, depressed and suicidal from spending his life on the road making money for someone else. He desperately needs to get an office job. So he visits his boss, who is actually the son of the man that Willie has worked under for years. Read the scene first as it will give you the elements to scoring a scene in Video 2.

WILLY: Pst! Pst!

HOWARD: Hello, Willy, come in.

WILLY: I'd like to have a little talk with you, Howard.

HOWARD: Sorry to keep you waiting. I'll be with you in a minute.

WILLY: What's that, Howard?

HOWARD: Didn't you ever see one of these? Wire recorder.

WILLY: Oh. Can we talk a minute?

HOWARD: Records things. Just got delivery yesterday. Been driving me crazy, the most terrific machine I ever saw in my life. I was up all night with it.

WILLY: What do you do with it?

HOWARD: I bought it for dictation, but you can do anything with it. Listen to this. I had it home last night.

Listen to what I picked up. The first one is my daughter. Get this. *(He flicks the switch and Roll out the Barrel is heard being whistled.)* Listen to that kid whistle.

WILLY: That is life-like, isn't it?

HOWARD: Seven years old. Get that tone.

WILLY: Ts, ts. Like to ask a little favor if you...

(The whistling breaks off, and the voice of Howard's daughter is heard.)

HIS DAUGHTER: Now you, Daddy.
 HOWARD: She's crazy for me! (*Again the same song is whistled.*) That's me! Ha!
 WILLY: You're very good!
 HOWARD: Sh! Get this now, this is my son.
 HIS SON: The capital of Alabama is Montgomery; the capital of Arizona is Phoenix; the capital of Arkansas is Little Rock; the capital of California is Sacramento...
 HOWARD (*holding up five fingers*): Five years old. Willy!
 WILLY: He'll make an announcer some day!
 HIS SON (*continuing*): The capital...
 HOWARD: Get that — alphabetical order! (*The machine breaks off suddenly.*) Wait a minute. The maid kicked the plug out.
 WILLY: It certainly is a...
 HOWARD: Sh, for God's sake!
 HIS SON: It's nine o'clock, Bulova watch time. So I have to go to sleep.
 WILLY: That really is...
 HOWARD: Wait a minute! The next is my wife. (*They wait.*)
 HOWARD'S VOICE: Go on, say something. (*Pause.*) Well, you gonna talk?
 HIS WIFE: I can't think of anything.
 HOWARD'S VOICE: Well, talk — it's turning.
 HIS WIFE (*shyly, beaten*): Hello. (*Silence.*) Oh, Howard, I can't talk into this...
 HOWARD (*snapping the machine off*): That was my wife.
 WILLY: That is a wonderful machine. Can we...
 HOWARD: I tell you, Willy, I'm gonna take my camera, and my band-saw, and all my hobbies, and out they go. This is the most fascinating relaxation I ever found.
 WILLY: I think I'll get one myself.
 HOWARD: Sure, they're only a hundred and a half. You can't do without it. Supposing you wanna hear Jack Benny, see? But you can't be at home at that hour. So you tell the maid to turn the radio on when Jack Benny comes on, and this automatically goes on with the radio...
 WILLY: And when you come home you...
 HOWARD: You can come home twelve o'clock, one o'clock, any time you like, and you get yourself a Coke and sit yourself down, throw the switch, and there's Jack Benny's program in the middle of the night!
 WILLY: I'm definitely going to get one. Because lots of times I'm on the road, and I think to myself, what I must be missing on the radio!
 HOWARD: Don't you have a radio in the car?
 WILLY: Well, yeah, but whoever thinks of turning it on?
 HOWARD: Say, aren't you supposed to be in Boston?
 WILLY: That's what I want to talk to you about, Howard. You got a minute? (*He draws a chair in from the wing*)
 HOWARD: What happened? What're you doing here?
 WILLY: Well...
 HOWARD: You didn't crack up again, did you?
 WILLY: Oh, no. No...
 HOWARD: Geez, you had me worried there for a minute. What's the trouble?
 WILLY: Well, tell you the truth, Howard. I've come to the decision that I'd rather not travel any more.
 HOWARD: Not travel! Well, what'll you do?
 WILLY: Remember, Christmas time, when you had the party here? You said you'd try to think of some spot for me here in town.
 HOWARD: With us?
 WILLY: Well, sure.
 HOWARD: Oh, yeah, yeah. I remember. Well, I couldn't think of anything for you, Willy.
 WILLY: I tell ya, Howard. The kids are all grown up, y'know. I don't need much any more. If I could take home — well, sixty-five dollars a week, I could swing it.
 HOWARD: Yeah, but Willy, see I...
 WILLY: I tell ya why. Howard. Speaking frankly and between the two of us, y'know — I'm just a little tired.
 HOWARD: Oh, I could understand that, Willy. But you're a road man, Willy, and we do a road business. We've only got a half dozen salesmen on the floor here.
 WILLY: God knows, Howard. I never asked a favor of any man. But I was with the firm when your father used to carry you in here in his arms.
 HOWARD: I know that, Willy, but...
 WILLY: Your father came to me the day you were born and asked me what I thought of the name of Howard, may he rest in peace.
 HOWARD: I appreciate that, Willy, but there just is no spot here for you. If I had a spot I'd slam you right in, but I just don't have a single solitary spot. (*He looks for his lighter. Willy has picked it up and gives it to him. Pause.*)
 WILLY: Howard, all I need to set my table is fifty dollars a week.
 HOWARD: But where am I going to put you, kid?
 WILLY: Look, it isn't a question of whether I can sell merchandise, is it?

HOWARD: No, but it's a business, kid, and everybody's gotta pull his own weight.

WILLY: Just let me tell you a story. Howard...

HOWARD: 'Cause you gotta admit, business is business.

WILLY: Business is definitely business, but just listen for a minute. You don't understand this. When I was a boy — eighteen, nineteen — I was already on the road. And there was a question in my mind as to whether selling had a future for me. Because in those days I had a yearning to go to Alaska. See, there were three gold strikes in one month in Alaska, and I felt like going out. Just for the ride, you might say.

HOWARD: You don't say.

WILLY: Oh, yeah, my father lived many years in Alaska. He was an adventurous man. We've got quite a little streak of self-reliance in our family. I thought I'd go out with my older brother and try to locate him, and maybe settle in the North with the old man. And I was almost decided to go, when I met a salesman in the Parker House. His name was Dave Singleman. And he was eighty-four years old, and he'd drummed merchandise in thirty-one states. And old Dave, he'd go up to his room, y'understand, put on his green velvet slippers — I'll never forget — and pick up his phone and call the buyers, and without ever leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living. And when I saw that, I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want. 'Cause what could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eighty four, into twenty or thirty different cities, and pick up a phone, and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different people? Do you know? When he died — and by the way he died the death of a salesman, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of the New York, New Haven and Hartford, going into Boston — when he died, hundreds of salesmen and buyers were at his funeral. Things were sad on a lotta trains for months after that. (*He stands up.*) In those days there was personality in it, Howard. There was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it. Today, it's all cut and dried, and there's no chance for bringing friendship to bear — or personality. You see what I mean? They don't know me any more.

HOWARD : That's just the thing, Willy.

WILLY: If I had forty dollars a week — that's all I'd need. Forty dollars, Howard.

HOWARD: Kid, I can't take blood from a stone, I...

WILLY: Howard, the year Al Smith was nominated, your father came to me and...

HOWARD (*starting to go off*): I've got to see some people, kid.

WILLY: I'm talking about your father! There were promises made across this desk! You mustn't tell me you've got people to see — I put thirty-four years into this firm, Howard, and now I can't pay my insurance! You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away — a man is not a piece of fruit! (*After a pause.*) Now pay attention. Your father — in 1928 I had a big year. I averaged a hundred and seventy dollars a week in commissions.

HOWARD: Now, Willy, you never averaged...

WILLY: I averaged a hundred and seventy dollars a week in the year of 1928! And your father came to me — or rather, I was in the office here — it was right over this desk — and he put his hand on my shoulder...

HOWARD (*getting up*): You'll have to excuse me, Willy, I gotta see some people. Pull yourself together. (*Going out.*) I'll be back in a little while. (*Howard exits.*)

WILLY: Pull myself together! What the hell did I say to him? My God, I was yelling at him! How could I?

* * * *

(*Howard returns.*)

HOWARD: Willy, look...

WILLY: I'll go to Boston.

HOWARD: Willy, you can't go to Boston for us.

WILLY: Why can't I go?

HOWARD: I don't want you to represent us. I've been meaning to tell you for a long time now.

WILLY: Howard, are you firing me?

HOWARD: I think you need a good long rest, Willy.

WILLY: Howard...

HOWARD: And when you feel better, come back, and we'll see if we can work something out.

WILLY: But I gotta earn money, Howard. I'm in no position to...

HOWARD: Where are your sons? Why don't your sons give you a hand?

WILLY: They're working on a very big deal.

HOWARD: This is no time for false pride, Willy. You go to your sons and you tell them that you're tired.

You've got two great boys, haven't you?

WILLY: Oh, no question, no question, but in the meantime...

HOWARD: Then that's that, heh?

WILLY: All right, I'll go to Boston tomorrow.

HOWARD: No, no.

WILLY: I can't throw myself on my sons. I'm not a cripple!

HOWARD: Look, kid, I'm busy this morning.

WILLY: Howard, you've got to let me go to Boston!

HOWARD: I've got a line of people to see this morning. Sit down, take five minutes, and pull yourself together, and then go home, will ya? I need the office, Willy. Oh, yeah. Whenever you can this week, stop by and drop off the samples. You'll feel better, Willy, and then come back and we'll talk. Pull yourself together, kid, there's people outside.

END

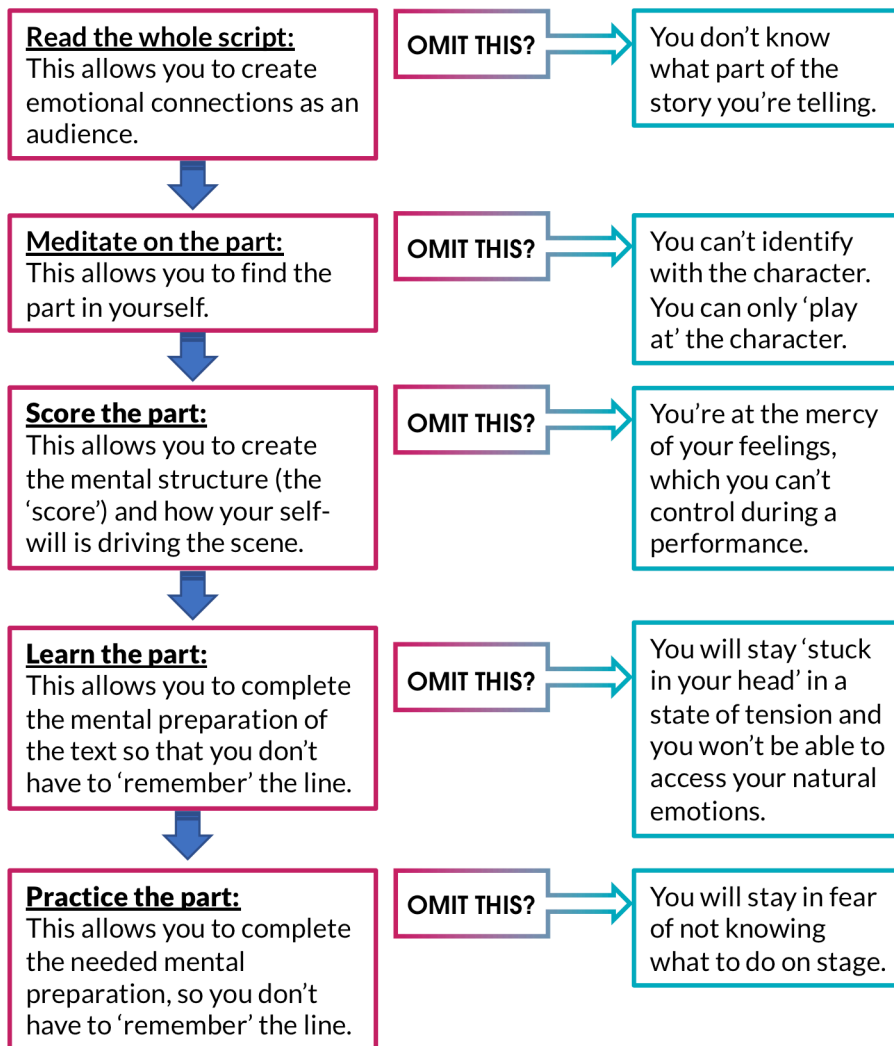
LESSON 9 – PART 1

Prepare & Share a Role



PREPARING A ROLE

1. The Mental phase: 'Train the dog.'



2. The Instinctual phase: 'Take the dog off the lead.'

Play the score:

Each time you run the scene or monologue, focus on your moment before and then intentionally forget your lines while focusing on your relationship with your partner and what you need from them. You will then stop speaking lines so you can become a channel for the playwright's energy.

THE MENTAL PHASE

1. READ THE WHOLE SCRIPT

READTHROUGH 1: Make notes about:







- How did the play make me feel as a member of the audience?
- What emotions do I think my character was feeling at different points in the story?
- Where were the surprises? The revelations?

READTHROUGH 2:

- How is my character changing over the course of the play?
- What are my character's deep needs and desires?

2. PROBE THE SCRIPT

1. **Compile a list of facts that the playwright gives you in the script, and list any questions that arise from that. (See page 24 for examples and separate worksheet called 'Character Lists'.)**
 - biographical facts
 - beliefs and attitudes: what the character says or believes about or herself
 - relationships, including:
 - what my character says about others, including people not seen,
 - what other characters say about me.
2. **Compile a list of things the character says about him/herself.**
3. **Compile a list of things that the other characters say about him/her: (i.e. Martin's wife says he is a "gentle man." How do I behave as a gentle man?)**

-  **HISTORY:** What are some events in the past that have shaped my character?
-  **MOMENT BEFORE:** What happens before the story begins?
-  **INTENTIONS:** What are the pictures in my mind of the future that drive my actions?
-  **EVENTS:** How do events in the story change my character?
-  **PERSONALITY PROFILE:** What personality does my character have, and how is it different to my own personality?
-  **SUPER-OBJECTIVE:** What is the over-arching desire that my character has (which he/she may not even be aware of)?

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER LIST & QUESTIONS

MARTIN GRAY, EDWARD ALBEE'S 'THE GOAT'

He is having trouble remembering. Preoccupied? Why?

He has business cards in a jacket and he can't remember where he got them.

He is an innate worrier.

He has a wife named Stevie.

He has a son named Billy. He worries about him.

He is fifty years old today.

He feels the need to kiss Stevie on the forehead. (Why not on the lips?)

He doesn't want to order business cards. Why?

He holds secrets, and projects that on to Stevie.

He is wearing his prep school tie. Why?

He is honest enough with Stevie to confess about Sylvia – or is it a subconscious expression of his deep integrity?

He is snooping about Stevie (mistrust as a projection of his own dishonest behavior). I will review them her

He loves wordplay ("dandled")

He feels the need to correct people's English.

His son had a 17 year birthday party last week and Martin wasn't there.

He respects his son's intellect.

He has been awarded a huge contract to design the World City – holds huge responsibilities – but at the moment he doesn't care.

He has been told by Stevie that he can be cranky.

He is considered egotistical by Ross.

He is happily in love with Stevie and they have a good sexual relationship.

He has integrity towards Stevie when traveling – hence the confusion?

He and Stevie (mostly him) want a house in the country – why?

He has been seeing Sylvia for six months.

He doesn't want Billy to swear.

According to Stevie, he's "decent, liberal, right-thinking, talented, famous and gentle."

He respects Stevie's privacy – doesn't open her mail.

He attended a meeting for people recovering from bestiality on the pretense of trying to discover why they thought they had a problem – is that really true?

He "can't feel what I'm supposed to". (What does he think he's supposed to feel, and why can't he feel it?)

His creative mind makes him go off on wild creative tangents (i.e. "April, May, June", "Eumenides", "make mudpies; climb a tree").

He feels "deeply troubled, greatly divided."

He's only been in love with Stevie (and Sylvia)

He is transformed from scorn and intolerance at the beginning of the play to acceptance and tolerance.

He thinks (at the beginning of the play) that "I think I've lost it." (said to Ross)

He believes that integrity is crucial (i.e. To thine own self be true.) although he has been dishonest with Stevie. Believes that integrity is our soul. Life is not about appearances or "getting by".



3. CONTEMPLATE THE ROLE

- How am I like my character?
- How are the events that my character is experiencing similar to what I'm going through right now, or have gone through in the past?
- How is my character **different** to me? Where can I search for these different ways of behaving and incorporate them?

4. SCORE THE ROLE

Scoring is important because it adds:

- Dynamics and variety
- Tools for creating realistic, recognizable behaviour
- Room for spontaneity
- Ability to repeat performances during a long run
- Power to expand your performance when needed

'Actioning' (the process of assigning a verb to an actor's behavior) is helpful for both actors and directors. It gives actors a process for creating performances that are truthful, varied and repeatable. Directors find this a helpful way to give clear, concise and practical directions to their actors (see special note for directors at the end of this document.)

SECTION 1: TERMINOLOGY



- **SUPER-OBJECTIVE:** the single driving need in the character over the course of the play. It motivates all action, but it may be unconscious to the character.
 - Death of a Salesman: *Willie needs to believe that the American Dream is real, so that he can hope to rise above his own sense of inferiority.*
- **UNIT or EVENT:** a description of what happens in the scene, expressed as if it happened in a story. "A unit is the largest piece of text in which one event, pertinent to all the characters present, takes place." from Freeing the Actor by Mike Alfreds.
 - *Willie's argument with Howard ruins his hope of getting a better job in*

the office.

- **OBJECTIVE:** what a character **wants, needs or desires**. These are steps along the way to reaching his or her super-objective.
 - *Willie wants to PERSUADE Howard to give him the desk job.*
- **OBSTACLE:** what **prevents** the character from achieving what they want (internal or external).
 - *Howard is more interested in his gadgets than in Willie's safety.*
- **BEAT:** the smallest, most precise action that an actor plays to reach her objective. A new beat starts when there is any transition, however small, or any shift of thought, attitude or action. There may be several beats within larger actions. This change of dynamic affects only one person, as opposed to a Unit. (see page 7)
- **ACTION:** what the character **does** to achieve their objective (i.e. to get what they want.) An action is a tactic expressed in a verb that you do to another person, or to yourself.

The OBJECTIVE: What do I want?



AN OBJECTIVE IS NOT A NOUN.

SO, INSTEAD OF:

I want a car.
I want a boyfriend.
I want attention.
I want order.

SAY:

I want to EARN enough for a car.
I want to WIN Jack's heart.
I want to FASCINATE everyone.
I want to ORGANIZE this mess.



AN OBJECTIVE IS NOT AN ADJECTIVE.

SO, INSTEAD OF:

I am angry with her.
I am nervous.
I am frustrated.
I am in love.
I am being charming.
I am confused.
I am friendly.
I am arrogant.

SAY:

I want to DESTROY her.
I want to FOCUS my attention.
I want to FIND a way out.
I want to TAKE CARE of him forever.
I want to DAZZLE the guests.
I want to FIGURE OUT a solution.
I want to WIN him over.
I want to BELITTLE him.



FIRST CLASS OBJECTIVES HAVE:

	1. VERB:	2. RECEIVER:	3. DESIRED RESPONSE:
I want...	to WIN	Richard's	admiration.
I want...	to AWAKEN ...	my father's	enthusiasm.
I want...	to REDUCE	my friend	to tears.
I want...	to IGNITE	the crowd	to riot.
I want...	to PERSUADE ..	Romeo	to kiss me.

The ACTION: What do I do to get what I want?



THE MARK OF A GOOD ACTION:

An action word must always be a **transitive verb** – a doing word that you can actively do to someone else. It is always in the present tense and it goes from you (the subject) to the person you're speaking to (the object).



THE TEST:

1. Place it between the words 'I' and 'you' and see if the sentence makes sense.
 - GOOD: I 'charm' you. I 'encourage' you.
 - BAD: I 'interfere' you, I 'anger' you.
2. Ask yourself:
 - a. Is this something I could 'put my shoulder' into?
 - b. Is this something I could do for minutes at a time?

VERBS THAT ARE ACTABLE AND UN-ACTABLE:

GOOD: Actable	BAD: Too intellectual	BAD: Too behavioral
hurt	reciprocate	walk
inspire	atone	listen
suppress (push down)	glean	cry
incite (stir up)	repudiate	laugh
enlighten	reign	shout
crush	blame	run
encourage	mollify	eat
explain	vilify	sit
organize	obfuscate	stand
destroy	ruminare	fear
prepare	reinstate	like
tease	require	belch
cheer up	accomplish	wait
reassure	adjust	record
mock	impugn	recover
BAD: Too Existential	BAD: Too Triggering	
think	slap	
use	slice	
try	shoot	
be	kick	
live	touch	
exist	kiss	
become	quit	

SECTION 2: THE THREE TYPES OF ACTABLE VERBS:

Note that these actable verbs are color-coded to add a visual element to creating an acting score in Section 4. They also get 'hotter' as you move down the list.



Directors: if you want more emotional intensity from your actor, give them an adjustment to play an action further down the list.

1. NURTURING (loving, encouraging, supporting)

- I want to **EXPLAIN** (make something clear)
- I want to **SOOTHE** (reduce pain or gently calm)
- I want to **REASSURE** (remove doubts or fears)
- I want to **AWAKEN** (rouse or make someone aware for the first time)
- I want to **AMUSE** (make someone find something funny)
- I want to **CHEER UP** (make someone happy)
- I want to **ENCOURAGE** (give support so that they'll do something)
- I want to **INSPIRE** (create a positive feeling)
- I want to **EXCITE** (cause strong feelings of enthusiasm)
- I want to **IGNITE** (arouse or inflame someone)

2. USING (manipulating, disturbing, deceiving)

- I want to **PREPARE** (make someone ready to deal with something)
- I want to **ORGANISE** (arrange the activities of someone efficiently)
- I want to **NUDGE** (encourage gently)
- I want to **STROKE** (apply gentle pressure)
- I want to **BUILD** (strengthen a relationship)
- I want to **TEASE** (make fun in a playful way)
- I want to **DISARM** (take away the power to hurt)
- I want to **JUSTIFY** (prove to be right)
- I want to **ENSNARE** (catch in a trap)
- I want to **PURSUE** (follow someone to catch or attack them)
- I want to **SEDUCE** (attract someone to do something that is wrong)

- I want to **DECEIVE** (make someone believe something untrue)
- I want to **PLEAD** (to make an urgent appeal)
- I want to **BEG** (stronger than pleading)
- I want to **INCITE** (persuade someone to act in a violent way)

3. DAMAGING (discouraging, harming, destroying)

- I want to **DAZZLE** (overwhelm someone)
- I want to **SUPPRESS** (restrain or push down)
- I want to **CONFUSE** (cause someone to become perplexed)
- I want to **BELITTLE** (make someone seem unimportant)
- I want to **MOCK** (tease or laugh at in a scornful manner)
- I want to **INSULT** (treat with scornful abuse)
- I want to **OVERRIDE** (reject by exerting your authority)
- I want to **COMMAND** (take authority over)
- I want to **EXHAUST** (drain someone)
- I want to **FORCE** (push to the utmost)
- I want to **DEVOUR** (consume destructively)
- I want to **HURT** (cause mental pain or distress)
- I want to **OUTRAGE** (arouse fierce anger or shock)
- I want to **BOMBARD** (attack someone persistently)
- I want to **CRUSH** (bring about overwhelming embarrassment)
- I want to **OVERWHELM** (bury or drown completely)
- I want to **RUIN** (cause great and permanent damage)
- I want to **DESTROY** (defeat someone completely)

SECTION 3: THE EMOTIONS/ACTIONS CONVERSION TABLE

Actors should avoid playing emotions as acting is about connecting. If an actor's goal is to project emotion then they are self-centered and unavoidably boring after several seconds. This table converts an unplayable emotion into a playable action that you can do to your scene partner.

EMOTION	ACTION
AFRAID	I SUPPRESS my fear.
ANGRY	I CRUSH you.
ANXIOUS	I ORGANIZE my chaotic thoughts.
ARROGANT	I BELITTLE you.
ASHAMED	I HIDE from you.
EMBARRASSED	I REPLAY my mistakes in my mind.
BORED	I FORCE you to see how boring you are.
CONFIDENT	I WIN you over.
CONTENT	I BATHE you in my warmth.
DEPRESSED	I BOMBARD myself with reminders of my failures.
DISAPPOINTED	I PUNISH myself for my mistakes.
DISGUSTED	I CRUSH your self-esteem.
EXHAUSTED	I CONSERVE my exhausted energy.
FRUSTRATED	I JUGGLE several things at once.
GUILTY	I FORCE myself to think of how awful I am.
HAPPY	I IGNITE feelings of joy in you.
HESITANT	I DISARM your power over me.
HOPEFUL	I AWAKEN possible beautiful happenings.
HYSTERICAL	I CONTAIN my uncontrollable excitement.
IMPATIENT	I SPEED you along.
JEALOUS	I HURT you for hurting me.
JOYFUL	I DAZZLE you with my brilliance.
LONELY	I OVERWHELM myself with self-loathing.
LOVING	I TAKE CARE of you forever.
LOVESICK	I BATHE myself in the awfulness of impossible love.
MISCHIEVOUS	I TEASE you.
PASSIONATE	I DEVOUR you.
PROUD	I SHARE my brilliance with you.
SHOCKED	I OUTRAGE you with your mistake.
SHY	I PERSUADE you to help me open up to you.
SUSPICIOUS	I PUSH you away from me.

SECTION 4: HOW TO SCORE ACTIONS INTO A SCRIPT

STEP 1: Divide the text into thoughts (BEATS).

What is a thought? A thought is what a character intended to say when they started speaking.



A **new thought** begins when the character suddenly **thinks of something new**, or **additional**, to say when the other character starts to speak. Each thought will have **its own action verb** allocated to it. This is called a **beat**. We then draw a line (always in pencil) in the script all the way across the page marking the end of one beat and the beginning of a new one.

STEP 2: Choose a transitive verb.

- **Explore with questions:** “How am I, the character, responding to what has just happened?” (Even if it’s unclear from the text, find a reason for speaking these words). Also ask, “What effect do I wish to have on the other character?” And, “What single verb seems to sum up that intention?” Note: always state your actions in a first person voice (i.e. “I belittle you”, instead of “He belittles her.”). This reduces the distance between you and your character.
- **Be strong:** Avoid neutral verbs like ‘I INFORM’ or ‘I ASK’, as they are boring, neither do these verbs suggest a strong intention or strategy. Strong verbs force actors to engage with each other and consequently offer clear guidance about how to speak or move.
- **Focus on what you want:** Focus on your character's *intention*, not the *effect* of the information on the other character. (i.e. perform ‘I OVER-RULE YOU’, not ‘I DISAPPOINT’ you.)
- **Be direct, not sneaky:** The action must be **direct, actual** and **overt**; the action verb always expresses what is done on the surface. The action verbs you choose must always express what your character is *overtly* and *explicitly* trying to achieve with a particular thought, not what he or she might be *thinking* or *plotting* under the surface. This is because all actions are done in order to have particular effect on another character or characters, so unless the other characters are able to *experience* that affect, the action cannot be said to have been ‘done’. So, never choose a verb that expresses the subtext and not the text.

- **Learn the actions with the lines:** The next stage is to learn the lines and the action verbs together, so that each spoken line automatically evokes the idea of its accompanying action verb. This is a very important point within your early rehearsal work.

Step 3: Create the score of actions.

- **Building to a climax?** With each new beat, increase the level of intensity of your actions so that by the end you are at the bottom of the **RED** list of actions in the Actioning Guide.
- **Want to show confusion?** Choose actions from different colors (**GREEN, YELLOW, RED**).
- **Want to indicate a realization?** Build to a climax of RED, then drop back down into GREEN.

Step 4: Play the score:

- With each rehearsal of a scene, always 'let go' of your previous energy from an earlier rehearsal, and return to the energy of your first action in the score.
- When acting the scene, focus entirely on what you're doing to the other character, instead of focusing on your lines, and be vulnerable to what they're giving you in return.

The play has nothing to do with words.

You do not act words

- you act with your soul.

Stella Adler



SECTION 5: EXAMPLE OF A SCORED SCENE

This is the beginning of Scene 3 from Edward Albee's 'The Goat'. The score is written from Martin's point of view as he grapples with the havoc that he has caused his family.

CIRCUMSTANCES:

Billy, a 15-year old boy, walks into his own sitting room, where he sees his dad, Martin, sitting in the ruins of their living room, following a huge argument between Martin, Billy, and his mother, Stevie. The argument started after they found out that Martin has been having a romantic affair with a goat. The floor is full of broken pieces of pottery from Martin and Stevie's argument.

SPECIAL NOTE:

This scoring allows the actor playing Martin to be even more confused: he expects Stevie to enter, but he is surprised when it's actually Billy. So Martin has to change tactics. He doesn't have to act the surprise – it occurs naturally.

UNIT: Martin gets closer to Billy than ever before.

OBJECTIVE: I want to salvage my relationship with my wife, Stevie.

OBSTACLE: She said she'd destroy me after learning that I'm having an affair.

*ACTION: I **WRACK MY BRAINS** about how I'll explain me and Sylvia.*

Scene Three

An hour or so later. Martin is sitting in the ruins. Maybe he is examining a broken piece of something. The room is as it was at the end of Scene Two. The front door slams; Billy enters; Martin rises and stands in the middle of the room.

**SURPRISE:
IT'S BILLY!**

(Billy's entrance begins a new unit.)

*OBJECTIVE: I want to **CALM** Billy down so that I can think.*

BILLY. (Looking around.) Wow!

OBSTACLE: I'm in a brain fog with my shame.

MARTIN. (Realizing Billy is there.) Yes; wow.

*ACTION: I **SIDESTEP** Billy with humor.*

BILLY. (Seemingly casual.) You guys really had it out, hunh.

MARTIN. (Subdued; almost laughing.) Oh, yes.

BILLY. Where is she?

MARTIN. Hm? Who?

BILLY. (Not friendly; overly articulated.) My mother. Where is my mother?

MARTIN. (Mocking.) Where is "my mother"? Not "mother – where's mother?" Not that, but ... "where is my mother?"

BILLY. (Anger rising.) Whatever! Where is she? Where is my mother?

MARTIN. (Arms out; helplessly.) I ... I ...

BILLY. (Angrier.) Where is she?! What did you do ... kill her?

MARTIN. (Softly.) Yes; I think so.



5. LEARN THE ROLE

PREP WORK:

Know what you're saying

First: score the scene so that you know your circumstances, objectives, obstacles and actions. This will help you know **why** you are saying **what** you are saying. Otherwise you're just cramming words into your head, and you risk losing them during the performance.

Let your imagination fly

From the very first time you read the piece, read it like a good novel or screenplay and imagine yourself in the scene as if it were real. This will already start making the reality and the flow of the scene make sense to you – and create ideas of future movements and gestures.

Seeing is believing

I can't stress highly enough the importance of using anchoring images that are in your imaginary environment. Also, you could brainstorm an image for each line – especially if your piece already has imagery or descriptive language within it. Simply associate a specific image or visual with each of your lines and your lines will come to you much faster. Later you can discard these images or choose to keep using them.

LEARNING TACTICS FOR MONOLOGUES:




Slow is the fastest way to learn

Read through the monologue slowly, and just listen to the words. Focus on pausing between each line, really absorbing what's being said.


Sound it out

Write the first sentence on a pad of paper and speak the words out loud as you write – not **after** you write, but as you write the sentence. This way, you are writing, speaking, and in essence, drawing the words into your muscles, both mentally and physically. You are beginning to internalize the words and make them your own.

Easy does it

-  Learn the monologue one sentence at a time or you will overwhelm your mind. So learn the first sentence, then run that sentence and add the second sentence. Then run those two and add the third sentence, etc.
-  An even better way to learn it: learn the last beat first then learn the second to the last beat, and run it into the last. This will create a psychological momentum that draws you from the preceding beat to the last beat. Might seem confusing at first, but you'll learn it faster that way.
-  When the lines start sticking into your head, run the lines with a sheet of paper covering your upcoming lines in the script. It will help you see how your thoughts flow and point out any gaps in your memory.

Get it into the body

-  You can lock the lines more quickly into the mind and body if you “suit the action to the word” (thank you Shakespeare) instead of learning the lines sitting still. Get on your feet, run the lines and let the gestures flow, especially if you're referring to a remembered object within the piece. But: keep an open mind and don't get locked into a permanent delivery of a line. Always keep it fresh.

- 🌀 Still troubled connecting all the lines together? Run the lines like a dance step: on phrase number one: step your right foot forward. Phrase number two: left foot forward. Repeat. Then increase the speed of the steps as you increase the pace.

Bedroom perfect is not good enough.

'Bedroom perfect' means that you could run the lines in a quiet place with no distractions. Not good enough for the actor. You need to know your lines so well that there's NO WAY you could say anything but these lines – especially for a monologue, which is the most potentially stressful acting situation. You need to know those words so well that you could speed through them without thinking, because in your acting, you must not be searching for your lines; you must be focused on what's happening with your imaginary scene partner. I tell my students to get a peeler and work their way through a carrot (or some other task that requires your full concentration) while going through the words. Only then will you be able to start acting.

SLOW IS THE FASTEST WAY TO LEARN

Rachmaninov was a dedicated and driven perfectionistic pianist. He worked incessantly, with infinite patience. Once a student had an appointment to spend an afternoon with him in Hollywood. Arriving at the designated hour of twelve, he heard an occasional piano sound as he approached the cottage. He stood outside the door, unable to believe his ears. Rachmaninov was practicing Chopin's Etude in Thirds, but at such a snail's pace that it took him a while for the student to recognize it because so much time elapsed between one finger stroke and the next. At first the student suspected the master must be recovering from a stroke, but then realized this was his method of learning a new piece. Twenty seconds per bar was his pace for almost an hour – which is about 1/10th the final playing speed!



6. PRACTICE THE ROLE (SPECIAL NOTES FOR MONOLOGUERS)





Prepare before the run through

Before running it, sit down, close your eyes and remind yourself of all the items in the moment before of your character's life, especially your circumstances and your environment.



Think of getting a photo of someone that you might be talking to (preferably someone you don't know). Imagine that you need something from them, and that you can be hurt deeply by them if you don't get what you need from them.

1. Get reacquainted with your scene partner.

What matters is not so much *who* you are talking to but *what* you address in your partner at the moment. Have fun dealing with your absent partner – you don't have to look at them the whole time – do you look at someone the whole time you're going for a walk with them? For example, take the line: "What am I going to do?" and deal with it different ways.

-  Look at them entirely.
-  Look at them for the line and then look away.
-  Look away and then return to them.
-  Look away entirely.

Special scene partners:

-  If you're stumped for an idea of whom you're talking to, I always make them 'The One Who Knows What it's Like to be Me'. This person accepts you and is your champion as I get through this tough time.
-  Soliloquies - where you're supposedly talking to yourself. Consider making them the someone that you're addressing when you're stressed out and you find yourself talking out loud (i.e. "Where are my keys!?). It's perfectly natural and it's normal, and that's what's happening in a soliloquy. Imagine taking your mind from the front of your head and placing it out in front of you and wrestling with it, reasoning with it, pleading with it. Your audience will identify, because we've all had these 'imaginary friends'.


2. Find a similar situation.


- Imagine that you are personally going through the same situation.
- If that's difficult to imagine, think: "*What's this situation like from my real life?*"
- If you feel you would never act as the character does in the situation, ask yourself, "*In what situation would I act that way?*"
- Talk out loud about it and then switch to the text, keeping the sense that you're making it all up.

The run through

Create a springboard to grab your audience.

1. **Improvise a brief dialogue with an acting partner.** Set up the circumstances in such a way that you are led into the first line of the text without a break; at that point your acting partner stops talking but continues to offer nonverbal feedback. Created by actor John Cazale when he worked with Al Pacino.
2. **Create a springboard event:**


 Pretend to hear something that your imagined partner says.

 Before you speak your first line, say something **silently** to yourself:

- a one sentence summary of the main point of the monologue
- improvise a brief dialogue 'preface' to the text: either from yourself or your scene partner.

This gets you started acting before you speak. It helps you connect with your partner and it will bring your thoughts into focus. It will also draw your audience out of their world and into yours.




 React to an imaginary sensory stimulus.

 Do a strong, simple physical activity.

3. **"Now, just talk to them."** (..and don't worry about getting it 'right'.)

4. **Try this exercise if you're really struggling with connecting to your absent partner: *The Alphabet Game*:** Picture a close friend across the room and accept that they are there. "Hear" the friend say "A", respond with "B", then hear "C," and so on. At some point in the middle of the exercise, break into the first line of the monologue. During the monologue the actor keeps picturing the kind of supportive feedback.

Remember:

-  Don't stare at your scene partner. Make your anchoring images as real as possible and use them. It will make your performance more believable.
-  Imagine that your scene partner is making it as difficult as possible for you to get what you want from them. Allow yourself to feel the frustration of this. It will bind you to them and increase your focus.
-  Always keep a sense of playfulness and exploration whenever you rehearse

* * * * *

THE PHYSICAL PHASE: Performance Time!

Rehearse this checklist in the final rehearsals before the performance of your piece. (Note: don't listen to the Visualization track until the actual performance.) The more you rehearse each of these steps, the more likely you'll have set down the neural pathways that will make your performance confident, relaxed and passionate.

T MINUS 15 MINUTES:

- Listen to this helpful the mental rehearsal track in the downloads of your lesson. It will help calm your nerves, focus your mind and improve your performance.

T MINUS 1 MINUTE:

Celebrate yourself and remind yourself:

- They want you to do a great job; nobody wants an actor to fail.
- You are bringing something entirely unique to this audition. Celebrate that.

- You are an instrument for the writer and director. You don't have to blow them away. You're simply there to give them an option.

T MINUS SEVERAL MOMENTS:

Moments before you start, remind yourself:

- What is the event of the story, what is this piece about?
- How does my character change during the course of it?
- What just happened to my character?
- What's my attitude toward my scene partner at this very moment?

LIFTOFF:

- Take a moment to viscerally connect with your scene partner and remind yourself of your Objective.
- Say to yourself, "I have no idea what I'm about to say, but you need to hear this."
- Look into the eyes of your imaginary scene partner.
- Play the score and fight for what you need with all your energy and focus.
- Make contact with your anchoring images.
- Trust the process and do not control your emotions.

AFTERWARDS:

If they give you any side coaching or feedback, listen carefully and crucially: incorporate those notes. They will be watching for how flexible you are in your performing and how well you can take direction.



LESSON 9 – PART 2

Create an Acting Score



PRACTICE SCENES FOR SCORING:

Use these two scenes with a partner to develop and play a score. Remember to commit fully to the actions and work towards actions from the 'red' list.

SCENE 1:

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:

You are both 3rd class passengers on the Titanic. You were heading for America to take up your jobs as servants. You are standing at the rails as you watch the last lifeboat leave without you.

SCRIPT:

Actions	Text
	A: Think this will last long?
	B: What?
	A: This. It has to end soon.
	B: This?
	A: It can't go on forever, right?
	B: It can't go on forever.
	A: You're right. It isn't so bad.
	B: If you say so.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

A	B
Entertain	Unburden
Calm	Mislead
Worship	Defend
Soothe	Pacify
Glorify	Reassure
Idolize	Repair
Unravel	Spare
Tease	Assure
Befriend	Bear
Brighten	Amuse
Coax	Charm
Tantalize	Hush
Follow	Overcome

SCENE 2:

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:

Both of you are on a residential or camp. You're at breakfast. The previous night 'B' snuck out with a group after lights out, and 'A's brother was badly hurt, and is in the hospital. 'A' doesn't know any of this. 'A' only knows that she asked 'B' to look after her brother during the residential, and that 'A's brother was going to have breakfast with them today.

SCRIPT:

Actions	Text
	A: Hi!
	B: Hello.
	A: How's everything?
	B: Fine, I guess.
	A: Well?
	B: Well, what?
	A: What did you do last night?
	B: What do you mean?
	A: What did you do last night?
	B: Nothing.
	A: Nothing?
	B: I said nothing!
	B: Sorry I asked.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

A	B
Entertain	Unburden
Calm	Mislead
Worship	Defend
Soothe	Pacify
Glorify	Reassure
Idolize	Repair
Unravel	Spare
Tease	Assure
Befriend	Bear
Brighten	Amuse
Coax	Charm
Tantalize	Hush
Follow	Overcome



LESSON 10

Love the Soul of the Artist

"Always be a first-rate version of yourself and not a second-rate version of someone else." Judy Garland



FINAL REFLECTIVE TASK: How have my ideas of acting changed during the course? Has my life changed? How?

THE EIGHT GUIDEPOSTS:

1. Celebrate who you are.
2. Handle social media responsibly.
3. Continue to know yourself.
4. Nurture your spirit.
5. Work on your craft each day.
6. Feed and grow your curiosity.
7. Practice these principles.
8. Stay on the crest of the wave.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Actor's Way never ends – and that's the exciting part of being an artist – the journey will always change as we change – as we become more truthful and creative. Keep going deeper, keep experiencing life, keep working each day on your skills and your life as an artist will be a happy one – even if...

"The greater the artist, the greater the doubt. Perfect confidence is granted to the less talented as a consolation prize." Robert Hughes.

Know that you're never alone in that feeling.



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