



HOW TO BE A GOOD ACTOR

CURATED BY CARRIE OLSEN

Quoted posts are mostly from Anthony Abeson's book, *Acting 2.0: Doing Work That Gets Work in a High-tech World*

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ANTHONY ABESON

**STOP TALKING
AND PICTURE
WHAT YOU
ARE TALKING
ABOUT.**

”

IAN SOMERHALDER

Learning and applying what is learned are two vastly different things. It takes the right teacher to offer a way in which to easily bridge the two while staying emotionally connected to whatever you find yourself doing in a professional situation on screen or stage.

DILSHAD VADSARIA

Always have respect for the work and find the life and humanity behind the words.

JAMES WOLK

I uncovered my deeper purpose for pursuing the craft and learning to be proud to call myself an actor.

MARTHA GRAHAM

Because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium, and it will be lost. The world will not have it.

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**The more human the actor,
the more humane the audience.**

”

KONSTANTIN S. STANISLAVSKI

Every good actor, even in moments of heightened emotional connection, was relaxed. Conversely, sweating and straining were hallmarks of the bad ones.





DO WORK THAT GETS WORK


ANTHONY ABESON

9 Bad acting, no matter how attractively packaged, would be revealed for the rip-off that it is. - Anthony Abeson

10 Undeveloped talent used is talent used up. - Anthony Abeson

11 The richer your soul, the richer the contribution you'll make to your audience. - Anthony Abeson

12 Distraction is one of the most common occupational hazards of our profession. - Anthony Abeson

13 This our raw material: humans being humans. - Anthony Abeson

14 Concentrate on developing your strengths and eliminating your weaknesses. - Anthony Abeson

15 In addition to developing your talent in these ways, work on marketing it as well. - Anthony Abeson

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HAROLD CLURMAN

**THERE IS
NO ONE
RIGHT
WAY.**

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We must recognize that to avoid having our talent used narrowly, we must develop it widely, by regularly tackling the great roles of dramatic literature. - Anthony Abeson

Any training worth its salt cannot be fetishistic or one-size-fits-all. If the actor's not improving, it's up to the teacher to change methods and arrive at a way that's effective. - Anthony Abeson

Actor training is not about the teacher, but about the artists who come to us trusting that somehow, with patience, ingenuity, and grace, we'll be able to find the ways to ignite their talent. - Anthony Abeson

The menu of choices, real and/or imaginary, is huge: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touches, music, thoughts, actions, objects, and so on. - Anthony Abeson

Use your sensitivity to the power of suggestion to make believe. - Anthony Abeson

Acting's the ability to live truthfully in large imaginary circumstances, not the ability to replace the imaginary with small reality of our own lives. - Anthony Abeson

Feed yourselves well; don't make the images boring or a compilation of data. - Anthony Abeson

The word emotion derives from the Latin for "moving away from": Your emotions, words, and actions must all be expressive, propelled outward from you, threaded through with what Stanislavski imagined as the "needle" of your intention. - Anthony Abeson

- 25** The extent to which you allow your feelings to show is an interpretive choice. - Anthony Abeson
- 26** It's shocking how we're treating our work as recitation when it's meant to be action. - Anthony Abeson
- 27** Our actor's birthright, encoded in our DNA, is the ability to create life, not just say words. - Anthony Abeson
- 28** We've lost touch with what we did when we were kids - we didn't just talk, we played. - Anthony Abeson
- 29** Acting is doing. - Anthony Abeson
- 30** You have to see your words as actions to do, not merely things to say. - Anthony Abeson
- 31** If all you're doing is talking, your work is going to have a two-dimensional, talking-head quality that just doesn't pop. - Anthony Abeson

32 Talk is indeed cheap and actions do speak louder than words. - Anthony Abeson

33 You can't be reacting as if you're experiencing if you're only speaking what you're reading or reciting what you've memorized. You must resist the power of the "muscles of the tongue" and instead engage the power of suggestion. If you do, you'll be immediately susceptible to belief in the imaginary, and if you believe, so will we. - Anthony Abeson

34 If you listen to and picture what you're saying, images will attach themselves to the words, and the words will attach themselves to your memory, because now they'll be alive in your imagination, not dead on the page. - Anthony Abeson

35 We must return to picturing if we truly want to infect both the lines and the audience with life. That's the art, not recitation. - Anthony Abeson

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ANTHONY ABESON

**THAT'S WHY I STRESS THE
IMPORTANCE OF THINKING
THE THOUGHTS OF THE
CHARACTER, BECAUSE
DOING SO IMMEDIATELY
CROWDS OUT UNCREATIVE
THOUGHTS AND PLUNGES
US INTO THE MIND OF THE
CHARACTER AND OUR
BELIEF IN THE VERY
CIRCUMSTANCES WE'RE
GOING TO HAVE TO BELIEVE
IN THE AUDITION ROOM.**


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37 One of the most important areas to warm up is your mind, because where it goes, the rest of you follows.
- Anthony Abeson

38 We're always concerned with our lines, our competition, our wanting to book, that we often leave our mind - the thing that can screw us up the most - totally unsupervised, allowing insecure-actor thoughts to undermine our focus and confidence. - Anthony Abeson

39 Stop wasting your precious, creative audition energy in the waiting room on your devices, your uncreative thoughts, and your competition, and instead channel it into thinking the thoughts of your character, creating a moment before. If you do, then instead of being burdened by the "pressure of having to begin", you'll be catapulted into the room with the state of being your character in the scene, not nervous actor in audition. - Anthony Abeson

40 Focus on your work, not their words. - Anthony Abeson



**EXHIBIT A
WILLINGNESS
TO ENGAGE,
TO TAKE
DIRECTION, TO
DEMONSTRATE
OTHER SIDES
OF YOURSELF.
WHAT'S THE
WORST THEY
CAN SAY?
"NO."**

ANTHONY ABESON

41

Let your work speak for itself,
confident that if given half a chance,
you can surprise them, because you
have the universe inside you. -
Anthony Abeson

42

Part of your talent lies in your sensitivity
to the power of suggestion, so you don't
need to force anything. - Anthony
Abeson

43

Perceive the monologue as a
situation to experience - not words to
say. - Anthony Abeson

44

Disconnect from your devices for a
moment and become still, really still.
- Anthony Abeson

45

Actors lit from within, whose signals
through the flames can light the
world. - Anthony Abeson

46

Despite all the stuff that can (but
shouldn't) get in the way, your work is
to play (a part) - so it's meant to be
fun. - Anthony Abeson

47

Without wonder and insight, acting is
just a business. With it, it becomes
creation. ~ Bette Davis

**I URGE ALL OF YOU
TO MAKE CERTAIN
THAT YOUR WORK,
NOT THE CASTING
DIRECTORS WORDS
AND REACTIONS, IS
THE FOCUS OF YOUR
ATTENTION. IF
YOU'VE TRULY DONE
YOUR BEST, THEN
YOU CAN LET IT GO.**

ANTHONY ABESON

**BEAR IN MIND THAT
OFTEN A WORDS
AND/OR BEHAVIOR
CAN CARRY WIDELY
DIFFERENT
CONNOTATIONS FOR
SPEAKER AND
LISTENER, CASTING
DIRECTOR AND
ACTOR, EVEN TWO
ACTORS.**

ANTHONY ABESON

50

ANTHONY ABESON

Before you start focusing on the lines and (God forbid) how you think you should say them, ask yourself, “What’s going on?”. If you can answer that in a juicy way that grabs you, you’ll play that, not your condition, or your words - which, by the way, will come out just fine once you’re connected to the situation

ANTHONY ABESON

**ACTING IS NOT ABOUT
YOU, IT'S ABOUT WHAT
HELEN HAYES CALLED
“ADDING SOMETHING TO
THE LIVES OF THE
AUDIENCE OUT THERE.”**

**ACTING 2.0: DOING WORK THAT GETS WORK IN A
HIGH-TECH WORLD**

52



ANTHONY ABESON

Choose a loaded partner - real, imaginary, or a “combo platter” (where you pass a real partner through your imagination to make him or her more suitable_ - and turn the monologue into a dialogue as if the partner’s reaction with words and/or behavior at strategic moments impel you to talk.

53

Acting should be bigger than life.
Scripts should be bigger than life. It
should all be bigger than life. ~ Bette
Davis

54

Find in yourself those human things
which are universal. ~ Sanford Meisner

55

Use what you know. Don't worry
about what you don't know. ~ Michael
Shurtleff

56

If you really do want to be an actor
who can satisfy himself and his
audience, you need to be vulnerable.
~ Jack Lemmon

57

Actors think more with their hearts
than with their heads. ~ William Esper

58

My job is usually to express emotion
as freely as possible. ~ Meryl Streep

59

I'm curious about other people. That's
the essence of my acting. I'm
interested in what it would be like to
be you. ~ Meryl Streep

**Listening is not
merely hearing.
Listening is
reacting. Listening
is being affected
by what you hear.
Listening is active.
~ Michael
Shurtleff**



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MICHAEL SHURTLEFF

**CREATING
RELATIONSHIPS
IS THE HEART
OF ACTING.
IT IS BASIC.
IT IS
ESSENTIAL.**”