

Michael Chekhov

(Afternoon) September 16, 1940

FEELING OF EASE
FEELING OF FORM

Lesson for Beginners:

FEELING OF EASE:

All our exercises are both psychological and physical. Therefore, when we say feeling of ease, we realize that it is both psychological and physical. If in our psychologies we are light and easy, our bodies will respond to these suggestions. For instance, many fat persons, such as Pickwick, are very light, like bouncing balls, while normal or even thin persons can be very heavy and weighty because of their psychology.

Exercise the feeling of ease by:

1. Lifting the arms.
2. By walking forward and backwark three steps.
3. By walking forward, raising the arms, turning, and then walking back.
4. Add music to this exercise and realize that the rhythm of the music helps you because rhythm is the easiest and lightest thing in the world. Use the rhythm as a definite means for getting the feeling of ease.
5. Imagine two persons - one has this feeling of ease and rhythm and, consequently, moves well - the other person is embarrassed and unrhythmical and awkward.
6. Now march with this feeling of rhythm and ease.
7. Add the feeling of the center which is in your chest. This center leads all your movements - your body does not lead you. We must explore our physical possibilities and at the same time make it light and flexible.
8. Lie down and get up with this feeling of ease and center. Exercise the body in many different ways. In comedy we

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we must have this feeling of ease, but it is also necessary in even the heaviest form of art. It can be very heavy as an idea but very light as a piece of art.

9. Lie down and get up quickly - it must be quick but not hurried and without noise.
10. Now, without doing anything, just have the psychological desire to become lighter and easier.

FEELING OF FORM:

All art has form - psychological and physical. Without a feeling of form, it can only be more or less obvious chaos. Chaos and the creative state are two extremes and have nothing to do with each other. We can do nothing as artists if we are psychologically and physically formless. The form must have a certain spiritual content, a certain meaning.

Try to imagine your own body as the most perfect piece of art. It is essential for the actor to have this feeling of form in regard to his body, otherwise he will lose sense of form in himself. Even if he is playing a hideous this wonderfully fine part, such as Caliban, the artistic form has to be there. It is one of the basic things.

Exercise:

Now raise your arms, realizing that you are moving this form. Appreciate your ability to move this form. Move forward and back, realizing that you are moving your body. Now realize that in moving your body, your arms, a form remains in the air. Appreciate this pleasure of carving the air,

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realizing that a form is left there. You must develop this feeling of placing forms in the air and around you. Realize that I move my form and at the same time I create forms in the space around us.

Now kneel down and bow your head, then straighten up and lift your arms and head so that the whole process of contraction and expansion will be experienced as a moving form. These two extremes will be experienced completely so that you feel that you become bigger and taller when you expand, and smaller when you contract. Now add the experience of the center in the chest which really does everything - that the center moves your hands and arms and not they themselves. The movement originates from the center. Now combine the exercise with the music. Feel that the contraction is dark and the expansion like light rays.