

Lessons to Teachers

LESSON IV

CONCENTRATION
TEACHER - STUDENT RELATIONSHIP
THE ACTOR'S TERMINOLOGY
THE ACTOR AS A CREATIVE PERSON
THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

Goethe

CONCENTRATION:

First explain to your students what concentration is. Tell them that the first exercises are only to show them what it means to concentrate. The students must work first for an understanding of what concentration is and then what it feels like to concentrate. After many lessons we will be able to tell them that now they are concentrating. There are two steps: (1) Try to understand what concentration is. (2) Now try to be really concentrated.

When we are really concentrating, we use all of our five senses and more. For instance, we use the feeling of equilibrium, and we use a special feeling for the weight of an object. But we must first learn to concentrate on the two senses of eye and ear because they are more developed and that is enough because we must begin in the most simple way possible. In order that we may simplify the way to concentration, we use only the two senses. We use only the eye and the ear in order to make our lessons simple and to let the pupils understand what it means to be attentive and how to

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be attentive. After a time, when the students begin to be attentive, you will see that they will use many, many senses.

To be at one with an object means to feel and sense everything about it. In this work you will use more than your five senses. If it is an image, you are concentrating on, you must be able to feel the soul of the person or the thing you are concentrating on. Concentration means "being with" something, and the simplest way to begin is to train the two senses.

TEACHER - STUDENT RELATIONSHIP:

Write down all the exercises you give your pupils in the order which you believe to be the most simple and the clearest. Think over the themes much more intensively. You must spend hours on this work and then you will have results.

The students must be like children and the teacher like a mother. The teacher must never become aware of criticism in the class because it weakens all your powers as teacher. It finishes the teacher's powers over the pupil. The moment the students begins to criticize, and the teacher to apologize and plead, the student is no longer a student. He must have complete confidence in the teacher. The teacher must give the students a radiating presence.

THE ACTOR'S TERMINOLOGY:

We must create our own language in the theatre. For

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instance, to give warmth or sympathy means you give from one spirit-being to another; by giving your "being" it means that you are in the other person. We must not be afraid to use our own terms and to use words in a way that would seem strange in the English language. For instance, the word "being."

Continue the exercise for hands and arms to give form to thoughts; to give the form of the thought.

THE ACTOR AS A CREATIVE PERSON:

You must try to develop a feeling that you are a creative person; that you are capable of creating anything. You must have such a fine inner technique that you can say to yourself, "I want to be a creative person," and at once you can be, no matter if you are tired, lazy, or indifferent. Try to do everything as if it were a piece of art. That is the way to be a really creative person on the stage.

In order to find a way to be a creative person, you must understand how to create everything. Every movement, every action becomes a creative thing. Say to yourself, "I must be a creative person," and then pick up a book. Do everything as a piece of art. Whether you create one well-formed sentence or a whole part, in the theatre it is only a matter of degree - the essence is the same. An actor can show his talent by merely coming into the room in such a way that everyone will know he is gifted. Goethe was permeated

with this creative power. When he looked at a flower, he looked at it as if he was creating it. That is the right way to approach our work in the theatre.

Exercise:

Sit down as if you are creating something. Get up in the same way. If you train yourself in this way, you will begin to feel what form is. Try the most simple things. Try the same movement ten or twenty times until you really feel that it is a creation, and you are glad to do it. You will have form in your thoughts, in your heart, and in your actions. A creative process requires always that your whole being is used. A non-creative person will move each limb separately, as if it didn't belong to the whole body. A creative person must move with the whole being. Some energy must go through your whole body and not only through your body, but around the body also. That comes afterwards and is the most exciting form for the actor and for the spectator.

It is very important to find some examples from life; for example, Dorothy Elmirst. Everything she does is creative and a work of art. The finest feeling an artist can have is not to hurt anything around him. It is not only a physical thing, this "artistic touch." Your soul must touch everything with your feeling, as if it were a creation. When you are teaching or giving a lecture, your thoughts and

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the content of your lecture must be like this. You must "touch" us with your words.

You must ask everything you see and contact in your daily life, "What can you tell me for my purpose?" If we aim to be actors, everything we contact can help us if we realize that it has something to give us. Try some exercises with "power" and then with "doubt."

Take a sentence and repeat it twenty times as a piece of art. Say the same thing with your hands and with a gesture. You can speak this sentence - you can "touch" this sentence - now try to "think" the sentence as a form. To think, to speak, to move, to feel, not chaotically, but as a piece of art, you will find that you open your soul and that you give the possibility for your creative spirit the chance to come through your words, your movements, your thoughts, and your feelings.

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT:

That is what we want in our school, to open the doors for the creative spirit. Everybody has the creative spirit, but they have so many locked doors that they seem to be pieces of wood or stone. They are only doors which can be opened up, and we will see at once that the person is a brilliant, creative person. Try to create in thoughts, in words, in movements, little by little.

You must have the feeling that you are speaking with

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your whole body. You don't really have to move your whole body every time you speak, but you must feel the sensation of movement in your whole body. You must always know and sense this.