

ACTOR'S APPROACH TO WORKING
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ACTOR'S APPROACH TO WORKING ON THE PLAY:

I promised this morning that I would help you in producing these plays, and my first step will be to give you some suggestions

Point One - READING & IMAGINING: / Now you have your books with you and you have to learn your words by heart but beside that, the Method requires that you read your scenes - I mean the scenes in which you are acting. You must read it again and again, and by reading you have to imagine these scenes and your own characters from different points of view, which you know; from the point of view of atmosphere, etc. This reading must be done until you are able to do without the book, only repeating the whole scene in your imagination.

Point Two - INCORPORATION: Slowly, you have to try to incorporate your imagination, I mean for yourselves, not here in class, but how you have to work at home. You have to incorporate the action and the subject and everything.

Point Three - CHARACTERIZATION: I want you to elaborate gradually your characterization because, as you know from our point of

view, each part is a "character" part. That means that you have to find some characteristic features, psychological and physical, and develop them and let them grow, so that the part which seems to be without special characteristics becomes more and more characteristic, through your concentration on certain qualities, which you will find necessary to develop.

Today we shall work together, and tomorrow we shall divide more and more into groups, being led by our assistants, authors and collaborators, and work with different scenes.

Today, I want you to remember some main points of our Method, and then after remembering the styles of these two plays, tomorrow we shall work on the plays themselves. Through this effort to touch on the different points of the Method we will try to awaken in our souls the ability to live in our Method, and to have it in our hands to use, and to feel ourselves powerful enough to pick from the Method different points which we need.

CONCENTRATION:

First of all, very quickly, without special preparation, will you please concentrate on the sound which will come from this side of the Studio. Be concentrated - that means to have certain kind of activity in our whole body whether we are listening, looking or imagining - we must do it with our whole being and body. "I am concentrated," - that means I am somewhere - I am there, I am here, I am inside of me. We know that our Method requires when we are concentrated we

do not have to strengthen our brain - our head is quite free always. Actors are composed of legs, arms, hands and torsos and very little head - the head is something which cannot act - there are no limbs - the hands and face they must only radiate our whole being - our "actor's being." To be concentrated means to be concentrated with our actor's being, and not with the brain. Our method of concentration requires that we be absolutely free, without stiffness.

Stopping the exercise of concentration, try to realize that the real kind of concentration gives pleasure because it brings harmony in the whole.

FEELING OF EASE:

Take it inside of you - enjoy this feeling of ease. Walk up and down and develop it - increase it and don't allow your body to be stiff. Walk with your mind inside your body and try to see what part of your body is absolutely free. The actor must master himself and never depend on "habits" of body or mind. "I am the master of my own body and my own mind."

FEELING OF BEAUTY:

Beauty, in our sense - the aesthetic feeling. Sitting down and getting up with the feeling of beauty, try to avoid stiffness. Beauty must be experienced inside of you. Now realize again that you are masters of all these things - you do not depend on your bodies, your habits or your moods - you are masters of your own bodies.

FEELING OF FORM:

First of all, your whole being, your body, is a form, a beautiful form. Try to realize the form which moves itself, and you will find the moment when the form breaks. Each part of your body is a form, a beautiful form which you can enjoy as an artist. These are the means by which you have to sway the audience while you are on the stage. If you have a strong feeling of form the audience will enjoy with you everything on the stage. You know that there is a sign which will tell you whether you are doing your exercises correctly or incorrectly. If you have pleasure, that means you are right, but if you have to strive and feel certain contractions, that means you are not doing them correctly.

FEELING OF THE WHOLE:

Whatever we do we must be able to anticipate the end and to feel the beginning, and that gives us the ability to feel the whole thing, which is absolutely necessary for the artist. To have the feeling of the whole performance, the whole art, the whole scene, everything. I want you to take it as a whole which you have to fulfill. Enjoy this beautiful state of the whole. Will you please realize again very clearly - "I am beginning - I do - I have accomplished."

The "Four Brothers" must be continuously there, and sometimes even when life tears us to pieces and we come to the lesson, or the rehearsal, or the performance, all the

abilities must be there.

CONTACT:

Will you build a circle, remembering what we understand of contact, and establish the contact in a very business-like, unsentimental way, humanly opening your heart - there are no other means to establish the contact - all other means are an illusion. Open your hearts - it is technically possible to find another person through this psychological gesture: I am not important - You are important. It has nothing to do with sentimentality - I can have good feeling but not sentimentality. Try to be absolutely in a state of being unimportant. Break the circle which you have established - technically, break the contact, but do not actually break it. When you lose the contact, try to re-establish it with the means at your disposal.

We are now a group. Will you please bring structures and build for exercises, but you must keep the feeling of contact. This means that the forms must be born out of the feeling of form. We have to include in our contact not only us, but the construction and the music which will be suggested. Incorporate this music into the world of sound, the world of material things and human beings, and out of all these things you have to build one thing which will be the group which incorporates everything.

Private life kills the creative spirit. The bell

rings and I am no more a private person - I am an artist - I have my profession - I have the Method to manage my outer and inner being - I start my work - and that is what I want you to do at our rehearsals and let it be your professional instinct.

STYLE:

We shall start with Henry's play. Try to remember simply all the things we have done from this style, and try to permeate your own bodies with this quality we have found, but don't flounder - do it quite concentratedly. Gradually re-create your whole being so that you are able to move, to speak, in the style of Henry's play.

Characteristic for the style of Mr. Shdanoff's play - the feeling of form especially elaborated. Every word, each movement is form; inner state is psychological form; if I am on the stage it is form; if I am silent it is form. The style is "drama, near to tragedy."

Will you please remember the form is filled with content so that it can break. This is the second point for the style - the form which is always filled. Therefore, it must be a continuous threatening for the audience - form full of content and ready to break. The audience must be frightened with this form - if it were comedy the audience would be ready to laugh, but because it is tragedy it must frighten the audience. Now, try to break the form and justify it.