

Michael Chekhov

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IMPROVISATION
CONCENTRATION
IMAGINATION
RADIATION
CONTACT
INCORPORATION
CONTACT

IMPROVISATION:

Again let us make an improvisation on The Robbers scene based on atmospheres and imagination. Don't think out or invent things, but do it on the grounds of your imagination. Take the scene second by second and imagine it clearly. Atmospheres: 1. Unbridled. 2. Family warmth. 3. Fight for life or death. 4. Desolation.

CONCENTRATION:

1. We must know what the object is upon which we are going to concentrate. This is the first thing, otherwise it will be floundering. 2. Concentration is inwardly experienced as moving towards the object of your concentration. To develop this ability to move directly towards the object is one of the essential things in acquiring the ability to concentrate. While you are moving towards the object, you will get an idea of what concentration is. It is moving towards the object continuously. In our psychology we can move continuously, without any steps. Inwardly you can go on moving continuously, and this moving is one of the steps towards concentration. 3. You begin to embrace the object, as it were, to grasp it or take it with your invisible hands.

M. Chekhov

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IMAGINATION:

1. Imagine two things which have nothing to do with each other - a chair and a cow. In this exercise you will see how imagination and concentration really need one another. 2. Imagine some action in perfect detail, and then imagine it as if going backwards - for example, pouring a drink into a glass and then reversing the process.

RADIATION:

It is a very simple and pleasant thing. In radiating you enlarge your own being and are free to move everywhere. You can concentrate your radiation to one point, if necessary. You can radiate from different parts of your body. Radiation is nothing but the ability to move one's own being inwardly in the direction which you choose.

Exercise:

With a partner, come together and shake hands. 1. Send out radiation to your partner. 2. Move as a result of this radiation. In radiation you are sending out your own being, and this can be expressed inwardly or by physical means as well. 3. Point to some chosen object and by means of your physical arm send out your radiation. Then add a word and by means of this word you can also send out your radiation.

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This is also a constant ability. In order to have contact on the stage with our partners, we have, of course, to radiate. But there is a little nuance. In order to be able to find the contact psychologically, you must open yourself to the radiance of your partners.

INCORPORATION:

This is the well-elaborated imagination, or the imaginary event, in which you take part and then incorporate it in the right sense of the word. You give your body to it. After having met the difficulties in the physical world with your body, voice, and emotions, we have to rehearse it again in our imagination and then come back to it. Rehearse it many times in your imagination.

This process of drawing the image into our physical words and expression will give us two things. The imagination itself will develop quicker because it is not vague because it has to take into account our bodies, voices, etc., and the imagination will meet certain obstacles and then it has to grow and overcome this. On the other hand, our bodies and voices and emotions, having been forced to incorporate our imagination, become, in time, more flexible. They have to become more flexible because if I see something which is difficult to incorporate, I must develop all these things in me so that I will be able to have them in me to radiate.

M. Chokhov

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CONTACT:

To a musical phrase, form a group around a central figure. With every part of your being, be in contact both with the music and with the group. Now make the space a little more complicated. For instance, place a table in the middle of the room, take it into your consideration and be in contact with it. Now divide into two groups: one group will form a harmonious group in relation to the table and chair and the music, and the second group will form a group which will be, as it were, the answer to the other group.

Exercise:

1. Throw the ball from one to the other on the basis of contact. Every part of our being takes part in this exercise - it is more than just the physical ball.
2. Then add a musical phrase for throwing and catching the ball.
3. Then walk about, still throwing the ball to your next door neighbor.
4. Now walk freely around the room, throwing the ball to anyone anywhere in the room.