

Michael Chekhov

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CONCENTRATION
OUR METHOD
JUSTIFICATION - TRANSITIONS -
METAMORPHOSES
IMPORTANT POINTS

CONCENTRATION:

It is very important in our work to be conscious of all the things we have in our profession. For example, concentrate on a book on the table in the next room. See the book clearly in your mind. Then be aware of its size, its shape, its weight, etc. Then be with the book and have it in you. Then consciously bring it near to you. Then go out to it. Be the creator of the book.

Compare being concentrated and not being concentrated. Compare it as two different states of consciousness. Try to be more and more conscious of our exercises. Be able to explain them to new students.

For our type of actor, it will not be possible to say that "I cannot rehearse today," or "I cannot act today." This will not be possible because we have so many means to stand on - even with one toe if necessary! We have such means as objectives, atmosphere, feeling of truth, etc.; therefore it is not possible for us to be in any way vague.

OUR METHOD:

But to get this ability to stand on the ground, an actor must have a method - and we have it. To acquire the ability to use the Method when you know it, that is another

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thing. You must take the Method and use it and apply it consciously, and then it will become a power in our subconscious or super-conscious being.

With reference to the exercise you did yesterday, in which you tried to justify "the wind chases me angrily," some of you used a throaty voice to emphasize feeling. If a dreadful throaty voice is part of a characterization, then it is justified, but otherwise just to use a throaty voice to give supposed power is not right. It is not good to use a throaty voice to give the impression of passion.

JUSTIFICATION - TRANSITIONS - METAMORPHOSES:

We will take three positions and will try to justify not only the three moments, but the transitions and metamorphoses. The first position is a contracted one on the ground, as if you are pulling something; the second moment is on the knees, the arms outstretched to the sides holding something; the third position is again sitting on the floor, but not contracted this time, and pushing something away. As a condition, the tempo is given: the beginning is very slow, the middle part very quick, and very slow at the end. Use these movements to awaken your feelings. Until your feelings are aroused, the exercise has not been explored fully. Just being able to see what you are doing, and to justify it by doing certain physical things, is not enough. You must justify it psychologically; it must be psychologically necessary.

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Without justification, we will always be afraid and our acting will always be thin in quality, and the audience will have to work too hard to give us the justification which we lack and which they unconsciously feel the need of. They will try to supply it in some way, because it creates the reality for the audience.

IMPORTANT POINTS:

We must be able to criticize what we see. Our directors are not always aware of what the cast needs. The most dangerous thing is when the director overlooks the important point and speaks about details. Until he changes the important points, the work on details will never help him. Directors must ask themselves, "How can I help?" "What suggestions can I give?" "What is lacking?" "What is good?" This is absolutely necessary for our directors. With time you will get this ability to help at the point where it is necessary.