

Michael Chekhov

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THE GROUP - GROUP FEELING
Troublemaker-Doublemaker
THE GROUP - GROUP FEELING:

The Group is our slogan from now on. In this group idea is included everything - personal friendship, and comity and everything. The people who belong to the group inwardly, in the most real sense, act differently and that is the point. Even people who have criticized us negatively have mentioned that we are a group. It is not only obvious to us, but it is obvious to the audience that there is something about us which makes us different from other companies. This group feeling can be approached from different sides. With all our negative sides we must approach this group feeling - from the personal, from the community, and from the art. The significance of the group spirit will help us to make our group exercises.

First realize that your body and your psychology must be relaxed - nothing tense anywhere. Then open your hearts to each other - to everyone in the group. This exercise consists of two elements. The whole group, of which you must be aware, and then the individuals which comprise this group. Never lose the individuals while realizing the whole group.

Exercise:

One member of the group takes a chair and moves it in the room. The rest of the group must be with him, doing the same thing inwardly, being with the other person who is doing it - acting it. The same thing can be done on the stage.

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We can act the part of the other person while acting our own. It is also true of objects - when we have this relationship to them, they begin to act with us and for us. It is the way to awaken our creative imagination and powers. In our dreams we have such tremendous possibilities, and we can get this invisible life in our day life. If we get it as knowledge, we can keep it and manage it.

We must master this group feeling - we must become masters of certain things, not students. We will then have the ability to live with everything, but we must be able to live just as fully with our imagination, which is the very heart of our work. If, for instance, we imagine a thunderstorm, we can immediately act it. As it comes from the imagination, we can use it on the stage. The imagination must become for us a reality - it must be just as concrete.

Exercise:

Try to imagine autumn - try to become autumn and do autumn. We are all potential masters - we must realize this.

This group feeling is a source of power - an inner power which we can draw on and which will give us inspiration. If we are able to act each other and everything around us by means of this group feeling, it will give us certain power. The group feeling between the artist and the audience will give him inspiration. He can get this inspiration from every member of the group, too. If the nucleus of the group will

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will once realize to what degree of power we can come artistically, culturally, and in every way, you will realize how worthwhile it is to strive for this group feeling. It will be the meaning of your life as an artist and as a human being. It is the only thing which is worthwhile to strive for and build on. The power is unlimited. You will see that there is a life before us of strength, beauty, and clarity, and wisdom in our art and all obstacles inside and around us can be pushed away lightly if we have the vision, the ability to know the qualities of the group, which is tremendous strength and power.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Troublemaker-Doublemaker characterizations. ¹ Deirdre: - the character of Sloopy, for instance, is that she must become like a bolster. She must not act like a graceful opera star - she must think she is a graceful, beautiful being, but she must be a helpless pyramid...a corpse. Her body has died entirely, and out of this coffin we hear her voice - only her voice can come out - she cannot move.