

Michael Chekhov

November 7, 1941

Lesson for Students in New York Class

FEELING OF EASE
FEELING OF FORM
CENTER

FEELING OF EASE:

Continue the exercises with the body. Lie down and get up. Then move the chair and sustain the movement, adding the words, "I am moving the chair." By these exercises we are knocking at the door of our actor's nature, trying to free our powers.

Wrestling without muscles - feeling of ease. For the purpose of developing free movement and controlling your movement. Take partners and wrestle quite freely, but absolutely without muscles - master your body and your tension. To a very definite rhythm, do the wrestling exercise. When the music stops, the movement stops - this is controlling it.

FEELING OF FORM:

Without form in art on the stage everything becomes superfluous. The feeling of form is a fine, strong psychological thing and for things outside as well. It embraces the world around us and in us as well. We must develop our feeling for our own bodies. This is the form with which we must always appear before the audience. Sometimes, when we use our bodies on the stage, we give the impression of something stupid or ugly or undeveloped because we do not pay attention to the beautiful form we have.

M. Chekhov

November 7, 1941

Exercise:

1. Realize that we have our bodies which are directed up and down. This we must realize as the ideal. We direct our body from the earth to the sun or the spheres. From the earth to the sky. That is what we are as human beings. Your body will understand you, and this will bring such harmony that you will be able to manage your body in any way you like. You can then play even crippled and distorted bodies because you know that you have an ideal form, and you will always perform artistically and not clinically.

CENTER:

2. Now realize that in each person there is a center in the chest from which spot our arms and hands start - you must have the impression that your arms and hands are much longer. Just the same with the legs - they also start from the chest - like scissors.

Exercise:

March around the room moving your arms and legs with this feeling of the center. Quite free. Move in any direction. Then sit down and get up, being led by the center. Then lie down and get up, still being led by the center.

Exercise:

Realize what limitations the animals have in their horizontal position. Take such a position and then compare

M. Chekhov

November 7, 1941

it with the upright position of man, whose arms are like wings and who can move freely through the space. Then stand fixed like a statue, and realize how limiting it is not to be able to move.