

Michael Chekhov

November 5, 1941

INCORPORATION OF IMAGES
ATMOSPHERE
FEELING OF EASE

INCORPORATION OF IMAGES:

When you have imagined vividly enough, you will get the desire to give your image your own body, voice, and physical being. This desire to incorporate the image is actually the desire which leads us in our profession because actors are people who always want to incorporate their images. This does not mean that we are always able to incorporate all our images and that is the trouble with our profession. There are thousands of actors today, but actually only a very few are real actors. Many are very talented, but they are not equipped, and they have no idea how to incorporate their images and, therefore, very often they remain behind and others, more skilfull, take their place. It is not a case that they are not gifted, but that they have no technique.

Our aim in our school is to give you the ability to incorporate everything you imagine. For this aim we must develop our imagination to the degree where we want to incorporate everything, and on the other hand to develop our bodies and voices and emotions in such a way that they will be able to incorporate what we see in our imagination.

First approach to incorporation:

Exercises:

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1. Imagine as strongly as you can a certain physical position or pose - imagining yourself first and not a character. Imagine it strongly enough and in details, and then make an effort to incorporate it physically. Do it several times and get a feeling of satisfaction when it is well done.

2. Now imagine a pose, but add to it the word "well" and listen so clearly to your own voice in your imagination that the word and the pose will be in harmony. Hear your own voice and intonation.

3. Now imagine a position, a movement, and then a final position. While adding the movement, hear your voice saying "It is so."

ATMOSPHERE:

Improvise The Robbers scene on the basis of atmospheres: 1. Vicious, vulgar, rude, crude. 2. Pious, warm, happy family. 3. Sleepy. Exercise the scene for radiating atmospheres.

FEELING OF EASE:

Art requires to be lighter and easier than things are in everyday life. This is one of the differences between everyday life and art. As actors, we have at our disposal our ideas, our bodies, and voices as a means of expression. All of them must become light and easy. Therefore, we try to get this feeling of ease in our body.

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Exercises:

1. Standing still, try to experience the desire to become light and easy in your body. Drop it. Then repeat the exercise several times.
2. March around, trying to get this desire to be light and easy.
3. Kneel down and lift the arms up.
4. Lift the arms and say, "up" with this quality of light and ease, then add, "down."
5. Lie down and get up, then in slow tempo but still light. Then in fast tempo, but light. Move forwards and backwards across the room.
6. Take a chair and move it from one place to another with a feeling of ease so that the weight of the chair will not bother you.
7. Two students take one chair and pass it from one to the other saying, "I am giving you the chair.", and the other person says, "I am taking the chair." This is an act of collaboration. Each person must appreciate the others' feeling of ease and carry it on into his own.
8. Then take the chair with the feeling that it is very very heavy. This must be performed artistically and not realistically.