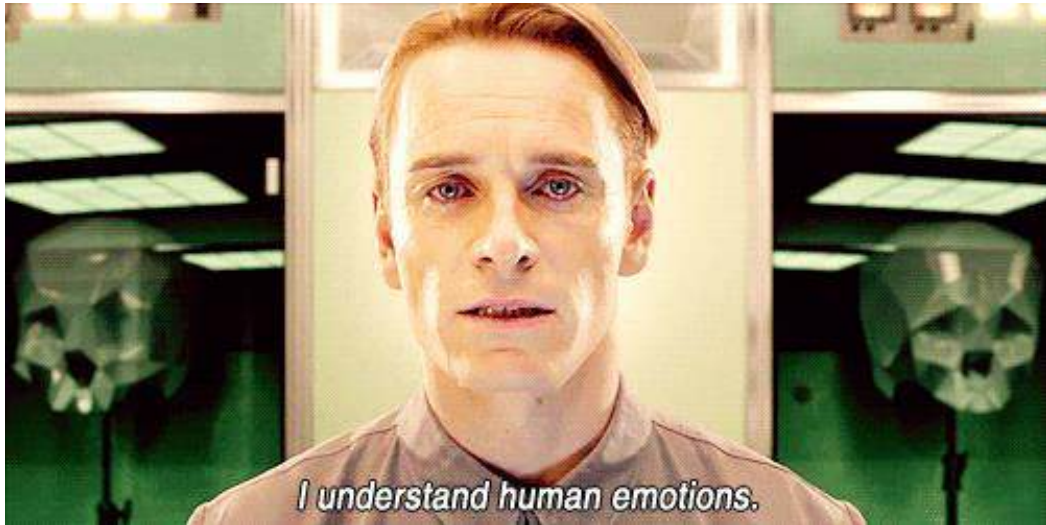




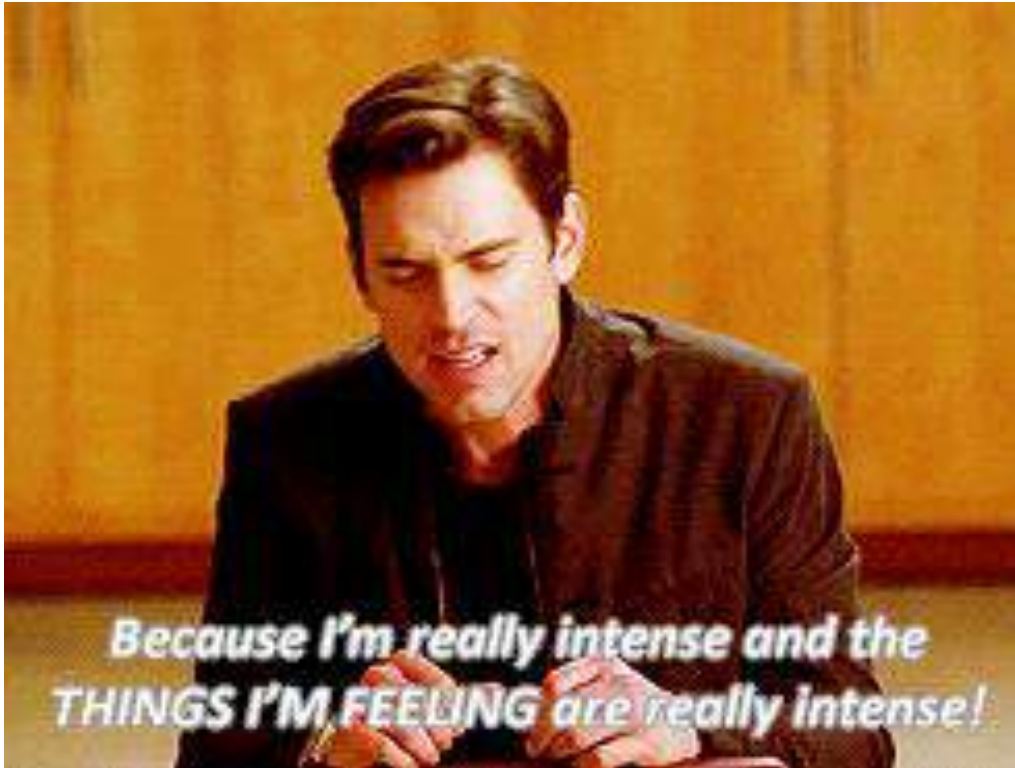
ACTING METHODS

CLASSICAL ACTING / STANISLAVSKY SYSTEM



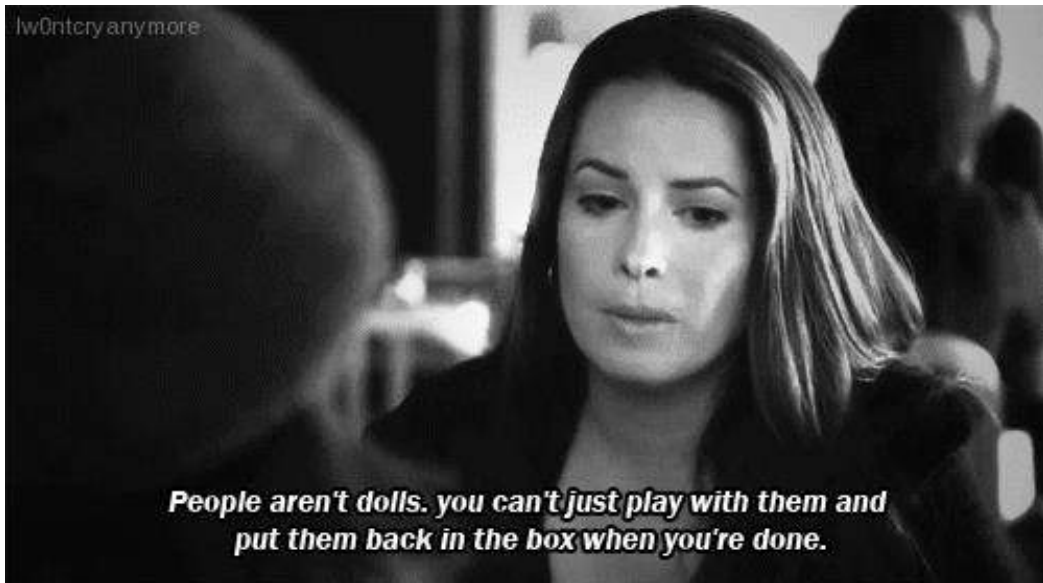
- Considered by many to be the father of what's known today as "method acting," the Stanislavski system was founded by Konstantin Stanislavski and is based on the idea of the "art of experiencing." The intent is to ignite an actor's conscious thought to affect their less conscious expression in their performance, as far as emotion and subconscious behaviors.
- One of the world's most frequently taught acting techniques, Stanislavski inspired scores of future teachers including Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, and Lee Strasberg. Think emotional memory recall, spiritual realism, and self-analysis.

METHOD ACTING: STRASBERG



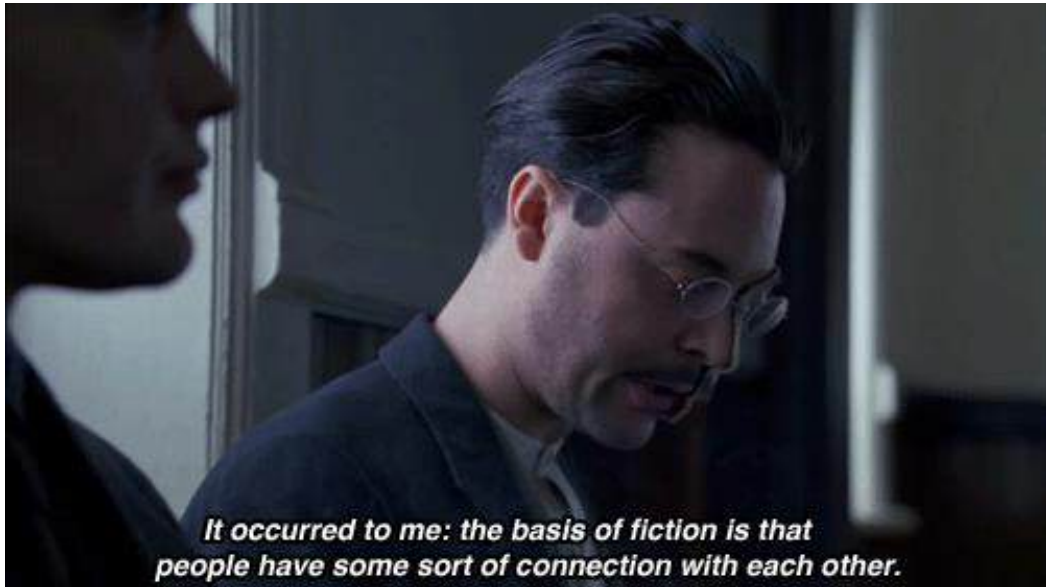
- Lee Strasberg extrapolated upon Stanislavski's technique to create "The Method" but focused on the psychological aspects. The approach is for actors to evoke their own applicable experiences in order to bring them closer to those of their character, which Strasberg called "emotion memory."
- Lee Strasberg's actors intensify their connections to the work by mimicking characters' experiences within the context of their own (real) lives, and reaching deeper connections and understandings of their characters' emotional worlds.

METHOD ACTING: STELLA ADLER



- Stella Adler also worked with and expanded upon Stanislavski's method, though she stringently opposed the idea of dredging up past experiences for the sake of acting, deeming it unhealthy. Rather, she created a system that revolves around the development of independent actors, the power of the imagination, the importance of action, script interpretation, and the cultivation of a rich humanity.
- Stella Adler's approach is also built on that of Stanislavski, but imagination is emphasized over emotional recall; in her words, "You have to get beyond your own precious inner experiences."

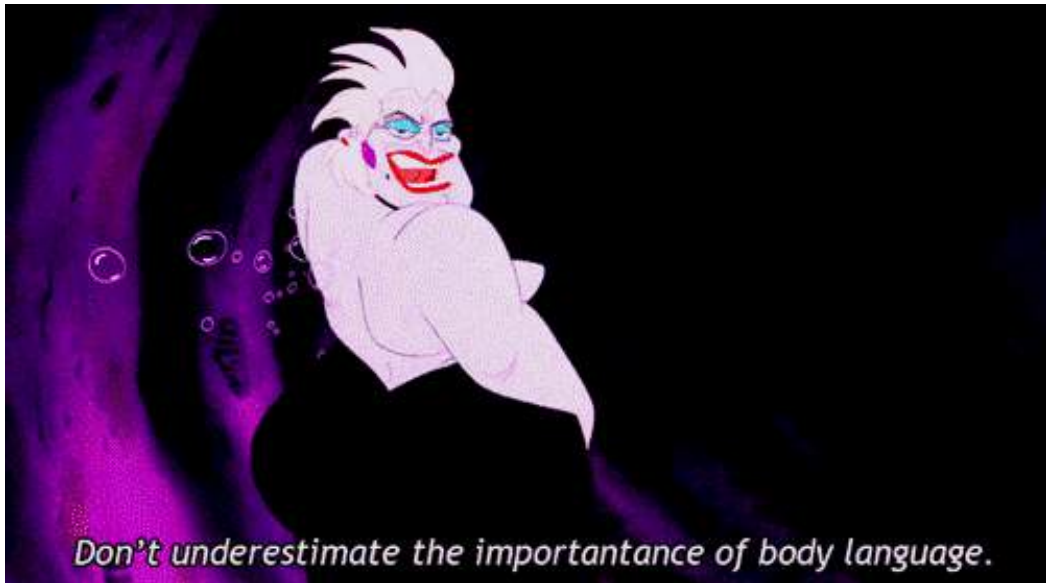
METHOD ACTING: MEISNER



It occurred to me: the basis of fiction is that people have some sort of connection with each other.

- Developed by Sanford Meisner, the Meisner technique, too, builds on Stanislavski. Its primary goal is for the actor to “get out of his or her head” to enable him or her to act in response to a given circumstance based on instinct, thus creating a natural performance.
- Famous for his “repetition” exercise, Meisner teaches actors to “live truthfully under given imaginary circumstances.” The work emphasizes openness, honesty, and listening above all.

METHOD ACTING: CHEKHOV



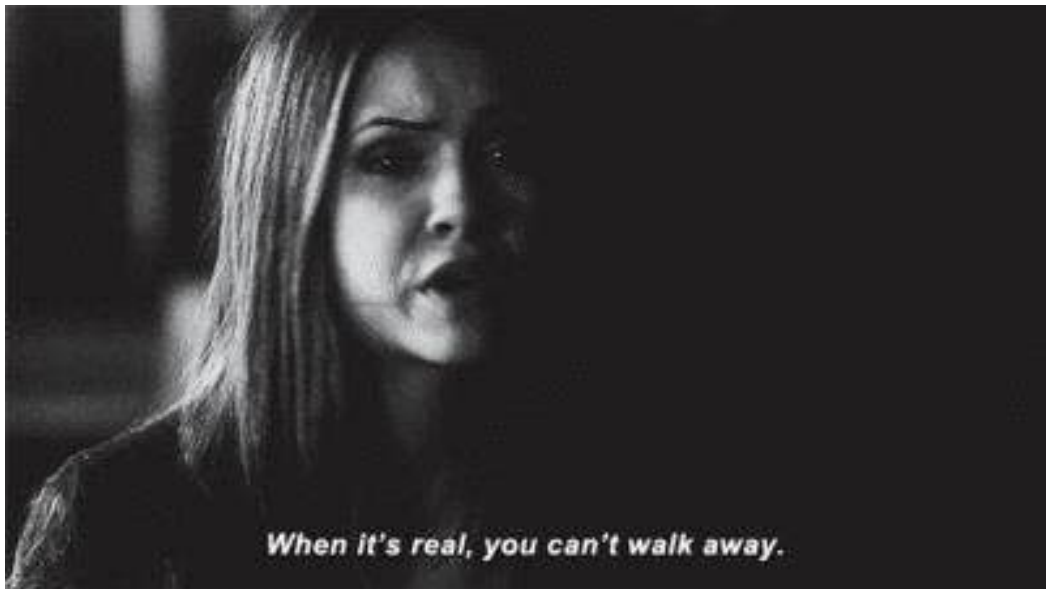
- Michael Chekhov's acting technique was founded on the notion that actors should not imitate life but, rather, interpret it in order to uncover its hidden meaning for an audience. This is achieved through an actor's physical manifestation of a character's needs or desires, which is then suppressed and interpreted in a way that creates a physical memory, informing the performance on a subconscious level.
- Famous for his "repetition" Michael Chekhov created a famous "psycho-physical" technique which draws on physical actions and mind-body connection to create a sensual approach to the character.

PRACTICAL AESTHETICS



- Conceived by playwright David Mamet and actor William H. Macy, practical aesthetics revolve around a four-step approach to any scene: the literal, the want, the essential action, and the “as if” (relating the essential action to the actor’s own life: “It’s as if *my father...*”).
- Developed by actor William H. Macy and playwright David Mamet, this analytical approach emphasizes the simple pursuit of an action above all else. Actors’ attention goes to text-analysis, script work, and a literal understanding of a scene’s driving events.

UTA HAGEN



- Uta Hagen penned two books on the craft which are still highly regarded: “Respect for Acting” and “A Challenge for the Actor.” Hagen stressed realism above all else, achieved through what she initially called “substitution” before shifting to “transference”: actors putting their own experiences inside the circumstances of a scene.
- It’s all about realism for Uta Hagen. Students are taught to “substitute” or “transfer” their own memories into the experiences of their characters, building deep connections based on their own personal truths.

VIOLA SPOLIN



- Viola Spolin actually helped develop a technique for *directors* to impart upon actors with the intent to help them become entirely present and spontaneous during a performance, thus making choices in real time as they would in reality. She created many acting exercises, known as “theater games,” to achieve the feat.
- Viola Spolin’s “theater games” approach inspires students to respond immediately and live in the moment. Her technique focuses on self-direction and improvisation, and she’s considered a driving force of improv as we know it in the United States.

DO ACTING TECHNIQUES BECOME OUTDATED?

- Like everything, acting and its corresponding techniques have evolved over time. In fact, the entire reason Stanislavski initially developed his technique was because, up to that point, acting had been focused only on the physical with little mind paid to the psychological.
- The eight techniques detailed earlier have, in many ways, withstood their respective tests of time, as they're still regarded as the primary tenets of the craft today. But they, too, have their detractors. Most prominently, the “method” movement as a whole has been sharply criticized, particularly in the last decade, for creating a competition for actors to “outdo” one another with their commitment to roles under the guise that great acting and method acting are synonymous.

DO I HAVE TO STICK WITH ONE METHOD? CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL USING MORE THAN ONE METHOD?

- Look, if there were a surefire answer to the “how-to-be-a-great-actor” equation, everyone would use it. But there’s not, which is why there’s so much discrepancy when it comes to the best acting techniques and methods in the first place (and likely why you find yourself reading this guide). Ultimately, selecting the acting technique that works for you is deeply personal, and if you find that you’re not clicking with a technique or what once worked for you no longer does, you should feel no guilt not sticking with a single discipline.
- “I can find hundreds of actors who would swear by any and every technique,” says [Dorian Santiago](#), an award-winning filmmaker, director, and acting coach. “But at the end of the day, the result is the same. They move you with their believability and character, not their technique. It’s because they do whatever they have to do (that works for them) to bring their character to life.”

DO I HAVE TO STICK WITH ONE METHOD? CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL USING MORE THAN ONE METHOD?

- Ultimately, Santiago insists, a successful career is the result of sheer grit, not the technique itself. “But acting techniques are like diets and methods to quit smoking,” he waxes. “If applied and practiced, you will reach your goal. But you’re reaching that goal because you want to reach it, not because any one technique is better or more effective than another.
- “There isn’t a wrong way of how to be or become. Every way you are is right in that moment, in your craft, in life. How you get to any one place, thought, or emotion is insignificant; getting there is the goal. You are already great at being human. You are flawed but perfect, ignorant but learning, dying but living. You are all these things without thinking of how to be or become them, so the secret is to move subconsciously in your craft and characters.”