



Method Acting Techniques

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Anyone who has looked into studying acting can recall hearing about an acting technique or “the method”. Sounds easy enough, right? Acting is a skill; therefore there must be some sort of method behind it. Method Acting itself is not a technique. What it is really is an umbrella term of different techniques of acting. A method actor is really an actor who has a methodical, consistent and effective approach to their work.

There are approximately thirteen different major acting methods and five major voice techniques. No one technique is better than another. Acting being such a personal craft requires the actor to figure out which technique or mix of techniques works best for them.

The process to discovering which acting technique works best for you can be challenging; but it can also be an amazing opportunity for self-discovery, which is extremely rewarding. It helps to know a bit about each method before you begin to try them out. Here is a synopsis of each of the ten major acting techniques, and a few other techniques that can be applied to any acting work.

The first thing anyone needs to know is that the “method” or methods of acting which every acting teacher and actor speaks of and derives their work from, was originally developed by Konstantin Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky was a Russian actor, director, and mentor who lived from 1863-1938. He was the first man to propose the idea that there was a step-by-step, calculated process to the art of acting, a “system” if you will. A means of “living truthfully in an imaginary circumstance” which is what acting is.

1. The Stanislavsky System

Much of the Stanislavsky system revolved around the script itself. Stanislavsky believed that by breaking down the script you could further understand the character and the emotional qualities would evolve through this process. He said that the first thing needed to developing a character was to identify the characters *super-objective*. This is the over-all goal that the character wants to achieve. The next step would be to identify the *obstacles*, or the things that can prevent the character from achieving his/her goal. Next would be to identify the *tools* or *methods* used to overcome these obstacles.

The script would then typically be broken down to *units* and *bits*. These are small objectives and methods used to reach the overall goal; bits make up the units, and the units make up the whole. Lastly, one would define *actions* for each line. These are identified through action verbs so there is a clear focus on what the goal is line by line. Stanislavsky believed that the best way to communicate these objectives truthfully was through emotional memory. He would ask his students to do this by recalling their own experiences in which they felt the emotion they were trying to portray in a scene and then try to recreate this emotional reaction.

2. The Michael Chekhov Technique

Mikhail Chekhov worked very closely with Stanislavsky at the Moscow Art Theatre. He is considered to be Stanislavsky's greatest pupil; however his approach to acting is inherently different. The Chekhov Technique revolves around the use of the imagination and the actor's physical connection to his imagination, his intuition, and mind as one whole, cooperative unit. Perhaps the most important detail in this technique is the use of the imagination. The actor must be able to imagine great images and sensations within himself and his surroundings and be able to immerse himself in these imaginings to perform any of this acting method.

Chekhov believed that all movement and motivation for movement should begin in one of the three centers, the *will center* (the pelvis), the *heart center* (the middle of the chest), and the *knowledge center* (the head). The use of each center produces a different quality and an entirely different take on a character. These centers could also be used to develop the same character at different emotional states. Actors are taught to associate certain images to certain centers, to help further express different emotion. Some images one might play with is the image of a sun, growing warmer and warmer within the will center, and then expanding as far as possible; this image may help to express a feeling of growing passion, for example. Another might be an icebox in your heart center; this image may be used to express someone who is hardened and cold toward a certain person or object. These images are totally up to the actor's discretion. The goal is to choose an image that you can associate with the quality you are trying to portray and let it resonate within you until that quality becomes innate.

Chekhov also believed that qualities of movement must be applied to each and every movement made. The qualities of movement are molding, floating, flying and radiating. Actors are to apply these qualities, again, using imagery work. The quality of *molding* is often performed by moving as if you are surrounded by clay, *floating* can be accomplished by imagining you are a piece of seaweed under the water, *flying* is done by picturing you are a leaf on the wind, and *radiating* is performed by imaging you are a growing beam of light, expanding on all sides. These specific images are not a requirement- only suggestions that Chekhov found to be effective. Any actor can choose whatever imagery works best for him.

The role of the atmosphere can be applied into any scene. This refers to the overall mood or air of the scene- which could be different for everyone involved. This would affect any and every move made by someone within a scene- just as it would in everyday life.

Another part of the Chekov technique is its use of physiological gesture. This is a technique based on the idea that within every human resides archetypal gestures that express these six statements: I want, I need, I feel, I yield, I stand my ground, and I reject. It is believed that these basic statements can be found within any action. The way physiological gesture works is the actor chooses his/her objective and simplifies it as much as possible (it does not necessarily have to be one of these statements) an example of this might be "I want to love" or "I want you to stop". Then the actor has to allow his body to begin to react intuitively to this objective when spoken. After finding the slightest reaction within the body the actor is expected to drop the phrase and let his body take over. When done correctly the movement should provoke a deep and real physical emotional response to the desired objective.

3. Lee Strasberg's Method

The popular term of "Method Acting" is the method that was adapted directly from the Stanislavsky System, developed by Lee Strasberg. This method was designed to help actors conjure up real thoughts, emotions and behavior in imaginary circumstances. This method of acting can result in outstanding performances- mainly because any emoting done by the actor is actually occurring rather than appearing to occur. That said; before taking on this method of acting, consider the immense physical and mental effort required to "turn on" and "turn off" a real emotional release in your work.

This result is achieved, for the most part, through Strasberg's relaxation, sense memory and emotional memory training. The idea of sense memory is fairly easy to grasp. Students use sight, sound, touch, taste and smell to explore and recreate experiences from their own life.

Here's a basic example of how sense memory works: The smell of my grandmother's cooking is one I would recognize anywhere. Recreating that memory, my five senses are triggered. Your sense memory is strengthened through various exercises that challenge your five senses.

As I work on these senses, if I smell it, I am immediately overwhelmed with thoughts of my grandmother, and associate these thoughts, feelings and emotions of warmth, love, and safety. They manifest in maybe a smile, or tears or laughter, basically an emotional output. This is an emotional memory. If I can consistently and effectively recreate this emotional affect, then for me, it becomes an affective memory. In a scene, if I ever needed to reproduce these sensations, I would simply physically and mentally connect to this affective memory, and theoretically this should trigger such emotions. I can then apply the reactions to these experiences within a scene.

The overall goal is to bring on the desired emotional response at the drop of a dime. This method of acting is especially popular amongst film actors when they are required to shoot out of sequence and need to draw upon a state for a specific scene. Even in highly stylized or imaginary circumstances (for e.g. a play taken place outdoors in the middle of winter), Strasberg believed that all imagination came from experience, which is filtered in and out of us through our senses. This makes it possible to work in any style, any genre or medium.

Like most of the acting techniques, the Strasberg Method relies heavily upon relaxation. Strasberg believed that in order to create the most open and responsive actor, their bodies must lack any tension whatsoever. A great deal of this method revolves around an active physical and mental connection and the release of tension throughout the body. Some of the greatest method actors of our time have used this tool to live their career to the fullest such as Daniel Day Lewis, and Robert De Niro. Their exploration of character often involves complete and not coming out of it. They truly become the character in every sense. This work is highly rewarding, however it is also highly taxing on the mind and body of the actor.

Other aspects to Lee Strasberg's work include improvisation and also finding unique psychophysical behavior through the Animal Exercise. This is where the anthropomorphic embodiment of an animal in your human characters adds a distinct, compelling and authentic layer to your work.

4. The Meisner Technique

Sanford Meisner, the founder of the technique, defines acting as “living (or doing) truthfully under imaginary circumstances”. A lot of people think of Meisner as ‘repetition technique’, but that is only its most basic form. What the technique really stresses is the reality of doing. Emotion, Meisner teachers believe, is brought to the surface through the action. Because acting is, essentially, performing a series of actions, the Meisner technique stresses the importance of putting your all into those actions. For instance, if you have to sew a piece of clothing perfectly, put 100% of your attention into making every detail perfect. You cannot divert your attention from this task even for a second because you’re focused on making sure you cry on cue or waiting for the next actor to enter the scene. If you don’t set up a reality where that article of clothing has to be sewn perfectly, what kind of world are you setting up for the audience? One that is not based in truth. It’s not interesting to just watch a person cry. It’s interesting to see what spontaneously comes out of the struggle of doing. Doing doesn’t always have to be a physical act (such as sewing, cleaning, cooking, etc.) Listening and responding truthfully to what your acting partner is saying fall under the category of active doing. The Meisner Technique starts by stripping the daily niceties and airs of actors to get down to their guttural response, and then gives the actor tools (i.e. point of view, impediments, fully realized objectives, etc.) to build characters from that place of truthful response.

5. The Stella Adler Technique

Stella Adler was an actress who studied under Stanislavsky for five weeks. However, Adler did not believe, like Stanislavsky had and Strasberg did, that an actor needed to relive past experiences to connect to the play. She developed her own method in which the major belief was that an actor had to rely on his/her imagination to fully believe in the circumstances of the play. Adler believed that acting is doing, and that you must constantly be performing an action and in doing so, find his conflict in this action. Every action done must have justification. She also believed that an actor must use his imagination to create the world around him, using every detail, down to the most miniscule. She believed that if the actor could truly see the world around him, the audience would see through his eyes. Adler’s technique pertains to thinking and analyzing. A deep analytical understanding of the script is a necessity to performing your role. She thought that you must know and understand the piece you were performing as much as humanly possible in order to perform it truthfully.

Another really important tool in Adler’s method is size. She pushed her actors to be bigger in everything they did. Their voices and bodies must be strong, and they must always be searching for the bigger meaning in the text.

6. Practical Aesthetics

This action-based acting technique was developed by playwright David Mamet and actor William H. Macy, and incorporates elements of Stanislavsky and Meisner. It involves a four-step scene analysis that simply focuses on pursuit of an action; actors are taught to focus on what is literally happening in the scene and what is desired of the other characters.

7. The Suzuki Method

This method of acting was created by theatre director Tadashi Suzuki method at SCOT (the Suzuki Company of Toga, Japan). This is an extremely physical Japanese movement technique designed to help actors ground themselves within their bodies and characters. Actors learn to work from their core to build discipline, strength, and focus. The rigorous practice draws on martial arts influences and those of Japanese Noh, Kabuki, and the ancient Greek chorus. Most people tell stories with words and facial expressions, but in Suzuki both of those outlets are taken away from you. The face is in a constant state of relaxation “cool face”. Some teachers will allow expression through the eyes (crying, ‘smeyesing’, etc.) and others discourage it, this depends on the class. The form is rigid, and Suzuki teaches that acting “begins and ends with the feet”; numerous exercises include controlled (and repetitive) forms of stomping and squatting and bent knees that create a connected center, rooting the body to the floor and sometimes to the brink of exhaustion. Suzuki actors require high physical endurance and strength. The actor is forced to express himself fully within the constraints of the form. Suzuki is also endurance and strength training since most of the exercises are extremely taxing on the lower body. The Suzuki Method is often alongside Anne Bogart’s Viewpoints.

8. Viewpoints

This acting technique often taught alongside the Suzuki method. This method was originally developed by Anne Bogart at the Saratoga International Theater Institute (SITI Company) in Saratoga Springs, New York. It grew out of work she did with the famous dancer and choreographer Martha Graham. It combines elements of Asian martial arts with a strong grounding in movement and the actor's body. The Viewpoints methodology begins with actions and gestures, and uses them to generate the emotions that are at the heart of effective acting. Actors are encouraged to explore human emotion, space and time from 9 different viewpoints: Architecture, Space, Shape, Choreography, Gesture, Duration, Tempo, Repetition and Reaction. This acting training is especially useful if you are mostly interested in theater acting or directing because it will help you develop a strong presence on stage, work well in an ensemble and ‘language’ to speak to actors. This method may be more appealing to you if you are a very physical actor or a dancer turning to acting. You may also consider a Viewpoints class if you need to work on your physicality on stage or if you want to get more comfortable in front of an audience. In a Viewpoints session, you begin by improvising, using music and movement. From that improvisation, the director and actors pull out movements and gestures, which eventually develop into the choreography of the show. Often, the entire play is improvised without any text being spoken; then later, the text is added to the choreography that has been developed.

9. Viola Spolin’s Theater Games

Spolin’s approach focuses on directorial and improvisational exercises for the actor, and is considered to be a major contributor to the improvisational theater movement in the United States. Her emphasis on improvisation teaches actors to live in the moment and respond quickly and truthfully to their present circumstances.

10. The Uta Hagen Method

Uta Hagen was a well renowned German-American actress of the 1900's. Much of Hagen's approach revolves around specialized exercises used to hone in on the tools she felt every great actor must possess. These tools often pertained to behavior in a given circumstance. One of the major exercises she championed was "waiting behavior" in addition to "mirror behavior". She believed that there was a given set of behavior that pertained to circumstances such as these and it should be recreated accurately to enhance the scene.

Another thing we focused on was "the moment before," in which we would have to identify specifically what happened before the moment the scene began and consider how this would affect us at the start of the scene. An exercise used to explore this is one known as "Three Entrances" in which a student comes through a door three separate times, each time using a different moment before. After entering through the door the student would only react to that moment before- the moment unseen- and then the exercise would end.

Uta Hagen also used Stanislavsky's approach to breaking down the script, and applied the "as if" technique as well. This meant that she would ask actors to perform a scene "as if" they were acting a circumstance they could relate to. An example of how this is different from using your imagination is as follows: In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* there is a line, "I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine,"... It is impossible to imagine how to feel if that happened without mimicry or indicating. It is not possible to relate to seeing that because it has never happened to you. On the other hand, you may have experienced circumstances in which you felt scared and alone, use those circumstances. The actor playing this particular role may choose to act "as if" they were in the circumstance that they have actually experienced when they felt scared and alone- and not the circumstance they are actually trying to portray at all, because they do not have that experience to draw on as an emotional trigger.

11. The Alexander Technique

Developed by orator, Frederick Matthias Alexander in the late 1800s, The Alexander Technique is focused on regaining our innate movement patterns that have been lost to years of tension built up within the body. Actors and non-actors alike are taught to apply specialized body-awareness strategies to correct unnecessary tension. The body is built to be completely agile, flexible, and responsive to impulse. So why is it that so many people deal with musculature pain and limited mobility everyday of their lives? It is because over the years we lose this natural grace with which we are born. We lose this due to tension. Tension can be caused by numerous factors; stress, injury, a poor night's sleep, and so much more. This tension can often lead to mobility habits, such as walking with a certain limp or swagger or having a slouch. The truth is that these habits only retain tension and it gets progressively worse. This tension stops us from responding truthfully to our minds intentions regarding movement. The Alexander Technique helps to relieve these tensions and break these habits, allowing us to return to our natural and healthy movement patterns. One example is this: Picture a baby, sitting upright on his bottom, for hours. Before a baby can walk all they do is sit up, and they have no problem doing so! An adult generally cannot sit upright without back support for more than a few minutes. This is because this baby is free from habitual tension, and is able to float around his natural center of gravity- without effort. The truth is it should take very little effort to move your body- it's made for it. The Alexander Technique helps to find the natural center of gravity and use it to motivate all movement. It is like learning to walk again. The key to maximizing your own physical functionality is to unlearn certain breathing and posture habits.

Most importantly, from an actor's standpoint, it really helps to be organically responsive to impulses. Once excess tension is stripped away from the body, it becomes significantly more in-tune with the mind and its innate intentions of movement. This technique can be paired with any other acting technique or any life-style.

12. Lecoq Technique

This renowned actor and teacher Jacques Lecoq used a mix of mime, mask work, and other movement techniques to develop creativity and freedom of expression within his students. L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, the Parisian school he founded in 1956, is still one of the preeminent physical training centers in the world, developing artists of all kinds through its two-year conservatory and a variety of specialized workshops. The training aimed at nurturing the creativity of the performer, as opposed to giving them a codified set of skills. The teaching aims at imparting knowledge accomplished through the style of "via negativa," never telling the students how to do what was "right." The goal is to encourage the student to keep trying new avenues of creative expression.

The work is largely improv-based, and draws on historical movements like Commedia Dell'arte, clown work and psychological exercises involving elements, colors, and seasons. There is an emphasis on masks, starting with the neutral mask. The aim of the neutral mask is to aid an awareness of physical mannerisms as they get greatly emphasized to an audience whilst wearing the mask. Once a state of neutral is achieved, the actor moves on to work with larval masks and then half masks, gradually working towards the smallest mask in his repertoire: the clown's red nose. Three of the principal skills that Lecoq encourages are Le Jeu (playfulness), Complicité (togetherness) and Disponibilité (openness).

13. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)

LMA is a method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting and documenting all varieties of human movement. It is one type of Laban Movement Study, originating from the work of Rudolf Laban.

This multidisciplinary approach incorporates contributions from anatomy, kinesiology, psychology and many other fields. It is used as a tool by dancers, actors, musicians, athletes, physical and occupational therapists, psychotherapy, peace studies, anthropology, business consulting, leadership development, health & wellness and is one of the most widely used systems of human movement analysis today.

As much a language for observing movement as a dedicated acting technique, Rudolf Laban's scientific approach divides movement into four categories: body, effort, shape, and space. Applied to theatrical training, Laban uncovers small nuances behind behavior, examining everything from dramatic movements (throwing oneself across a room) to everyday gestures (flicking a piece of lint off of one's shoulder), and maximizing specificity with every action.

Laban Movement Analysis is generally divided into these categories:

Body (Bartenieff Fundamentals, total-body connectivity), Effort (Energetic dynamics), Shape and Space (Choreutics, Space Harmony). On a more macro level LMA looks at the categories in terms of Phrasing and themes of opposites. The themes are: Mobility/Stability, Function/Expression, Inner/Outer and Exertion/Recuperation.

The main features of LMA are Physicality, Breath, Vocal Quality, Practical Results and Vocal Rehabilitation.

Voice Techniques

1. Fitzmaurice Voicework

Originated by Catherine Fitzmaurice, this is a comprehensive approach to voice training. It includes, as needed, work on breathing and the body, resonance, speech, dialects, impromptu and prepared public speaking, text, singing, voice with movement, and presence. While the training is specific, it is offered in such a way that it is compatible with other approaches. Fitzmaurice Voicework explores the dynamics between body, breath, voice, imagination, language, and presence. Integrating physical experience and mental focus, the work develops vibrant voices that communicate intention and feeling without excess effort.

Destructuring, the first phase, promotes awareness of the body, spontaneous and free breathing, vocal expressivity, and presence, through Tremorwork and sometimes hands-on interventions. Tremorwork encourages students to allow uncontrolled shiver-like oscillations to flow through their entire bodies, making chronic tension blocks apparent and helping to release them. Restructuring, the second phase, encourages economy of effort while speaking or performing, using modified bel canto techniques and "focus line". The resulting freedom and focus allow for a wide range of vocal expression without strain.

2. The Linklater Technique: "Freeing the Natural Voice"

Developed by Kristin Linklater, and similar to the Alexander Technique, Linklater focuses on the release of tension. However, this technique works with building your vocal abilities through this release and specifically releasing tension in areas that would affect the voice. This technique can be utilized by anyone; however it is particularly useful to actors, singers, public speakers, and anyone who uses their voice as a vital part of their job. Linklater's book, "Freeing the Natural Voice" explains and teaches the progression, which she uses to release these tensions and discover the voice which you are meant to use.

Linklater believed that everyone possess a clear, resonant, and expressive voice which can often be stifled by social pressures and tension. This is because when we have tensions in our vocal channel sound and meaning are often blocked by this tension and we lose conviction and expression in what we are trying to communicate. With this technique, you find your natural register which many people are not aware of. Many people actually speak with a somewhat "put on voice" without realizing it. This is especially so in performance settings or in front of large crowds like a presentation.

The Linklater method is intended to help a person find their natural voice and in doing so be more expressive, motivated, and natural when speaking. This process is practiced through "the progression". This progression consists of various exercises (some physical and some meditative) used to release tension in the diaphragm, face, jaw, throat, tongue, and throughout the whole body. Throughout the progression you can feel your voice becoming more "dropped in", resonant, and expressive.

This work when applied to acting can be extremely effective. A tension free voice allows you to speak from a more organic place as your mind intends. In addition to this, freeing tensions in the vocal channel can often lead to an enormous release of emotion, since many emotional tensions are stored in areas targeted by this progression, such as the jaw.

3. Lessac Kinesensic Training

This training technique was created by Arthur Lessac, one of the great teachers of the 20th century in voice and body training. Instead of relying upon ear training, imitation, outside imagery, or inspiration; the student is encouraged to feel the sensations of sound--as it is being produced from within. It is a sensory approach, feeling the dynamics of energy, vibration or muscular action. 'Kinesensic' is a term that Arthur coined from kine for movement, esens for basic meaning, nature; sens for spirit, inner energy, and sic for familiar occurrences. So this training teaches the individual to feel and recognize the sensations of voice production, and to allow those sensations to guide the process of becoming vocally and physically 'aware'. It is gentle, enjoyable, reliable and extremely comprehensive, covering all aspects of voice and speech, while relaxing and energizing the body at the same time. It is very beneficial to those wishing to improve and develop the speaking and singing voice that lies within them

4. Berry's Voice Study

Cicely Berry is influential in vocal training for actors primarily because she refuses to separate the sounds actors make from the living context of the words they speak in the theatre. Berry has based her work on the conviction that while all is present in nature, our natural instincts have been influenced from birth by four factors: Environment, Ear, Physical Agility and Personality.

According to Berry's philosophy there is no right way available to speak correctly, nonetheless there are numerous wrong ways. Wrong uses of the voice are those that constipate feeling, constrict activity, dull expression, flatten idiosyncrasy, simplify experience and coarsen intimacy. These blockages are multiple and are the results of acquired habits that have become part of the automatic vocal equipment; unnoticed and unknown, they stand between the actor's voice as it is and as it could be and they will not vanish by themselves. Berry's mission is to expand the awareness of language, its roots, its possibilities of meaning, its physical seat and vibration, its associations, its weight and texture and colour. In acting this is achieved by relating the practicality of voice production to the challenges of a difficult text and by getting inside the words we use whether those of Shakespeare or our contemporaries.

With precise exercise and clear understanding an actor can liberate the hidden possibilities of words and learn the hard task of being true to the natural instinct of the moment in the text. Her exercises involve relaxation, breathing and muscular control but are ultimately connected to the meaning of the words and naturalness of the speaking voice. Berry never departs from the fundamental recognition that speaking is part of a whole: an expression of inner life. The sounds of words are inseparable from their living context.

5. Rodenburg's Voice Technique

Patsy Rodenburg is recognized as one of the world's leading voice teachers & coaches. She is also a renowned authority on Shakespeare. She has worked regularly with the best-known actors of the theatre as well as many of the biggest stars of film and television. Among her many exercises and concepts, Rodenburg's is probably best known for her emphasis of the primacy and presence of the human voice. This is all to do with where you store your energy.

The main thrust is that basic human energy falls into three circles. The First Circle is the Circle of Self and Withdrawal and although useful at times for moments of introspection and reflection, if you live mainly in this circle you will be limited, your passion for life will be dulled and you are shy. You will also tend to absorb other people's energy to try and compensate and therefore you will be rather a draining person to deal with. First Circle energy will also not be enough for a performer to be effective. Third Circle is the Circle of Bluff and Force where energy is outward moving and non-specific – people who operate mainly in this circle are self-centred but in a different way. They want to be the centre of attention – we have all come across people like this at parties and all that energy which they push out has the effect of making us switch off. Third Circle operators are in fact using this way of behaviour as a shield to protect themselves. They do not receive any energy from the world as they are alone, fighting to control life and perceived by people around them as arrogant and over-bearing. In singing these performers tend to push the voice out there using too much energy and the audience hit by this barrage of sound does not listen with rapt attention. These actors often come with an over-inflated sense of self-confidence and do not listen. Second Circle is The Energy of Connecting. People who operate in this circle have real presence. People who operate in this circle give out energy but also receive it back. These are the performers who literally change our lives when we listen to them. You feel they are connecting directly with you personally even although you may be one of a very large audience. They connect.

Conclusion

The various thirteen methods of acting and five voice techniques listed above are exactly that, methods, processes and ways of working. While acting is often taught using these already formulated techniques, remember that someone created these because they felt they had a better approach to an art and they wanted to share it with the world. Do not think that you have to choose one of these methods to find your way as an actor.

No one methodology is better than other. No matter what you study it is imperative to understand that this art is developed within the artist, and your technique may be entirely different than any before. Being a good actor relies heavily on knowing yourself. Use these techniques as a guideline to find the actor *you* are, as no two are exactly the same. Each one works differently for each actor and may produce different results for each individual. It is the actor who must actively decide which method or mix of methods works best for them to be consistent, efficient and effective in their work.

Now that you have read this article I sincerely hope you are excited to begin your work as an actor. While the process and the profession may be a lifetime of work, it is a profession that is well worth the work of a lifetime.