

**The reality, however,** is that reverence and respect for life is at the basis of your **vulnerability**. Instead of hiding it or apologizing for it, you should open the doors to **it for the world** to see. I think that what makes an actor successful is the precious **shared intimacy** that we all feel somewhere deep inside, but that *he* has the courage to show.

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# RESPONSIBILITY AND RELAXATION

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What are your responsibilities as an actor? There are many! More important than getting a good agent, having pictures taken, and waiting for the telephone to ring is your responsibility to develop your instrument and become creatively ready to work.

Painters paint, writers write, dancers dance—and most actors sit and drink coffee and talk about acting. That isn't because actors are lazy or afraid to work, but **because most of them don't know what to do or how to use their time productively. You are not only the best thing you have . . . you are the only thing you have. Being prepared to act is ninety-five percent of acting.** If you know *what* to do and *how* to do it, **then you can indeed do it. Knowing what and how are the things you work at every day. Daily practice of instrumental and craft exercise work is the most successful approach.**

Start dealing with your responsibility to yourself by setting aside an hour or two each day to work. Pick a time when you have the least distractions. (I have found that early in the morning or late at night are my best times to work, and the times when I feel most like working.)

Tension is the actor's greatest obstacle, because it stifles your impulses and makes it impossible to express what you really feel. Before you do any kind of work you should try to relax and eliminate tension. There are many good relaxation exercises and, after trying several, you will find the ones that work best for you. Here are a couple to start with.

### **Tense and Relax**

Lie down on the floor. Starting with the bottoms of your feet, slowly, **by degrees**, tighten each part of your body. Hold the tension until you are **rigid from the bottoms of your feet to the top of your head**. Then, from the **top of your head**, start relaxing each part of your body by degrees, slowly, until you **have reached the bottoms of your feet**. Do the exercise two or three **times**. **It forces your muscles to relax by tiring them.** It also teaches you to **recognize the varying degrees** of tension in your body and helps you to deal with it **when you are on the stage**.

**Logy**

This exercise is called Logy because that is the physical state and feeling you want to achieve. Again, lie down on the floor and begin by becoming aware of your own body weight. Slowly exaggerate your weight until you feel much heavier. Test your feeling of loginess by lifting your arms and legs and letting them fall of their own weight. Do this with all parts of the body, feeling the pull of gravity on each part.

These exercises are good ones to start with. There are a number of useful relaxation exercises, and you will discover others that work for you. I have talked to some actors who use meditation as a way to relax and get ready to act.

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# PERSONAL INVENTORY

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There is no other person on this earth like you! I cannot emphasize this enough. You are as unique as your fingerprints, and your uniqueness is what you have to sell as an actor. Unfortunately, a lot of actors imitate other actors who are successful or who are working a lot. The hope, whether conscious or not, is that by this emulation they can hook into the formula for success.

The only formula that really works, however, is to BE who you are and express that life freely and fully. The following exercises deal with penetrating to your real feelings and expressing them on a here-and-now, moment-to-moment basis. When you achieve that connection, you are readier to act—and once you are ready, then you can.

**Personal Inventory I**

This is a Stream of Consciousness monologue which you do semiaudibly, so that you can hear yourself talking but no one else can. Ask yourself, "How do I feel?" express your feelings, and then repeat the question. During your monologue things will interfere, interrupt, and take your attention away from the process. Include these things in the monologue. For example:

How do I feel? . . . I just cleared my throat . . . getting ready to do this exercise  
 . . . I feel obligated to do it right . . . taking a deep breath . . . How do I feel? . . .  
 I'm looking for things to grab onto . . . my eyes are scanning the room . . . I feel  
 anxious . . . a little tense in the chest . . . How do I feel? . . . How do I feel? . . .  
 [And so on.]

This exercise trains you to express everything that is going on moment by moment, alleviates mental tension, and promotes a state of BEING. Do the Personal Inventory exercise as often as you like. Naturally the more you practice it, the quicker you can utilize it in your work.

#### **What Do I Want?**

The purpose of this exercise is to find out what you want—both here and now and ultimately. Instead of asking, “How do I feel?” as in the Personal Inventory exercise, you ask “What do I want?” For example:

What do I want? . . . I want to find out what I want . . . What do I want? . . . I want to be happier than I am right now . . . I want to work more . . . I want people to respect me . . . I want to be good . . . What do I want? . . . I want not to care so much about those things . . . I want to be more relaxed . . . [And so on.]

You might do this exercise for ten or fifteen minutes at a time.

Both the Personal Inventory and the What Do I Want? exercises help you get in touch with what you really feel. From that point, you can create any kind of reality that the script demands. Remember: You can create truth only from a state of truth.