

## **Developing Character: Working Externally**

There are different methods you might use to develop a character. As always though, the actor must return to the source of the work – the script. You must first understand the script in order to build a full picture of the character.

Complete a character biography based on external qualities. You may not find it useful to answer every question – choose the ones which best apply to the situation.

### **Physical & External Qualities:**

Name

Age

Race/Culture

Social Status

Occupation

Marital Status

Family Relationships

Children or Siblings

Appearance: style of clothing and hair

Posture

Type of Movements

Mannerisms

### **Imagine other aspects of their life:**

Where do they live?

What kind of car do they drive?

What do they do in their spare time?

Where was their last vacation?

Do they give to charities? Or volunteer?

How do they see themselves?

How do other people see them?

# Think Physical

## Warm Up:

Sit in a space on your own. Relax and close your eyes. Imagine a mirror before you, a mirror which will show you the image of this character. Look in the mirror and see the character, the person, through their eyes. Look carefully at how you stand, at how you are dressed, at how you make eye contact with yourself.

Open your eyes and move to a position of readiness. You are to begin moving about as if this is a typical day for your character. How will the day begin? Use movement to find the character – how fast, how confident, etc. Explore your character's world at home, find typical actions and behavior as they get ready for the day. Consider what your physical space is like, what does it look like? Explore how you sit, stand, walk, take, give, etc. How do you wait for someone? How do you ask for something?

## Using the Monologue:

Sit a moment in silence and think about the monologue. Where does it take place? What are the physical actions that happen? Walk through it in your mind.

Do the entire monologue without words, use only your physical movements to express what is taking place. Work through how to express the feelings of the piece without words. Do not try to mime actual words or phrases of the monologue – express the essence of the piece.

## Neutral Mask:

Use a neutral mask (covers the face and offers no expression) if possible for this exercise. If a neutral mask is not available, try to keep the face as expressionless as possible. The actor must rely upon the body to convey meaning. To prepare this scene, you must think about the monologue in terms of essential moments. Break it down into the most important elements for expression. Prepare the monologue in neutral mask as a silent scene for the class to watch. Can they understand what you are trying to express? What is needed for clarity?