

(Source: adapted from “Acting Notes from Don Richardson”, ABWAG, Acting School.
www.abwag.com)

Principles of Acting

- How to act: is about learning the feel, think, do technique, and then practice, practice, practice...
- An actor has to be trained to be in world of illusion.
- In life we struggle to overcome emotions. The job of the actor is to be swimming in them.
- Use your theatrical sense, not psychological conclusions.
- Do all acting on impulse.
- Don't think up clever things.
- "Acting is the only art you cannot be caught doing!"
- Secrets of drama: find what is recognizable to the audience. Recall things in life that the audience has forgotten. We go to the theater to live other lives. We like to watch people try and save themselves. People will give up illusion for reality.
- Don't love your performance, love the art of acting.
- Actor must give up self-thoughts. Audience doesn't care about the actor's problems, only the character.
- Be audible.
- 80% feeling, 20% technique and devices.
- Acting is the work of the imagination.
- Actors can't pretend things, it has to be emotional experience.
- All good acting must look like it was never rehearsed at all.
- All work has to be hidden. Act with your whole person.
- Art of acting is to move the audience not the actor.
- Bigger emotions must be more relaxed.
- Can't think the story, can't think dialogue.
- Character can be out of control, actor has to be in control.
- Coiled snake is more frightening than one sprung.
- Don't act dangerous, be dangerous.
- Don't cry to get audience to cry.
- Don't have more fun than the audience. .
- Don't shout away a scene.
- Emotions (feelings) are separate from thoughts (objective).
- For acting purposes: talk out to someone, not inward because it disappears for the audience. Always talking to someone or something. Talk to yourself in the room.

- Human beings are mysterious, there are many levels, don't oversimplify things.
- No muscle tension in an emotion.
- No punctuation in speech. No commas, no periods. It is idea to idea. Stop anywhere, but not only at a period.
- Stay with one emotion and one objective until something occurs to change it. You don't drift off because of the dialogue. You only change because of new information or a new event.
- Speak with your body before you speak.
- Story telling, don't take up time with things that don't matter, art of compression.
- The audience is supposed to have fun. They will have fun only if you are more miserable than they are.
- There are no new stories.
- Have a worthy antagonist.
- What the character wants is always a selfish motive.
- When in doubt do nothing.
- When the behavior is correct, even a deaf audience will understand it.
- Wherever possible use sense memory.
- You learn the words and forget that you know them.
- Don't ever look like you're acting.

Comedy

- Choose emotion for Drama then take it higher for comedy.
- Don't do shtick, do character. (Look for dignity).
- Don't freeze a character to ride a laugh.
- Don't go for all laughs, only ones that are important; creditability. Don't try to make it as funny as possible.
- Humour is not who throws the pie, but the humour is where the pie lands.
- Heighten the words. Simple principle.
- If you have to choose between funny or real, choose real.
- In Comedy people have to suffer. In Farce they really have to suffer.
- Look for opposites.
- one straight (non-humorous) person and one funny person.
- Black Comedy is based on despair. Humour is not enough.
- The audience doesn't laugh accidentally, they laugh when you want them to laugh.