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## THE GADGET ACTOR

April 20, 2012 By [Clay Banks](#)

Acting is a natural process, or at least when it's executed correctly. Good acting is true, honest, real and *organic*. OK, so there's that word again ...So, what's '*organic*' really mean anyway? "*Her performance was so organic!*" Let's take a minute and look at this often *used and misused* term – **ORGANIC**.

Throughout the many definitions of the word, you'll consistently find something to the effect of, or having to do with – "*living, or the state of being alive*".

Organic is alive! It's a natural process of behavior and experiencing that is fully *in the moment*. When acting isn't embraced correctly the actor (or someone who is calling themselves an actor), may succumb to using *gimmicks* or *tricks* from their stockpile of *shtick*. I've come to understand this type of actor (who likes to use 'shtick', or gimmicks) as... **The Gadget Actor**.



The Gadget Actor is a person who pulls from a stockpile of gadgetry, fun things that have gotten them attention or laughs in real life social situations. I call this person the Gadget Actor because their work is more often than not a series of *set-ups*. *Set-Up's* are opportunities for

them to pull out a new gadget or gimmick, although there's really nothing new about it.

These gadgets have been used again and again and again... *It's shtick. It's stock. It's gadgetry.* It's not even close to being genuine, real, authentic, creative or in the moment. It's simply dead! I believe it was Einstein who said, the mind should be like a clean blackboard – as we go through life we write on it, creating our present reality. Not a blackboard filled with information that we pull from for our expression. And even if it wasn't Einstein, the point remains the same – we should live and work to be creative beings... in the moment, not schtick-y actors



pulling from stock.

Shtick is fun for some people, (*I'll be back!* Said with an Arnold twist), and at the same time it can be quite dangerous. The danger lies in the pattern building that the actor's behavior is creating. Repetition of this pattern will undoubtedly begin to create grooves. And, as this groove '*thing*' is repeated and repeated, the groove becomes deeper and deeper until it eventually forms a rut. And as the rut carves deeper, it becomes near impossible to get out. It's been said that the only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.

Do you see where this is going? It goes beyond forming bad habits – it actually imprints them!

The moment I catch one of my actors even touching on shtick or gadgetry, I'll point it out and have them correct it right away. "*Get out*



*of that and trust the present moment.*” Next, I’ll have them engage their emotional memory to understand what they just did so to prevent them from doing it again. I’ll continue pointing it out to the actor until it’s removed, completely, all the while teaching them what it is so that they won’t find themselves falling prey to bad habits in the future. Eventually, personal learning curve indicative, it will be wiped out, vaporized, erased completely!

Outside of some character acting, and I say this with caution... there’s no place for gadgets in the true art form of the craft!

Enough of this!

See You In The Studio (with no tricks!),  
Coach Banks

**SHTICK** – A **shtick** (Yiddish: שטיק) (or **schtick**) is a comic theme or **gimmick**. “Shtick” is derived from the Yiddish word *shtik* (שטיק), meaning “piece”. Only giving a piece of. It’s incomplete. ~ Wikipedia