

SESSION 10 -- CHARACTER WORK

Types & You

HOMework REVIEW:

- 1) Did you complete the KEEP IT UNDER \$5 exercise? What were your results?
 - Continue to journal your extemporaneous interactions. Doing so will help you process your progress as you become stronger and more capable of staying In The Now longer. As you journal, you'll also find that you'll be learning how to write dialogue and better understand story structure.
- 2) Have you been practicing being in the HERE & NOW? What have you noticed about the time spent in Survivalist mode, versus time spent in Creative Artist mode?
 - Your Creative Artist is like a precious, innocent, valuable, beautiful little baby that needs to be nurtured and protected. Get into the Here & Now and continue to do The Now work. Doing so will help you grow and protect the baby from the Survivalist.
- 3) Did you choose one dramatic and one comedic monologue? Did you practice breaking down the copy?

NOTE: About 'Life Killing People' - These people have a downward sucking energy and should be dealt with cautiously. You have a responsibility to yourself to protect your creative genius (the upward energy) from the negative energy they project. The more you do The Now work, the more you should be able to positively affect those around you, instead of being affected by their negativity. REMEMBER -- Life affects art, just as art affects life. What happens in your real life can very easily affect your creative life, and visa versa.

CHARACTER WORK:

Does the Character Become the Actor or Vice Versa?

1. TOOLS AND TERMS

- A. **A Character:** Any role played by an actor in a cast
- B. **Character Breakdown** - A short, synoptic description (a literal breakdown) of the different roles (or characters) available in any particular script. The breakdowns are used in the industry by actors, agents, producers, directors and casting directors during the casting process.

Example Breakdowns:

Bob: Male, mid-to-late 20's, the local small town hero and all around good guy, who manages a small diner that's always busy. Sensitive, romantic, but a little restless.

Mary: Female, mid-to-late 20's, Bob's romantic interest. She dated Bob in highschool but moved away to college for a big city experience. Smart, cute and funny.

C. Character Analysis Breakdown Sheet: Don't confuse Character Breakdowns (the noun) with the act of breaking down a character (the verb). When you, the actor, begin to analyze and develop your character, you're doing character work. This means you're breaking down the character.

- One invaluable tool for this process is the Character Analysis Breakdown Sheet. This Sheet is a downloadable document filled with questions for you to answer about your character.
- The Character Analysis Breakdown Sheet is a springboard for the actor to begin creating a strong character. To access the character analysis breakdown sheet, go to the Resource Documents for Download section included in Session 10.
- Remember, Character Breakdowns are simplified, descriptive summaries of the characters that are used by the above mentioned, industry professionals as a tool to get just the right actor cast for each role/character.

NOTE: Not all of the Character Analysis questions will apply to all of your characters. This is simply a guide for you to use to better understand and develop your character.

2. LEVELS OF CHARACTERS

A. Real Person - This is the baseline we start from when talking about character.

B. Playing a Role -

C. Character Actor -

D. Lead Actor -

E. Other Types of "Characters"

F. Caricature -- An exaggerated or blown-out personality, way beyond what is normal or reasonable for a typical character.

- Actor _____ in the film _____ is a good example of a believable caricature.

G. A Personality --

- _____ is an example of someone who would be considered a personality. (When she's not acting.)

H. Impersonator --

- _____ (known for his presidential impersonations) is a good example of a talented impersonator.

3. ARCHETYPE -- A typical example of a person.

Wikipedia has a comprehensive list of stock characters. Visit the following links and do the research. Spending time with this information will help you better understand what the writer, director and casting director are generally expecting from your performance.

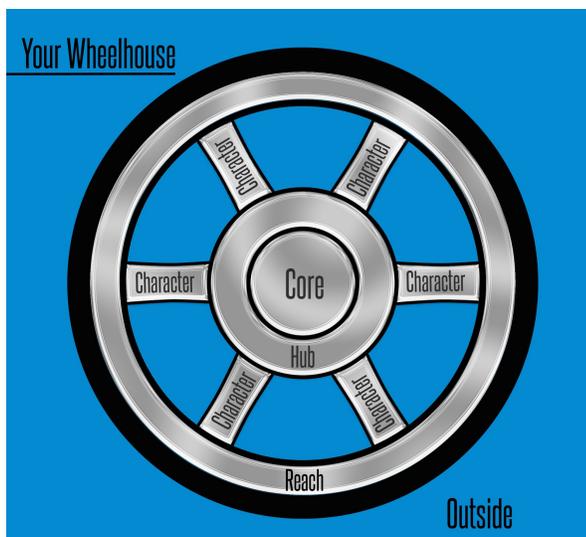
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archetype>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stock_character

4. CHARACTER ACTORS vs. WHEELHOUSE ACTORS / LEADING vs. SUPPORTING

A. Character Actors - These Actors can play all sorts of different character roles (they may even be good at caricatures and impressions)

- _____ is a great example of a character actor. When he takes on a role, the audience never quite knows who to expect.

B. Wheelhouse (Hub) Actors - These actors will usually play roles that are close to who they are as a person (often a leading character)



- _____ is an example of an actor who is exceptionally good at playing subtle versions of herself. We know her when we see her, and for the most part, we don't want her to change.

NOTE: It's important to understand, one type of actor is not better than the other. There's no right or wrong, good or bad; it is what it is. We're all built and gifted differently. Learning who you are as an actor and what type of character(s) you're able to play is not only important, it's also an incredibly fun and adventurous part of your actor's journey!

Consider these two types of Characters:

A. Lead Characters -

B. Support Characters-

- Take note that supporting characters can sometimes take the lead in a particular scene and the lead character will sometimes become the supporting role to a supporting character. However, the bulk of the story will always focus on the lead character. This switch will happen a lot in episodic television because Guest Stars and Co-Stars will appear on the show and shine for a moment but the story will always return to the lead(s).

5. THE GADGET ACTOR

- The name Coach Banks has given to the actor that uses a lot of _____.
- For more on the topic of Gadgetry, read Coach Banks' blog on the topic: The Gadget Actor. You can download a PDF of the blog available under your Resource Documents for Download section.

6. WHY “JUST YOU” IS NOT ENOUGH.

- You just being or acting natural is not enough-- it's not interesting enough.
- You don't have a very good understanding of the craft of acting if you think you can get away with just acting “natural” and not doing the necessary work.
- Acting is not _____.
- REALITY TV is _____“reality”.
- Even the _____ is scripted and packaged in a certain way to make it more sensationalized.
- The word actor goes back to the greek word _____, which means to lie or present something that is not true. Acting is just a lie in the name of _____. The better and more effectively we lie, the more entertaining it becomes.*

*These are allowable lies because they aren't being used in reality to deceive or harm. They're used to entertain an audience that wants you to be incredibly good at 'the lie'.

“Acting is one of the most unnatural things there is! Talent, craft, skill and ability are what makes this unnatural oddity look and seem natural!”

~ Coach Banks

7. CHARACTER BREAKDOWN SHEET

- You can download this PDF from the Resource Documents for Download section for this session.
- Complete this sheet to help you develop each character you play. (Remember, this sheet is a guideline, not everything on it will apply to every character you play.)

8. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, & SPIRITUAL INTUITIVE CHARACTER WORK

- The more work you do to bring your character to life, the more real the character will become.
- When you tell a lie, you don't want to get caught. How do you not get caught?

- The same thing goes for when you're creating a character. If you don't do the appropriate character analysis work, the bottom is going to fall out from under your lie. You'll get "caught" acting.
- Some of the characters you play will be very close to who you are naturally, aligning with life experiences you've already had.
- Other characters you may be asked to play will require you to do a lot of emotional, mental and intuitive work, as well as character research.
- Never _____ the people you're playing. They are some form of YOU!
- Be sold-out to your character. If you're not sold-out to the character yourself, your audience will not be sold-out either. You have to be convinced yourself in order to be convincing.

9. CHARACTER WORK EXERCISES

- Play around with character development for awhile. Explore and experiment with character work.
- For more on character work, read Coach Banks' article on the topic here: <https://bit.ly/2J9zoKA> (Or View a PDF copy of the article under your Resource Documents for Download section).

HOMEWORK: Creating a Character

- 1) Create a character for yourself by working the CHARACTER BREAKDOWN SHEET. Just jump in and go for it! Once you've completed some development on a character, take this character out into a public place. Yeah, that's right...go somewhere outside of your own community where people don't know you. Try going someplace you don't regularly shop. For example, a grocery store you've never been to. Live out the experience as the character.
- 2) Before you begin, make sure to set an in-point and out-point. Remember, an in-point is a physical location or action that will cue you to start the exercise. For example, exiting your car. You must stay in the exercise until you reach your predetermined out-point. A good out-point may be when you leave the store or get back into your car.
- 3) Everything you do (shop, walk, interact) in between your in-point and out-point, will be your character work. Let yourself discover new things about your character. After you're done with the exercise, write down some notes about your experience.

DEMO: Characters

You'll first see Joe, Danielle and Jack on stage being themselves. Then Coach Banks will count to three and tell them to snap into a character, caricature, or impersonation they've each been instructed to perform.

- 1) Can you tell which one is playing the more **Real Character**? Which one is playing a **Caricature (Character)** and which one is doing an **Impersonation**?

The actors will then be instructed to perform a second time, with the instruction to push the character to the next level, almost to the point of caricature.

- 2) What do you notice about these performances in comparison to the first performances?

Next, you'll see the actors decompress the exercise. Listen to their responses and answer the following questions.

- 3) What do you think it means to push a character? What may cause you to push a character to give a performance that is not authentic or believable?
- 4) What do you personally take away from the discussion about the process Danielle uses for building and developing her character Denise?

- 5) What sort of work can you do to develop a strong impersonation like the one Jack has created with President Barack Obama?
- 6) Are you a Lead Actor or a Character Actor? Do you have the ability to do Impersonations or create believable Caricatures? How do you know what type of actor you are?

If you feel you need additional assistance with this work, you may request an extra one-on-one session with your online coach*. We'll check-in to see how you're doing with your character work and help answer any questions you may have in preparation for your final exam.

*Three one-on-one private skype sessions are included with this course. Any additional sessions will incur an additional cost.

END SESSION 10

Go over your notes and prepare for the Session 10 Quiz. You'll find Quiz 10 by clicking the Blue TAKE TEST button under this Lesson's main menu.

You must complete and pass the Session 10 Quiz before proceeding with Lesson 14.
