

## SESSION 11 – MONOLOGUES

Why?

### HOMEWORK REVIEW:

- 1) How was your character work experience? What was your emotional response? What challenged you most? What did you learn?
- 2) The amount of character work you'll have to do will depend on whether or not the character you're playing is inside or outside your wheelhouse. Who do you think your wheelhouse character is?

### MONOLOGUES:

#### 1. WHAT ARE MONOLOGUES...REALLY?

- A. The Greek root word for Mono = \_\_\_\_\_
- B. The Greek root word Logue (logos) = \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Length is irrelevant. There's no defined or required length for a monologue. It can be a short paragraph, several pages, or anything in between. Either way, a monologue is one character speaking for a sustained amount of time. Dialogue is two or more people conversing back and forth.

#### 2. LA's ANNUAL 1MINUTE MONOLOGUE CONTEST

- A. Visit the CBSI 1Minute Monologue website [1MinuteMonologue.com](http://1MinuteMonologue.com) to:
  - Understand more about monologues
  - Find monologues
  - Learn about the contest
  - Watch examples of monologues performed LIVE in front of judges
  - Get inspired to tackle your own monologues
  - Keep an eye out for opportunities to perform monologues.
- B. Check out our 1Minute Monologue Youtube channel: <http://bit.ly/2su3h1B>

#### 3. MONOLOGUES ARE CRUCIAL

Some people ask the question, "Why do you need monologues if you're an on-camera actor?" Aren't monologues mainly for theater?

- A. Memorizing monologues isn't just about performing, it's about the process of training you get from the monologue.
- B. Monologues are like additional, ongoing, free training that helps you to develop your instrument. You don't need to go anywhere or even spend any money. You just do it!
- C. Monologues vary in length. At CBSI we use a one-minute standard, because one minute is long enough for any industry pro to know if you can act, or if you're what they're looking for.
- D. No matter the length of the piece, the real point here is that monologues are free training tools to help develop and improve your instrument. You should have, at the very least, one performance level monologue in you, ready to come out at all times!
- E. If you're serious about the craft, you should have five monologues in various stages of development at all times... with a minimum of three performance level monologues ready to go!

You should aim for:

- At least one comedic
  - At least one dramatic
  - Something specific to your type, your look, or special skill
  - A one-minute monologue
  - A two or three minute monologue
  - (Shakespeare, if that's your thing)
- F. As you search for the right monologue for you, the actual process of looking and researching will not only help you better understand monologues, it will also force you to read copy. Reading copy will help you get a better handle on story structure, character, behavior, and script analysis.
  - G. Developing a monologue is not just about the end result, it's about the process of learning and growing:
    - Searching for the perfect monologue will help you better understand your type.
    - Working through the monologue forces you to work on script analysis, story, and character.
    - Rehearsing, rehearsing, and rehearsing the monologue some more improves your overall acting craft.
    - Performing the monologue in front of someone enables you to work under pressure.

#### **4. FINDING THE RIGHT FIT**

- A. Keep reading monologues until you have an "Aha" moment!
- B. Who are you and what's your type? It's important to know your wheelhouse core character.

- C. Are you the character, or is the character you? You can't build a character unless you know who YOU are first, because YOU are powering the character. YOU are the character, every character you play is some version of YOU. You don't become... you are!
- D. One way you can start looking for your type, is to look at all sorts of stories and try to find where you fit into those stories.
- Are you a specific archetype?
  - Are you a lead, supporting, or a character actor?
  - Good guy/girl? Bad guy/girl?
  - How do other people see you?
  - How do you appear physically?
  - How does your mind, body, soul, spirit, and intuition lineup to communicate the clearest notes?

Knowing the answers to these questions will allow you to better strike with your sharpest point. If you need additional support answering these questions, go back and review Chapter 10.

### **E. Optional Homework Assignment -- Finding Your Type:**

Go out with a partner into a public place, like a shopping center, and have your partner hand out a sheet of paper (a.k.a response sheets\*) to strangers on your behalf, so that you do not have any interaction with strangers. Your partner (or the response sheet) should explain that you're doing an assignment for an acting class.

For the strangers who are willing to participate, your partner should ask them to write down the first five adjectives or character types that they think of when they look at you. While your partner is asking strangers to evaluate their first impressions of you, you should be doing an activity that is normal and feels natural (drinking, eating, looking at your phone, reading, writing, typing on a computer, etc.). Relax into it, even if it's you just standing there.

When you get home, analyze the responses on your sheets. You should have fifty or so adjectives and/or character types. Looking for patterns and similarities will be quite enlightening and helpful in developing your objective understanding of how you come across to people. Reserve judgement over the adjectives that you consider negative. If a few people say you look mean, this is important for you to know about yourself as it may indicate that a mean character lies within your wheelhouse.

\*Response Sheets are simply a piece of lined paper with the sentence, "Please list the first five adjectives or character types that you think of when you look at me."

- F. You must figure out who you are first. Once you've figured out your specific type, you can then begin searching for monologues that best suit you.
- Try to find a monologue in your voice, one that speaks the way you speak.

## 5. ANALYZING THE MONOLOGUE

**A. Analyze** - Once you've selected your monologue, it's now time to analyze it. Use the same process for script analysis laid out for you in Sessions 5 and 6.

- Who are you?
- Who are you speaking to?
- What's going on?
- Where's the scene/moment taking place?
- What are your intentions?
- What are you trying to get out of this?

**B. Be Specific** - Don't speak out into the abyss. You have to know precisely who you're talking to and where you are at.

- It must be clear and specific. Some monologues will naturally be clear, while others will be quite vague. If the piece is vague, you'll have to do the work and choose the specifics, or you'll be operating out of vague choices resulting in a weak performance.
- Nothing in your monologue can be vague. It's your job to create the world of the story, along with all of the moments and beats.

**C. Everything is a Response** - In addition to doing the script analysis work, go through the monologue and dissect every sentence, as if it's a response to a question asked by the character you're speaking to.

**EXAMPLE:** if the first sentences of your monologue are:

I cut the tree down. I don't know why. I guess maybe, because, I'd been looking at it my entire life and just decided I didn't want to look at it anymore.

Then a question that might incite your first sentence could be:

**Possible inciting question:** What happened here?

**Your line:** I cut the tree down.

**2nd inciting question:** Why?

**Your line:** I don't know why. I guess I just got tired of looking at it.

- Writing inciting questions out is an important step in preparing your monologue.
- Knowing the question you're responding to will help you envision the person you're interacting with throughout the monologue. Doing so will result in a more believable delivery.

- This process will also help you respond truthfully and more naturally. Knowing what you're responding to will also change the way you deliver a line because you'll have a clearer understanding of why you're saying what you're saying.

NOTE: Not every sentence will work for this exercise.

**D. Know Who You're Playing To** - Next you need to do the work to create and imagine the person who's asking you these questions.

- You need to be able to clearly see them, then anchor them somewhere so that your eyes are not floating around the room. Wandering eyes will make the audience begin to wonder who you're talking to.
- When you decide to perform the monologue for someone, you can choose to use a live person to deliver your monologue to so that you're in relationship with a real person. All you do is place your imaginary work on this live person, as if they were the character you created. This will often help you better connect to your monologue and create a more real and believable experience.

NOTE: You may also choose to play to an empty chair. However, if you do this, you must do all your imagination work to fully envision the actual person you're talking to in that chair.

**E. Location of the Monologue** - You need to know the environment in which your monologue takes place. If the script does not specifically say where you are, then make a strong choice for this moment. Make a choice that makes sense and does not conflict with writer's intent (the given circumstances). Try and make it interesting.

**F. Edit** - Feel free to adjust your monologue. Outside of revered classical pieces, you can make changes, edits and customize it specifically for you to make it work better.

**For Example:** You may be attracted to a certain monologue because of its message, but not comfortable with all of the expletives in it. Just because it's loaded with F-Bombs, doesn't mean you have to use them in order to properly execute the piece. You simply edit around them. It's similar to going to a clothing store, choosing an outfit from the rack, and having it custom sized for you!

- You need to have the freedom to make adjustments to monologues that are well known. The last thing you want is your audience being distracted as you perform your monologue.

**For Example:** Taking the well-known character name (Gandalf) out of your piece and replacing it with a different name (Gary), will keep your piece covert. Doing this will also keep you from being compared to the actor who's already crushed it with the help of lighting, editing, and everything else known as Movie Magic!

- You don't want your audience comparing you to a known actor who did a phenomenal job performing the same piece in a movie, play, or television show. This is your chance to pick and edit a piece that'll present you as the star in your own award winning performance.

- You get to pick...everything! Take advantage of choosing material that allows you to shine. Cast yourself as the characters you want to be - in the situations you want to be in. Then own it! (Changing the character's age, hair or eye color, gender, etc. to fit you is also permissible.)

**NOTE: Remember to Stuff The Significant Nouns** - This is where you tear apart the monologue, isolating each significant noun/moment (person, place, or thing) and work out exactly what meaning it has relationally to your character. See Session 5 on Script Analysis for a review on stuffing the significant nouns.

**G. Group Monologue** - When performing a group monologue, it's important to create at least four or five people (in your imagination) who are in the room with you.

**Example:** a lawyer talking to a jury, a teacher talking to a classroom.

- These are characters you can personally relate to as you address them... as opposed to just a room full of ambiguous 'people'.
- Doing this will bring out different reactions in you as you connect with them, thus greatly strengthening your performance. Now you're not just speaking to a room full of strangers, but specific individuals with whom you have different relationships.

**H. Do the Work** - The more time you take and the more work you do on your who, what, where, significant nouns, and intentions--the stronger the monologue performance will be. PERIOD! Doing this work will help you better connect with your character and monologue, resulting in a delivery that is less of a read and more of an experience.

- Simply memorizing the lines of the monologue, then getting up and regurgitating them WILL NOT result in an effective monologue performance.
- As you move closer to owning a strong, customized monologue, you'll discover more and more magical moments for yourself and ultimately your audience.
- For more on MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCES, see:  
<https://www.1minutemonologue.com/2018-all-submitted-monologues>

"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it."

~ Pablo Picasso

## HOMEWORK: Monologues

1. **Monologues** - With your new understanding of monologues, begin your search for a fresh monologue. **This will be the piece you will perform for your Final Evaluation.** Read and read and read, until you find a monologue you feel is right for you.

2. Begin working on your monologue. Then read some more.
3. After doing all of the work from this chapter on your chosen piece, do it all again with two others. Don't rush this process. It's on-going. Begin now and you'll be ready later!

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## END SESSION 11

Go over your notes and prepare for the Session 11 Quiz. You'll find Quiz 11 by clicking the Blue TAKE TEST button under this Lesson's main menu.

You must complete and pass the Session 11 Quiz before proceeding with Lesson 15.

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