

Everything that you ever wanted to know.....About Drama

Everything That You Ever Wanted To Know...

About Drama



In Depth Instructions For Operating Christian Drama Clubs

By Stan Hood

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INTRODUCTION

“We have actors but no art of acting,” wrote Lessing of the theater of his day in the *Hamburg Dramaturgy*. Centuries later, we seem to have the same problem. Most jobs can be precisely measured with a scientific approach- a cause and effect. If you hit the nail with the hammer hard enough, it will be driven into the wood. There are no variables between the hammer and the force required to strike the nail. Therefore, a would be carpenter can be given specific instructions that would produce the same results each time applied.

Seemingly, acting is much different when small groups and even large local clubs approach it. We all seem to possess a disease called the “Skit Mentality,” which basically consists of one person throwing a general idea at a group of people who are allowed to say what ever comes to mind as long as they stay within the concept of the story. This method works very well for a one-time event but for an organized group, it is ultimately a death sentence to the reputation of the individuals involved and the group that it represents. Not only will the group not reach it’s goals, it will not achieve anything at all because it is impossible to reach a destination without a road map.

This book has been designed to help each member of your drama club fulfill his potential. Sometimes people have the desire to reach a goal but have no idea of how to get there. I think that is a small percentage of our problem. Our chief hindrance is our state of mind. ***We have been conditioned to expect all church programs to eventually fail.*** Trends say that people start out on fire in January and disappear by March. It happens so often that I have deemed it “March Madness.” Look up! It’s June and we’re still here! Why are we still here? Maybe it’s because we haven’t come up with good enough excuses to stop. If that be the case, you wont get your excuse from me. Everything I know has been included in this book to help you give God your very best in the form of drama. After all, isn’t He worthy of the praise?

The following directions are based on my 15 years of experience and research. As you begin your journey into Christian Drama, things may be slightly different for you. My intention here was not to lay down the law but to give you a starting point for organizing your group. Many have found this guide very helpful. We hope that it proves to be of equal value to you.

We’ve tried to include everything necessary to get you going in this guide but keep in mind that we are more than willing to give you personal assistance if you request it. www.sh-playhouse.com or email us at administrator@sh-playhouse.com.

Yours truly,

Stan Hood

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THE DIRECTOR

The Director is the most inspired individual of a drama club. His expertise should be unquestionable but more importantly, his patience should have no boundaries. He must be able to deal with disappointments and substandard performances in a way that inspires the fallen to get back up and try again. His personality must ooze with positive energy that has no quit. His signature must be easily recognized on each production by way of standards that will not be lowered under any circumstances because he is driven by his desire to be found pleasing in the Lord's sight and show everyone the perfection of God through stories that give hope and make the connection between a dead world and *the* living God.

ORGANIZATION

The first priority of a director is to develop a sequence of events that must happen. Always put these events on paper and keep that paper on hand. This will allow you to stay focused. Start with a simple outline that travels backwards. Ask yourself what you want. List it first and follow with what ever it takes to accomplish that goal.

My first list for "Running Back To You" looked like this.

1. Perform a play about my life before Thanksgiving weekend before people go on vacation.
2. In order to perform the play, I must have a story in writing.
3. In order to tell the story, I must have a cast.
4. In order to have a cast, I must have auditions.
5. In order to have auditions, I must have a place to conduct them.
6. In order to get people to come to auditions, I must advertise the story.

As I spent more time researching and developing my goal, the list became more detailed to include dates, times and places and ultimately performances. Until you get organized, there is no need to read any further.

COMMUNICATION

There are many people in this world that can perform certain tasks well but there are very few people who possess the ability coupled with the character to teach others what they know. Never let acting ability be the only factor in choosing leaders. Actors have to be able to work well with certain people. Directors must be able to work with everyone despite how he feels about them personally.

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Another element to communication is keeping it flowing. A director is also a manager. He must ensure that everyone involved have the latest information available at all times. This is mainly accomplished through an assistant and a secretary.

DIRECTING

Directing is much more than pointing out mistakes. It is giving insight where instruction is vague. It is creating an atmosphere. Directing is making fiction reality by always maintaining the audiences point of view. Directing is building an actor's self esteem by improving his strengths and hiding his weakness by assigning the proper roles regardless of what character the actor thinks he should be playing. A director cares more about developing the potential of each club member than he does about personal gain.

HOW TO DIRECT A PLAY

1. In order to direct, you must understand the *Three Major Elements of Drama- Action, Theme, and Character.*

Action- continued events that drop the reader/viewer into the heart of a story and so involves him that he never stops to question the motivation of the action. Any play must have attention-getting movement that keeps a story going.

Theme- a clear message that always takes the reader/viewer back to himself making him reflect on his own life and/or experiences. The theme is the glue that holds the scenes together.

Character- each character must have his own distinctive personality. In many cases, the actor has to spend as much time portraying his character off the stage as he does in rehearsals in order to make the transformation on stage.

2. Of course, the next obstacle is to learn how to balance all three elements which is one of the benefits of rehearsal. Whether you are the writer or not, you must have envisioned the entire play before the first rehearsal. You must commit the sequence of events to memory. You must know each character personally.
3. Your play cannot survive without all three elements. You can have the best story ever written, the most expensive set ever constructed on stage, and action scenes right out of a movie. But if the actors don't bring the characters to life, you will have a substandard production.
4. The following is a suggested routine for rehearsals using the example of the play "REDEEMED."

Agenda- Enter each rehearsal with an idea of what you want to accomplish.
In "REDEEMED," my first goal was to find out the actors' perceptions of the characters that they would be playing.

Tact- Always keep in mind that the actors were inspired to audition for their role.
When correcting someone, balance it with something positive that they did.

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“You’re trying really hard and I appreciate that but your character calls for much more desperation in his voice. So, let’s try it again.”

Patience- Keep in mind that the players involved may not be able to see what you see. If you share as much as you can with them and honor their efforts, the actors will become those characters.

Warming Up- As a director, you must prepare your actors mentally before each rehearsal. It is impossible to walk off the street and get into character immediately. In order to get into a character, an actor must leave all issues with their personal lives outside of rehearsal. One way to do that is through physical and vocal exercises.

Exercises that get you into character

Group Contact

1. Work your way around the room and try to find a different way to greet each club member without speaking.
2. Breathe and sound- Sit or stand in a circle and decide upon a shared sound by everyone (such as a hum). Continue the sound until everyone comes on one accord.
3. One person step forward and have every repeat tongue drills (ex. la, la, la). It may be good to change leaders frequently to get a variety of ideas.

Physical Exercise

1. *The prune-* First, tense your entire facial muscles inward. Continue this pattern throughout your entire body.
2. *The puppet-* Drop your entire upper body like a puppet only being supported by your waist with your knees together. The director gives commands for movement and the cast executes the movements as if a string is pulling them.

Vocal Warm-ups

1. *Letting go-* Stretch your face open as if you are executing a silent scream.
2. *Respirations-* Inhale deeply. Let air pass slowly without expanding your chest.
3. *Sounding-* Reach down for a sound on inhalations and make different sounds on exhalations.

Although these exercises may seem silly, they are designed to ease tension, create a bond within the cast, and help the actors open up in order to be receptive to new ideas.

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THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

OVERVIEW

The Assistant Director is just as dedicated to the drama club as the director. He helps select the material to be performed, studies it and prepares himself as if he is the director. His primary role is to head the staff and keep the productions running behind the scenes.

Like the director, the assistant is a manager. He relieves pressure from the director by insuring consistency in daily operations.

DAILY OPERATIONS

1. The Director and Assistant compose a rehearsal schedule based on performance dates given by the Public Relations Representative. From that point on, the Director is relieved of overseeing daily operations.
2. The Assistant takes the draft of the schedule and gives it to the Secretary who informs everyone involved of the audition date/first rehearsal.
3. The Assistant then begins to work out the details of the production.
 - a. Using the script, talk to the light and sound technicians about what equipment is needed to perform play.
 - b. Using the Director's Instruction, get a list of materials needed to construct props.
 - c. Discuss advertisement with the Public Relations Department.
 - d. Take findings to the Treasurer. Find out if the estimates are within the budget.
 - e. If the budget allows, take estimates to Director for approval.
 - f. Collect reports from staff on a quarterly basis.
4. The chief responsibility of the Assistant is to keep the Director's mind on Acting and not on business.

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THE SECRETARY

The Secretary is the glue that holds a drama club together. No organization can survive without open communication and accurate record keeping.

COMMUNICATION

The Secretary communicates in two major ways.

1. He delivers instructions to all cast/crew members verbally or in writing (schedule/Director Helps). This one act can mean the difference between a performance next week or a project being put on hold indefinitely.
2. He delivers feedback to the Director/Assistant. Feedback helps to avoid major problems. When applied to rehearsal times, feedback allows the Director the options to go ahead as planned, reschedule or cancel the meeting all together. Too often, actors cancel personal plans in order to attend a rehearsal that no one else shows up to.

RECORD KEEPING

The Secretary must keep good notes at each meeting. The form is broken into categories that simplify this process. These notes are needed to help the club grow. These notes also become extremely important if you designate your organization as non-profit and you receive funding during the year. We avoid problems in the future by examining the past. Do your homework.

After each production or quarterly, which ever comes first, the Secretary must bind his notes in a three-hole folder, mark the front of the folder with the name of the play and time period, and turn it in to the Historian for archiving.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Secretary must be someone who is accountable. Once again, the Director must be free to concentrate on the performances. If he cannot depend on the Assistant and the Secretary, one of two things will happen. Either he will have to focus on daily operations and creativity will suffer or information will not circulate and no one will know where to be or what to do.

The Secretary's dedication is vital to the success of the club.

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THE CHAPLAIN

The Chaplain serves as the chief advisor to the Director/Assistant concerning the spiritually correctness of the material to be performed and the performance itself. In the midst of putting on a show, it is very easy to forget that the glorification of God is the number one priority. The Chaplain is installed to keep the Director and the club focused on this mission.

HOW DOES THE CHAPLAIN KEEP THE CLUB FOCUSED?

1. He reviews the material to be performed before the rest of the club sees it. This sometimes requires him to tell the Director things that he doesn't want to hear. In these instances, you as the Chaplain must protect God's reputation and not allow anything questionable on the stage. If the Director and the Chaplain disagree, the matter must be called to a vote by the entire club.
2. He offers prayer or appoints someone to offer prayer before and after rehearsals.
3. The Chaplain also gives a five-minute key thought devotional before each rehearsal. It has been our experience that prayer alone does not keep a group focused. There must be a feasting upon word to remind us of why we are involved.

To serve as a Chaplain for a drama club is not an easy task because people bring a variety of ideas to the stage and will not be so willing to let those ideas go for a greater cause. In short, the Chaplain must study and pray to be sure of what he believes and stand even if you have to stand alone.

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THE TREASURER

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Some reasons for having a Treasurer are obvious but some are not so obvious for a drama club. A Treasurer for a drama club consists of more than just maintaining a bank account.

THE TREASURER IS AN ACCOUNTANT

With regular drama club expenses and a Public Relations Department all asking for money, you must keep very good records and watch our spending closely.

THE TREASURER IS AN INVESTIGATOR

As the person who will have to answer the questions, you must demand that the requester of funds get estimates before the purchase and bring a receipt after the purchase.

Traditionally, a treasurer does not get involved with deciding on whether or not money should be spent. But in this situation, if you don't ask questions, the club can get in a lot of trouble in a hurry. Your first question should always be "Does the Director know what you're doing?"

THE TREASURER IS A MANAGER

With a drama club, money comes in spurts so you have to be careful not to completely deplete your funds. The Director should prevent this from happening but don't count on it. At times he will be so determined to get a play on stage that he won't consider that the club could be broke. You must bring this to his attention whether he wants to listen or not. If you and the Director cannot agree, any club member has the right to call an issue to a vote in a formal meeting.

THE TREASURER IS A COLLECTOR

It is the primary responsibility of the Treasurer to collect dues on a bi-monthly basis. The easiest way to do this is bring it up at rehearsals. Sometimes this is not enough so you will have to give some members a printout of their payment history to remind them that they are behind. If that doesn't work, inform the Director/Assistant and that individual will be cut off from receiving drama club perks (tapes, books, etc.) until they bring their account up to date.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

The chief responsibility of the Public Relations Department is to promote the drama club. This must be done in several different ways.

1. Create flyers that market the club and current play(s). Distribute those flyers through the mail and canvassing.
2. Seek sponsorship by making presentations and announcements at different churches and local persons or agencies.
3. Schedule performance dates according to the availability of the production.
4. Make appointments for the Director to speak at different locations.
5. Accomplish the above by developing a marketing strategy to include funds needed to reach your goal.

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THE HISTORIAN

The Historian is the person responsible for documenting the events of the drama club. There are several requirements included in this task.

1. In order to document events, the Historian should be present at all functions to include rehearsals, performances and social gatherings.
2. At these meetings, he must take copies of the script, bulletins and pictures to document these events.
3. The Historian also must obtain copies of flyers, posters and newsletters from the Public Relations Department.
4. The Secretary will turn in his notes on a quarterly basis to be included in the historical files.
5. As all this information is compiled, the Historian must maintain presentable photo albums and scrap books to be used by the Public Relations Department to market the drama club.
6. Keep in mind that you only get one opportunity to document a performance on film so you must ensure that you are close enough to get good pictures.
7. Always use the club camera and get petty cash from the treasurer to keep plenty of film on hand and to develop the film after it's use. Return receipts to Treasurer for his records.

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THE CHURCH BOARD

As powerful as the title sounds, the level of church board involvement is up to you. You must decide from the very beginning whether or not your club will be independent or function as a department within your church. It can't be both. I do have valid reasons for including this section in this book.

THE CHURCH NAME

If we are to use the church name as a part of our organization (example- The Bethel Drama Club), the church should have foreknowledge of our activities and a right to express its opinion.

THE CHURCH MONEY

I am absolutely certain that there will be times when you require financial support from the church. Although it is possible to declare independence and work with the church at the same time, if you are to ask for money, then it is only fair for your Treasurer to open the books to the board and show that you are good stewards and deserving of the funds that you are asking for.

I do not advocate hiding funds from the church board. You may have a separate account that they can't touch but they have the right to know how much is in it and what it is for. We cannot hold a thousand dollars in one hand behind our backs and ask the church to place a thousand more in the empty hand. Any staff member found guilty of this should be relieved of his or her duties immediately.

THE CHURCH'S OPINION ABOUT OUR PLAYS

They should have the right to deny a performance in the church for what ever reason. It is nothing to be angry about. Reconsider the material or find another location.

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THE LIGHT TECHNICIAN

Although the Light Technician sounds like more title than responsibility, there is a great deal of planning and coordinating to perform this duty.

1. Upon receiving and reading the script, the LT must decide how much light is required and what type.
2. Once you decide what lighting is required for the production, you must research probable costs (which will become easy after a few productions). Once you come up with a dollar amount to rent the equipment, multiply the cost by the number of performances and rehearsals that the equipment will be needed.
3. The LT is also responsible for the rental, set up and return of the equipment. Receive funds ahead of time from the Treasurer.

EXAMPLE

The play “REDEEMED” required two mini-spot lights because of the distance between the two main characters and a regular spotlight for the church scenes. The play also called for a Fogger for the homeless scene.

The Mini-spot lights rented at \$65 each for the weekend, the full spotlight rented at \$80 for the weekend and the fogger rented at \$40 for the weekend. But because of the low budget and the lack of dues being turned in, we could only afford one mini-spot light and had to make due.

EQUIPMENT RENTAL

I usually like to deal with the same business for all equipment rentals. This comes in handy when you get into tight situations where time constraints are involved. It also would hurt to have a credit card number on file and the names of several drama club members (light tech, sound tech, director, etc.) who are authorized to pick up and sign for equipment. Usually the rental office will require each person to fill out an application.

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THE SOUND TECHNICIAN

The quality of sound is the one thing that actors all point to when asked what would enhance their performance.

MUSIC

Music is one of the unseen characters in a play. It is just as important as any character. The music that you select for a script must tell the story of the script.

When you receive a new script from the Assistant Director, it is a must that you read the script in its entirety before selecting any songs for before, during and after scenes. Once you start through the play the second time, songs that you love will automatically come to mind in places you deem appropriate. You should seek as much information as possible from the director in order to determine the mood that the music should set in each scene.

MICROPHONES AND SPEAKERS

What is needed will be determined by the size and mood of the play. Often, placement of the equipment will be entirely up to you.

SOUND EFFECTS

Currently, the playhouse has over 3000 sound effects that are available to you upon request. As far as how to use them, you're going to have to experiment.

REHEARSALS

In the past, the sound technician has not attended many rehearsals. This lax policy has changed due to unorganized performances. There have been too many delays and instances where wrong sound effects and music were played at the wrong time. Once you accept this job, you are committing to rehearsal attendance. If you fail to attend, you will be replaced. Rehearsals are for you also. It is a time where you can make your adjustments and your mistakes without it costing the club anything.

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THE STAGE

As illustrated on the attached page, the stage is divided into eight major areas. Each cast member should be able to visualize these areas in their heads when reading the script. No matter who the playwright is, he will always include these areas in his instructions for movement on the stage. It is simply another form of organization and eliminates questions in rehearsal when everyone comes together.

POINT OF VIEW

When a writer gives directions, he always gives them from the audience's point of view. This comes into play mainly when dealing with entrance and exit points. For example, you perform facing the audience. So, if the command is to exit right, it is actually to your left. Most players have no problem with these backward commands. Of course, the exception would be the people who don't attend rehearsals consistently.

Please refer to the attached graphic regularly until you commit it to memory.

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EQUIPMENT

The following is a suggested list of equipment that is needed to produce quality plays in small venues. It does not include props or scenery. This list is not vanity. It is what is needed to ease the strain of the actors yelling instead of talking naturally. This equipment is needed to mix voices with music and to record quality tapes of performances. And the equipment is needed to make the drama club mobile. It would be nice to not have to worry about performances in places that have poor systems or no system at all.

1. **Two or more 200 watt speakers**
2. **Control panel with at least an 8 channel mixer**
3. **Amplifier that increases the output by at least 35 watts**
4. **Cordless microphone systems**
5. **Equipment Rack**
6. **One or more hand-held cordless microphone and three or more lapel microphones**
7. Two four-can sets of stage lights
8. One stage curtain (will probably have to be custom built)
9. Tape deck with CD auxiliary
10. Mini-Spot Light
11. Four cordless headsets (for director, light, sound and assistant backstage)
12. One or more Fogger

Item number one is most expensive. Number twelve is least expensive.

Bold indicates items needed for mobility.

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ACTING

It is the function of the actor, guided by the director, to create a unified concept of a given character, and then by using his own skills and theatrical devices available to him, to project that character to the audience.

WHAT?

It often happens that different actors see the same character in different lights, as do different readers. Whether one interpretation is closer than the other is of little importance. What is significant is that no actor may simply mouth words nor merely recite the lines the author has written. He must “see” the character in his or her own mind and make every speech, gesture, and movement conform to the view he has developed of that character as a total personality.

HOW DO I DO THAT?

Memorizing is not acting. You must come to a conclusion about the “meaning” of the lines. As in real life, most of what you see in a person does not come from what they say. It is how they say it and what they do when they talk that form your opinion of that person.

The beginner cannot be expected to create unaided what ordinarily requires the sustained efforts of several trained actors, but if he approaches his role with an open mind and heeds the instructions of the director, he will soon become more sensitive to the distinctions between characters beyond the obvious.

Your first step to making your character a complex personality is to study the words and actions of the characters in the script much more closely than you have in the past. There is no way around this task. For example, it is much more important to find out who Todd is than it is to memorize what Todd says.

SINCE YOU EXPECT SO MUCH, WHY DON'T YOU HELP ME?

I will. The next four sections are dedicated to helping you make the transition from a person who likes to do skits to a convincing actor worthy of admiration. But remember, instructions are no good without hard work.

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THE ART OF LEARNING LINES

Bad acting, like bad writing, always has two or three things in common. Failure obviously comes in the bad imitation of a good character but it also comes in a good imitation of a bad character. In other words, success begins with a good script. But a script is no good if actors who won't discipline themselves are portraying it. **The majority have not learned to speak, much less to act; they ramble on until they remember their lines (if they remember at all), they put emphasis on words at random instead of following the script and are too vain to follow the instruction of the director who is usually an experienced actor.**

Good acting, on the contrary, like good writing, is remarkable in its individuality. It thrives on truth; and truth is always original. A good play possesses qualities that belong to the fundamental excellence of the art of acting. It has distinctness and quiet power, natural expression, it's director has a ruling calmness which is never felt as coldness; yet these qualities have in each case the individual stamp of the actor and seem to belong to him while in actuality containing earnest personality created in the minds of the writer and/or the director.

George Henry Lewis: On Actors and the Art of Acting, 1875

HOW TO BE A GOOD ACTOR

1. Understand and accept your position in the production.
 - a) What is natural to the writer is often unnatural to the actor
 - b) Although (a) is true, you are under the guidance of the director
 - c) Within the context of instructions given, identify similarities between you and the character you are portraying
 - d) Look for the thoughts underneath the words
 - e) Understand that the other players depend on you to deliver
2. Upon receipt of the script, start reading it continuously until the completion of the production. A true understanding of the story and fresh new ideas to incorporate do not come with one reading of the script.
3. Learn the words as soon as possible.

THE ART OF LEARNING LINES

- A. The first element of learning lines is to take on more responsibility than the title suggest. In other words, don't learn lines. Learn your scenes. Learn them from the opening of the curtain until the fading of the lights.
- B. Don't be a victim of the skit mentality. Don't be in a hurry to get on and off the stage. If you enter your role with that intention, it is not possible to search for the thoughts beneath the words because you don't have time.
- C. Understand that the audience is looking to identify with you and your point of view. Approach learning your lines as if you are going to teach a class on your character.

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- D. You can't learn everything that you have to say in one sitting. Take your time and prepare a sequence of events in your mind. {He walks into the room with his back turned to the witch. He closes the door before turning around to be shocked by the appearance of the witch. And then he is spellbound by what she has to say as he sits down. Then he becomes angry before he jumps up and leaves the room}.
- E. After you learn the sequence of events, study the facial expressions, gestures and mood swings of the character. {He is obviously troubled when he enters the room. Then he is surprised by the witch's appearance. He is captivated by her words but then he bangs the table out of anger when she gives him bad news.}
- F. After you learn what is to happen, study what all characters must say to pull off the scene. Do this in an "action produces reaction" train of thought. If your character is asked a question, obviously there should either be an answer or some physical gesture in response. Or if there is a challenge some sort of reaction is required. {*Come in Todd! Wait a minute. How'd you know my name? (He turns around to see her) Whoa! You're messed up! Enough about me. Let's talk about you.*}
- G. Help your counter-part by practicing the correct voice fluctuations. In other words, the end of a statement should sound like the end of a statement, not an incomplete thought. A question should sound like a question. Actors can easily be thrown off by this simple detail and may never recover during the scene.
- H. Be prepared for your counter-part to forget a line. This is another area where learning the scene versus learning your lines is important. Practice moving on to the next line to bring your partner back on track.
- I. Never depend on other players to carry you by jogging your memory. Each performance is unpredictable. Instead, look to be someone that the other players can depend on.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO STUDY A SCRIPT

What's best for different people may vary but I've found that the best time for me is during my lunch period at work and 30 minutes before bedtime.

These times work well for me because there are limited distractions and temptations to focus on something else.

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THE ART OF PERSUASION

.....One actor may not cry on stage, but only make a pretense of crying, yet he makes the audience cry. Another actor is bathed in bitter tears but the audience does not respond. You may conclude that true feeling is not essential in drama. Simply “acting” is good enough. I say that it is not so. The audience did not respond to the man who cried because he never became the character.

HOW TO BE CONVINCING

- ⇒ Accept the fact that all people aren't stupid. The audience knows when you haven't prepared for the role that you are playing.
- ⇒ In addition to the instructions in the previous section of this book, “The Art of Learning Lines,” prepare yourself by removing yourself. You must walk, talk, think, feel and react the way the character does in the script and never come away from that personality while on stage. To insert your own thought or opinion shatters the world that you have put the audience in and though you may be truly touched by the story and inspired to cry at the appropriate time, to the audience, you are doing it as an outsider or as yourself instead of the character that you are supposed to be.
- ⇒ Understand that a convincing character is attainable. We are all actors and perform at a moments notice. When you have a painful look on your face because your mind is still on the fight you just had with a family member and someone asks you if you are all right, you immediately smile and say “I'm O. K.” knowing that you are not O. K. Long after you have forgiven someone for whatever they've done, you continue to be cold and indifferent knowing all along that you have closed the issue in your own mind. When some of us go to church and sing songs proudly and pray loudly, we appear to be very holy, knowing all along that we are not. Oh, yes, we all are actors.
- ⇒ When you struggle to come out of your shell, remember that it is better to completely transform into someone else and be free to enjoy yourself, get great reviews and feel that sense of accomplishment than to shy away from the character and embarrass yourself on stage and spend the rest of your life wishing you would have given more.
- ⇒ Most of all, remember that you already know how to be convincing when you want to. It really is more of an issue of preparation. If you don't prepare prior to rehearsal, you wont feel comfortable in rehearsal.

THE NITTY GRITTY

- ◇ Approach acting in the same way that you approach your job. Sometimes you don't feel like it and you'd rather be doing something else but in order to be a blessing to someone else, you have to make an effort.
- ◇ Mediocrity and half-heartedness does not fall on parts of a person's life. If he is always late on Mondays, he's probably going to be late on Tuesdays also. If he doesn't put effort into

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one thing, he's probably not going to put any effort into another.

◇ Acting is fun ...if you try it.

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INTIMACY BETWEEN ACTOR & CHARACTER

Knowing that being an author and actor is a unique viewpoint, I will try my best to be objective when speaking on what motivates a person to put in the work it requires to be a great actor.

- * Author and actor ought to complete each other rather than compete against one another. How much easier would it be if actors did not refuse to cooperate in rehearsal?
- * Besides the words of the author, the actor has at his disposal gestures, glances, movements, and the audience, which by way of it's reactions can little by little let him know the true theatrical nature of the character. Despite rehearsals, the real study begins above all on contact with the audience.
- * The role of the director is to stimulate the actor's creation of the role and help him to develop it to it's maximum potential. But first the director has to have something to work with.
- * Understand that when someone says you have talent, they mean that you have intuition.
- * You gain intuition through experience. You get experience through experimenting with personal freedom. In order to "play" (experience), we must be free to do so.

HOW DO YOU BECOME FREE TO ACT

1. Understand that the world in the script is not a real world therefore you cannot suffer any personal harm for entering into it and engaging in it. You can play around in it as someone totally different than yourself and entertain the masses as well as enjoy yourself.
2. Playing a game is psychologically different in degree but not in kind from dramatic acting. The ability to create a situation imaginatively and to play a role in it is a tremendous experience, a sort of vacation from your everyday self.
3. Strain and conflict are dissolved when you are in character. No personal problems exist.
4. Acting is similar to elementary school recess for grown ups.

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GESTURES AND MOVEMENT

To understand gestures and movements, let's review the elements of a play. When a person views a play or any literary work, certain elements are obvious at once, action, characters, setting, and theme. That is, something happens to somebody, and it has to happen somewhere, and to some purpose.

These elements are not all of equal importance, of course. What happens, for example, is usually more significant than where it happens; it is very probable that the story *Running Back To You* could be shifted from Alabama to Cleveland and not lose its effect because what happens, or the "action", during the scenes is what stimulates the mind of the viewer.

ACTION

Although it is carefully designed, the action of a scene should appear natural, spontaneous and non-stop. The action that engages the viewer's attention should be like the toy that is dangled in front of a child. He should not be able to take his eyes away from the scene until it's over because he sees a story in development not a group of people standing around waiting their turn to talk.

THE EYES

When one sees a character on stage, he should feel like he is spying on a private interlude. Except for where indicated by the writer, the player should appear totally unaware of the audience. His eyes should be fixed on who he is speaking to- not the sky, not the floor, nor the audience.

POSITION

Never stand with your back toward the audience when speaking or between the audience and someone who is speaking to you. Always give the audience a "window view."

MOVEMENT

When walking, move with a purpose. Everything you do should express your character. If your character is goofy, your walk should show that.

When you are not the focal point of the scene at the time you are moving, be sure not to distract the audience from what they should be looking at (don't get in the way).

GESTURES

Gestures could make or break your character. When talking talk with your hands also. When crying, cry with your whole body. When laughing, put emphasis on it by laughing with your entire body. Exaggerate because the audience doesn't know the story the way you do and your body tells the story just as much as your words.

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Everything that you ever wanted to know.....About Drama

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

How an actor uses his human medium to reach out to his fellowmen is the central question of a theater that is stripping away the expendable trappings of the stage and breaking down the barriers between art and life.

It has been hard for an actor to take himself seriously as an artist. When a person hears the phrase "Minister of Music," his mind automatically recalls a song that has inspired him and brought him closer to God; therefore he concludes that music is of God. When a person sees a painting of Jesus hanging on the cross with all its horrific reality on full display, the viewers heart is broken and he concludes that the ability to paint is a gift from God. But when an audience sees actors portraying conflict between an angels and demonic forces, some may view it as an intrusion on what is holy and sacred.

I have often been asked if it was in keeping with God's law to rehearse plays on the Sabbath or hold performances in the sanctuary or to be so candid about the subject matter. My response to all of those questions is not complicated or legalistic. As good Christians should do, I point people back to the word. What made Jesus' ministry so effective? It was always relevant and always personal. He asked the woman at the well "Where is your husband?" He asked the woman with the issue of blood "Who touched me?" He asked the woman who was about to be stoned "Where are you accusers?" They were gone because he wrote their sins in sand. And that is the mission of the drama club. We must get personal and write our sins in the sand. Not to condemn but to get to the root of the problems that our society faces. If we suggest to our peers that they should be like us, followers of Christ, then we must be prepared to reveal our personal past and present to illustrate God's plan of salvation. We must tell the world that His plan is perfect and applies to everyone.

In an age where people are completely consumed by television and fail to see a connection with a God who is seemingly unreachable until the appointed judgment, what better medium is there to reach souls than drama? Many preachers are content with simply pointing out sin. Many prominent religious figures are being exposed as scam artist. Scientists make millions by giving alternative theories that point to man as his own god; a freak of nature who just happened. True Christians have quietly become the minority and "have it your way" so-called Christians have taken center stage.

Shall we go away quietly? Should we run to the hills and bury our heads in the sand and isolate ourselves from society? God forbid! We that trust in Him testify of his goodness. Will you speak a word for your God? What do people think of Him based on what they see in you?

By joining this drama club, you have declared yourself as a part of the remnant church because it takes true commitment to God's work to prepare yourself for a role. You have dared to step out of the crowd and say that I will not be one way at church and another way in the community because by getting on stage, you expose yourself.

Everything that you ever wanted to know.....About Drama

I will not control my tongue at church and curse and swear at work. I will not take off my cosmetics just to come to church, but I will not wear them period. I will not use my knowledge of God to persecute those who believe differently. Instead, I will proclaim that God is supreme! I may not completely understand Him but I will let Him use me to show the world His mercy, His grace, His humor, His love, His power, His longing, His broken heart, and His devotion to His hardheaded children through drama and the way I live my life daily! I will be like Daniel and pull my curtains back and expose my love for Jesus knowing that I will be open to criticism, jealousy and every manner of evil that can be manufactured by men who have concluded that God's plan for our lives is not attainable.

Saints, let no man who has sided with the devil by saying that God has erred in His creation of man stop you from giving God your very best in everything that you do. My charge is not that you be perfect but that you be completely sold out to Jesus so that when Satan has been completely loosed to do his worst, you may stand on the word of God as Jesus did in the wilderness. It is revival time and I'm asking whose side are you on.

Will you stand with the people who have committed their lives to building earthly kingdoms? Those people who never seem to have enough time or resources for God's work. Those people who don't want to push themselves. Those people who think everything is way too hard to accomplish. Or will you stand with those of us who believe that to live is to serve God and everything else is a distraction from that. Have you ever wondered why some people are in such a hurry to leave church? It's because church, or service to God, is a distraction from their real goals and aspirations. Why do you think they lash out at you for suggesting that we should linger at the altar for a little while longer? Why do you think that Prayer meeting groups are so small? Very few people are truly in love with God. I don't mean for these things to be taken as hateful or self-promoting. I am simply pleading with you to look at life through spiritual eyes if you aren't already. Once we look through spiritual eyes, we will never run out of souls to witness to. We will perform our plays with a sense of urgency.

GET TO THE POINT STAN

If I don't uphold the standards of God, I am promoting the message of Satan, which is "God's plan is not attainable so why should we even try?"

We should approach our ministry the same way that we approach our disobedience. No matter how much pain, disappoints, set backs and opposition we receive on our road to disobedience, we are determined to press on in order to have our way. I suggest to you that you use that same determination to serve God.

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