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# 5 Basic Acting Rules You Must Always Remember

By [Lisina Stoneburner](#) | Posted Jan. 7, 2016, 10 a.m.

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I work with so many talented and skilled actors. I enjoy working with them, and watching them explore characters and stories. I enjoy witnessing their discoveries and watching them engage in a magical way. I love being a part of their preparation process for auditions—when they really feel connected and like they’ve found something unique and wonderful to do with a role. I feel for them when they report back from an audition that they could not do in the room or on the tape what they did in preparation. Sometimes the same things that work in rehearsal fall short in the room. Sometimes, the reason isn’t very complex. Instead, it’s really as simple as forgetting some basic principles.

yourself into the place. Without that connection it can sometimes be very hard to see anything other than the audition room.

**2. What is your relationship?** You should have a good sense of who you are speaking to and what they mean to you. While this sounds like it should be obvious, many actors don’t make a strong enough choice regarding their feelings about this person, which can lead to a weak objective in the piece. As soon as the objective weakens, the moments become less important.

**3. What is happening?** Consider the event of your scene as the headline of a newspaper. What is the main event? The essence of what is going on. The most important thing occurring at this time. Knowing this keeps you from veering off the through line of action in the scene. It also continues to remind you of what you are here to *do*. This, of course, will be the most important thing to

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remember.

**4. Where are you coming from?** Emotionally and physically. What just happened to you to cause the first moment of your scene? Something should already be going on in you before you begin. The first moment is yours whether you have the first line or not. You must always be coming from something and going to something.

**5. What are you doing?** Your character is there to *do* something. This something must be active, it must support your objective, and it must lead to another thing to do after another thing to do. It must push the scene forward. Otherwise you are playing words and not actions. Emotional actions drive your scene forward.

One of my mentors always reminds me, you should not be doing the scene, the scene should be doing you. The audition room, the taping room, can sometimes take over the creative actor and remove their imaginations for a moment. Sometimes it shocks you out of your magical place and reminds you of all sort of things to think about that distract you from the basics of how to engage in a scene. If you have prepared properly, it should take only moments to re-engage into these five things. Give yourself the breath you need to connect to them and set yourself up for a successful audition where you feel attached to the material through place, relationships, events, and actions. You know these basic principles; they will always hold true and they will always work. Trust in them, then let the organic moments happen to you.

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**er** is an Atlanta-based acting coach, founder of the *Company Acting Studio*, *bert*. For more information, check out Stoneburner's *full bio!*

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