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4 Steps Toward Defining Your Process

By Lisina Stoneburner | Posted June 26, 2015, 10 a.m.

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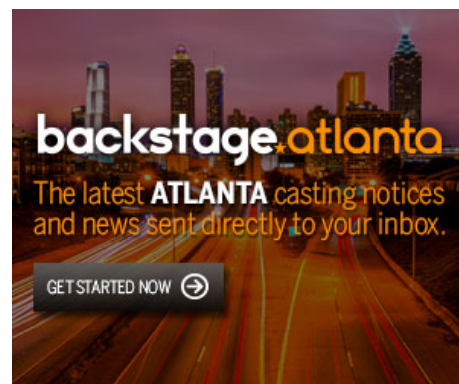
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Rehearsal is where the actor discovers the character, their relationship to the event, and where they find their path to believable moments. Many actors who are skilled in one medium often believe—or are told—that they need to develop a whole new way of rehearsing in order to start working in another medium. This leaves a lot of relatively experienced actors feeling lost and confused about how to approach their rehearsal. Younger, newer actors who are entering the industry often do so without ever starting with rehearsal processes or even classes, and can find themselves in very difficult work situations when they don't know how to approach their roles.

When I begin working privately with an actor, I begin by assuring them I am not there to change their process, but to be a part of it. However, sometimes I find myself helping the actor create one from scratch.

Your process is your way of preparing for your character's journey.

Imagine preparing for a journey of your own. First you become educated on what will be needed on your journey. You consider the obstacles—potential issues you might run into. You plan and prepare yourself physically, emotionally, and intellectually based on the given circumstances of the road ahead of you. Your journey might be personal. It might include some emotional discoveries; it might include people you are not familiar with or rather people with whom you might have a history. You consider all of the options available to you as you plan and you structure a through line for achieving the goals on your journey. Then, before the journey begins, you might find a way to relax yourself and leave yourself open for the new experiences that lie ahead.

Your character can benefit from your previous planning experience. Consider the planning process for them.

1. Educate yourself by thoroughly comprehending the text. Do any necessary research, ask your questions. Be a good script detective.
2. Consider the relationships of the character and what the text tells you about their history.

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3. Work your material out loud and rehearse physically so your body and heart have a chance to record, in its muscles, the behaviors of your character in these specific circumstances.

4. Find what centers you and brings you to a place where you can react spontaneously in a moment. Sometimes it's breathing exercises, stretching, music, journaling, or other common strategies for centering yourself and opening your mind, body, and heart for new experiences.

Your process can work in any medium and on any job. You can shorten or lengthen the process according to your prep time and on-the-job rehearsal time. You will shorten any part of the process based on how much of the script you are given or is pertinent for your role. Your process is about preparing for the journey the character will take and allowing them to live spontaneously in the experiences of that journey after you have prepared for it.

Enjoy your process, allow it room to shift, and adjust over the years and have fun.

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

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