

Drama: Relationship

A. Relationship between Characters:

1. Creating relationships is the heart of acting. It is basic, but essential. Start with the question: **What is my relationship to this other character in the scene I am about to do? Are you the child and she is the mother? Are you the husband and she is the wife? Is this character your friend or your enemy, etc...? Once you know the fact of a relationship, you are ready to explore how you feel about this other character---since a mere fact doesn't give you any feeling to work with, does it?** Many actors tend to settle for fact: I am her son, I am her husband. That really tells you nothing you can work with as an actor. You must go further, into the realm of the emotions.
2. **You need to ask feeling questions about your emotional attitude toward the other character:** Do you love him? Do you hate him? Do you resent him? How much? Do you want to help him? Do you want to get in his way? What do you want from him? What do you want him to give you? These are the most important questions to ask. The answers to them will allow you to function emotionally in the scene. That is your goal.

Shurtleff, Michael. Audition, Walker and Company, 1978 (page 23).

B. Relationships between Actors- Affecting the Way You Feel About the Other Actor:

1. **How do I feel about him/her here and now?** You have done your relaxation exercises, and your personal inventories of what you feel and sense and now you're ready, but you want to feel something other than what you're feeling now, because you know that's the obligation in the material. You have to bridge between how you feel and how you want to feel in the scene. Affecting how you already feel is a very important part of preparing, not only because it changes what is to what you want in the scene. First you ask yourself, "How do I feel about that actor/actress? How do I feel about her right here and now?" Take a kind of Personal Inventory about what you see, hear, taste, smell and feel in relation to that particular actress.
2. **How do I want to feel about him/her in the scene?** After finding out how you feel through Personal Inventory, then find out how you want to feel by identifying the obligation in the material. The obligation is the emotional life of your character that you want to experience. What do you want to feel about the other person in the scene? What do you want to feel about the place? What does your character feel generally and

cumulatively? There are thematic obligations, time obligations and many other kinds of obligations, but most often your first concern is your relationship to the other person. Find out specifically how you want to feel in that relationship and then find out where you are in your present moment-to-moment life. Then you will have some ideas about what you can do to go from one state of BEING to another. Once you've taken that kind of inventory and really know how you feel about her, then ask yourself, "How do I want to feel about her in the scene?" You've read the scene and you understand what the author wants and you identify your obligation.

3. **What is Available?** After you've found out how you feel and defined how you want to feel and discovered that they're poles apart, is to ask yourself the questions, "What is available? What is there existing in this actress that I can use to stimulate the feelings I want?" You really look the person over from head to toe, not just visually, but using all your senses to explore all the availabilities that might appeal to you. Once you have found several things that are there, several availabilities, then the next step is to isolate those elements one at a time and emphasize your relationship to each one.
4. **Endow your partner:** After you've exhausted all that is available and you find yourself closer to how you want to feel about her, but still no sparks, then you must go to the next step, which is Endowment. Endowment is a sensory process. You create sensory elements related to an object, in this instance, a person. You endow your partner with physical attributes, emotional attributes, vocal behavior and intellectual attitudes that appeal to you, things which you know if they really existed in this actress would help you feel a certain way about their character.

Morris, Eric. No Acting Please, Ermor Enterprises Publishing, 2002 (pages 160-167).

Junior Drama: Developing Relationships

ENSEMBLE WORK-

A. As a cast, work on memorization and really talking and listening

1. Recite the lines through the entire scene with no emotion.
2. Say the lines a second time and really talk and listen to each other. If you feel the other actor is not BEING mindful and sharing with you in a genuine way, then ask, "WHAT?" after their line. The actor must repeat the line and try to really communicate how they feel while getting what they want.