

Sande Shurin Transformational Acting Studios
New York City & Woodstock
Sande Shurin (917)545-5713; Bruce Levy (917)747-8757
email: studio@sandeshurin.com
www.sandeshurin.com

Acting Schools

Many years ago an ad in the NYC Village Voice caught my attention and made my heart jump. The aesthetics of this black and white ad, the name of the acting studio and the look of the print called me to learn more about it. I climbed the stairs to a studio on west 14th st. in Manhattan, to what I imagined a garret in Paris might look like; and in that instant my life changed...forever!

Bringing this into the present, we have many more acting schools, acting studios and acting techniques than I had. Although the variety is far greater and modes of research more available, the way to choose is the same; It is to trust what captivates you, feels right, grabs you, speaks to you, lights you up.

To help demystify some of the current techniques I will use a few abbreviated excerpts from a chapter taken from my acting book “Transformational Acting”.

Some Theatre History and Current Methods

By the early 1900’s when the great Russian director and teacher Konstantin Stanislavsky developed the system that was to become Method Acting, he took acting to an entirely new dimension.

Prior to this, Representational Acting was taught, as how to imitate and master certain physical and vocal abilities.

The then new field of psychology was leading to a new understanding of human behavior and he built on this, teaching the concept of sense memory to attain emotional truth. This gave actors the tools to mine the depth of his character by delving into and recreating his own past emotions. His method also included using the magic “IF” to stimulate the actor’s imagination. The actor would say IF I went to a royal wedding I would wear...This exercise puts an actor into the circumstances of the script. Also included were fourth wall, objectives, concentration exercises and thru line.

It is said that Stella Adler having visited Stanislavsky announced that he was minimizing the importance of sense memory. Adler’s technique focused on script analysis, actions and character and imagination.

By then Sense Memory was taken up by Lee Strasberg, which along with relaxation exercises and lee’s insightful critiques formed the basis of The Method taught at the famous Actors Studio.

Another great force was Sanford Meisner who updated the prevailing methods with his Repetition exercises, use of activity, and utilizing exercises for the first year of a two-year program.

And so I evolved my acting technique focusing on the uniqueness of each actor; developing their Authentic Self, defining their Individual Signature, Tapping into their Emotional Body so that they are working in the moment, spontaneously and truthfully and using themselves as the base from which to transform into character. Playing the moments of the script are much easier having already transformed into the character. The technique is very behavioral; the actor's presence is felt. Eventually we add circumstances, thru-line, intention, the arc, time lines and what you're revealing. It is a technique that works for all mediums.

Acting Schools/Studios

Many of the Acting Studio's teach a 2-year program, such as American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Strasberg Institute is still available, as is Stella Adler's school. Studios seem to be more about ongoing development and technique, such as Sande Shurin Acting Studio, where my husband Bruce Levy and I teach my own Acting Technique Transformational Acting otherwise known as the Shoran Technique. It is here that I develop Actors in class and private coach many notable actors for film, theatre, TV. Part of our class activity is to work on scripts the actors are auditioning for and/or hired for.

Your Choice

Do your homework; read about the places and Teachers, meet them. Some teach a 1-day intensive as I do where you can have a direct experience working with them. That by far is the best way. Trust your experience. It will take you very far in knowing and choosing and in becoming a great Actor.

Come from the heart and let your choice light you up. Wishing you many bright times.

-Sande Shurin