

## EXERCISE #1 — Jon Jory's **FOCUS POINTS** exercise

Here is the antidote to playing without ceasing to a point centrally located out over the audiences' heads in monologue preparation or looking eternally into the other actor's eyes (terminal eye lock) in scene work.

Prepare a monologue and each actor must use the FOCUS POINTS elements listed below during an appropriate line of dialogue within the first 6 to 12 lines. Justify the focus points.

- 1) to the left
- 2) to the center
- 3) to the Right
- 4) up to the ceiling
- 5) down to the floor
- 6) behind you

Note: Actually see what you are looking at. Remember the focus can change can be in the middle of the line. Make eye contact with the other characters

## EXERCISE #2 — Jon Jory's **PHYSICALIZING THE LINE** exercise.

Here is the antidote to the "talking head" in monologue preparation. There needs to be thought as well as the physical in this exercise. Prepare a monologue and each actor must use the PHYSICALIZING THE LINE elements listed below during an appropriate line of dialogue within the first 10 to 20 lines. You will be amazed how this brings your monologue to life and enhances your self-direction of the monologue preparation.

Each person must walk/move

- 1) to the left
- 2) to the center
- 3) to the Right
- 4) straight down forward
- 5) backward, straight up
- 6) Diagonal down right
- 7) Diagonal down left
- 8) In a Circle

Note: Most young actors have a tendency not to complete the circle, but to head back the way they came. Avoid this action at all cost.

- 9) Diagonal up right (if called on)
- 10) Diagonal up left (if called on)

## EXERCISE #3 — Rayher’s **LEVELS** exercise (with a bow to Jon Jory)

Prepare a monologue and each actor must use the LEVELS elements listed and illustrated below during an appropriate line of dialogue within the first 6 to 12 lines. If done as a scene exercise these levels must be reached at least once by any of the characters.

- 1) Lying down flat
- 2) Propping yourself up with an arm while still lying down
- 3) Sitting on the ground
- 4) Sitting on a chair
- 5) Standing up
- 6) Kneeling



Illustration: Contrasts in Level



Illustration: Variety of Level Without Platforms

## EXERCISE #4 — “PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER”

Prepare exercises #1, #2, and #3 in that order. Following this prepare exercises #1, #2, and #3 as one exercise, combining the best elements you discovered in each exercise.

## EXERCISE #5 — Rayher’s **Moving the Second Character** exercise

Choose a monologue with a second character (almost all have one, even if you are talking to the audience— or self) to whom you are talking. Prepare the monologue and you must move your second character around the “where” at least 6 times during an appropriate line of dialogue within the first 6 to 12 lines to the areas listed below in a logical pattern justifying the second character’s movement moving away from you or moving toward you.

- Down stage right
- Down stage left
- Diagonal left
- Diagonal right
- Directly up stage
- Directly down stage

## EXERCISE #6 — Rayher’s **IMAGERY/TRIGGERS** in Line exercise

**Imagery** definition, the formation of mental images, figures, or likenesses of things, or of such images collectively: the dim **imagery** of a dream.

A trigger is something that sets off a memory tape or flashback transporting the person back to the event of her/his original incident ... People, places, things, events, activities, emotions, things, dates



## EXERCISE #7 — Jon Jory’s **TORQUE** exercise

*(Definition: Torque, moment, or moment of force is the tendency of a force to rotate an object about an axis or pivot. Just as a force is a push or a pull, a torque can be thought of as a twist to an object.)*

The torque exercise is the hardest of the exercises listed here.

A torque is a sudden explosion of physical energy, perhaps, but not always, accompanied by vocal explosiveness as well, a sudden jump from normalcy to extreme, such as standing suddenly, slapping the table, punching the air, a jump, a scream, or a big gesture etc. The torqued moment can be very brief. It’s often a piece of punctuation rather than continuing through an entire line. All torque exercises must be based on the use of given circumstances in the text.

Torque recovery: After the burst, there must be a natural decline triggered by the following actions/lines.

## EXERCISE #8 — **VOWELS & CONSONANTS**

Consonants come from the head (brain), the Vowels come from the heart (soul)

You have all heard the sayings or phrases “Work on it till you know it by heart” or “Memorize it by heart.” These sayings are true. Yes you work on the words using your heart! Not your head but your heart.

## EXERCISE #9 — Jon Jory's TOUCH exercise.

Read the following article and prepare a monologue using the element that are underlined in the article (such as finger tips, touch shoulder, touch hands,,touch them with a fingertip on their arm, brush something off them, give them a pat, etc.). Touch has its own vocabulary

### The right touch BY Jon Jory

I ONCE KEPT track during a set of scenes done for an acting class final, and in the eight scenes, no actor ever touched another actor. No touch of any kind, not even with a fingertip. Hmmm... Why?

I think because in American culture, touch is considered rude and even explosive outside the handshake and, in the theatre world, the hug. How wonderful for the actor! Anything proscribed or overlooked in real life becomes instantly theatrical onstage. Breaking a taboo wakes everybody up, and that includes our friends in the audience. Sex in all its forms has become common- place in film and television while remaining less ordinary onstage. Strangely, a film may contain the steamiest moments of human sexuality and once that's over, there may be no other example of touch in the movie.

Except, of course, violence. Apparently, it's fine to make love to someone or kill them as long as you never touch them in any other circumstance. How deliciously odd! What I am circling around here are the uses that other forms of touch have for the actor.

#### 1. Touch as a wake-up call.

Actors have often sought me out privately to complain in repressed but outraged tones that some other actor "isn't giving me anything." Well, one explanation for this is that the actors in this state of non-giving are so deep in their own heads and processes that, practically speaking, other actors onstage have effectively ceased to exist for them. They aren't giving you anything because you only tangentially are there. So here's what to do: touch them. Your touch will wake them just like the prince's kiss woke Sleeping Beauty. No, I'm not suggesting you walk over and kiss them, or kill them. Reach over and touch them with a fingertip on their arm as you begin your speech. Brush a crumb off their jacket, a fly off their arm. A quick, reassuring pat, say. You will be amazed to find that for the first time in Act Two, they actually play the next moments with you. You will have called them forth from the cave of their self-concern. Try it; it's quite magical.

#### 2. Touch as a demand.

There are always certain moments in any play you perform where your character has something to say that he desperately wants heard. This line, in terms of plot and character, is crucial. This line is a big moment and moves the story forward—it changes everything, and the audience needs to know that.

Break social convention and expectation by *demanding* through touch. Turn the other person firmly to face you. Or, say, stop her from going where she is headed. Or, give her a little hit that shocks but doesn't harm. Allow whatever touch you use to be insistent and surprising, but not violent.

The audience fully understands that the social conventions that lead us not to touch have been broken and that they better listen up. This is touch as dramaturgy as well as psychology. Find that crucial moment in the play where a touch insists on being heard and understood.

### **3. Touch also creates wonderful moments when you withdraw.**

You empathetically put your hand on your sister's shoulder the moment before you tell her that her husband has been unfaithful. The next big moment will be when you withdraw your hand — when the hand disappears and something colder, even judgmental, enters the room. Touch can wake a big moment, and the withdrawal of touch wakes another.

Don't waste touch. Make the end of touching another emotional state.

By touching, you also give the other actor a chance to make a point by terminating the touch. You touch them to assure them of your affection or caring. They create conflict by removing themselves from your touch. Your touch can set off a cascade of meaning and deepening of relationship or conflict.

### **4. All right, I know, we need to talk about touch in terms of romance or simply getting it on.**

The first time touch occurs is a big moment. What is the first moment Juliet touches Romeo, or the other way around? You're going to want to think that over. Too early, and he seems seductive and practiced rather than enthralled. Too late, and the sexual tension will have evaporated.

In romance, touch is earned. What's the right moment to touch Romeo? That touch commits you. When is it right to be committed? If you make touch commonplace, you make the relationship commonplace. On the other hand, that might be what's needed. Remember the saying "timing is everything"? Take that into account.

### **5. What kind of touch when?**

Touch is, obviously, visible psychology. If you are, as I hope, a devotee of the objective (what do you want?), then touch becomes another arrow in your quiver. If touching another human being is a special moment, then touch and "need" are almost Siamese twins. When the "need" gets strong enough, we break through the social rules, spoken or unspoken, against touch and everyone in the room realizes something special and important has happened.

Your need would have to be great, for instance, to touch your boss. What about someone you've just met? If you don't want someone to think you are romantically interested in her, then you would only touch her out of some other profound need.

Touch has its own vocabulary. Flirting is one sort of touch, warning another. Just let touch respond to the moment. The point is to make touch a greater part of our acting vocabulary.

We should speak for a moment about how touch works in rehearsal. You obviously don't just walk up to another actor and slap him or smooch him without warning. Extreme forms of touch need discussion and agreement before being employed. On the other hand, if you have the impulse to place a warning finger on another character's chest, you need to be able to do so.

Most touch can be spontaneous and then discussed if it seems in some sense wrong.

Acting is an unusual profession. You meet people for the first time at a reading, and two days later, you are fighting them to the death with actual swords and daggers, or ripping off their clothes. The point here is that the touch you employ reflects the script's relationship and not how long you've been rehearsing. How you touch defines that particular character and that particular situation at that particular moment. Loosen up. Touch somebody. It's too useful a tool to be shy about.

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