

The background of the cover is a vibrant, surreal landscape. In the center, a large, glowing, teal-colored eye with a black pupil and a bright white highlight is superimposed on a sky filled with colorful nebulae in shades of red, orange, and blue. Below the eye, a silhouette of a person stands on a grassy hill, looking up at the eye. The sky transitions from a bright yellow glow near the horizon to a deep blue at the top. The overall atmosphere is one of wonder and discovery.

**The
Discovery
Technique
Volume 1**

**A Transformational Guide For Actors
and Storytellers**

Ron Weisberg

THE
DISCOVERY
TECHNIQ
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**A Transformational Guide for
Actors and Storytellers**

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Chapter 1

Intro to The Discovery Technique



“Discovery is the fabric of magic, and we are the magicians.”

~ Ron Weisberg

Hello, reader, listener, and storyteller. Thank you for joining my surprise show. I say surprise, you see, because in my decade of training thousands of actors in the vast empty desert of New Mexico, I discovered an unexpected secret... You’ve likely heard of this hidden truth in different forms, dealing with the esoteric powers of our own minds. This secret is as powerful as you can imagine it to be and is directly tied to powerful storytelling.

Words and thinking can only take us so far. We need a practice of sharpening thoughts into hot blades of discovery. In Volume 1 of

the Discovery Technique, I will show you, the actor, presenter, and human being, everything you need to know to be creative and tell powerful stories; stories that hold the power of transformation. We, as humans, all communicate our experiences, our lives, our everything through story. We expand our consciousness through story. I'm honored you are reading this, and I am thrilled to be on this story quest with you.

ORIGIN STORY AND PURPOSE

In March of 2020 after I had been training actors for 10 years, we were all forced into our homes to quarantine, and I realized we are all writing our own roles in the book of life. My parents had a profound effect on me early on as I learned to think for myself through playing chess, soccer, and music. I realized later how each of these activities helped developed me to be a discovery machine. Going to UT at Austin, studying acting and writing, further took me down the rabbit hole of creating my own story. I had a couple amazing professors, like Stephen Gerald, that taught us the moment is always primal. Something always confused me about how most acting instructors and directors give feedback, essentially forcing actors to play out actions and emotions, yet ironically asking for the truth. This book is a signal in the noise that will allow the actor and director new tools to effectively have a craft and at the same time be able to communicate your creative choices to other creatives in order to foster the most productive and exciting environments.

I created this book to make acting and storytelling accessible to everyone. This book illustrates how 'Discovery' is the most important and underutilized theatrical device in our tool belt. You'll realize, there is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Following the rainbow *is* the pot of gold. Similar to the Tao, walking the path of the actor and creating fearlessly *is* the only

path, it is the reward. Create stories and behold the resulting magic.

I no longer attach myself to the label of “actor.” Many of my friends and students would be shocked to hear me say such a thing. But that label excuses actors from seeing themselves as creators. We are all actors, and putting on different masks for different tasks is all of our business. A more fitting title for me is *Storyteller*. I now see myself as a story creator and mentor for anyone willing to create the unexpected; anyone willing to attempt this dance of revelations.

Define Acting

Write down your own definition of acting, we’ll use it later. Is it easy to use your own words, or would you default to what you heard on YouTube? In regards to style, the goal is always to create realism in acting in order to take the audience on a powerful journey that feels real, so that when a person sees your story happening, they will feel its happening to them, through you. The mechanism of achieving realism originates back to Stanislavsky, grandfather of all the modern acting approaches. Ironically, how the actor is taught to define acting has always been shrouded in mystery. There is an industry behind every market built to make you need that industry. If you never quite understand it, you will have to train forever.

I needed a new definition of acting so that people could access it instantly, not over four years. I said to my early students what I understood from the greats before me. Acting is: Taking action to get what you need as the character in the story. It’s not pretend., was my point, it is doing something. This is what I was taught based on the great teachings of Stanislavsky.

Then I learned about 'discovery' in a screenwriting class I hosted at my studio with Professor, Matthew McDuffie. His scene writing process, "leads the character in with a desire and expectation that gets smashed by a discovery, producing an emotion, leading the character to a new decision." Based on this, I had to re-create a new definition for myself when I realized what we are actually watching in the story from the actor. This also taught me how to give specific direction to actors without giving them a line reading. My new definition is designed to help demystify the entire acting process for you, and even to make it fun again.

Acting is: Discovering and making decisions as a character in a story.

Gently compare this to what you wrote down. What you write is never wrong as we are all exploring. Does this definition help you achieve your definition? For example, if you said something about expressing a characters emotions, or embodying a character, realize how by living from one discovery to the next, you will naturally embody all action and emotion.

The Philosophy of Acting

As you can see, this book is not just a step by step, it is a new way of being and expressing from the inside out. How we view the world and life will impact how we show up as an actor, just as with the character. I have to address the philosophy and psychology of acting before I teach you the craft itself as it saves so much of your time and effort that way.

We as a society have fallen into and created our own realities, through stories. We, the masses, live out our lives passively, unaware of the bigger picture. We find comfort in being fed the lies as long as everyone can agree on them. We believe what we

are taught in public schools. We believe the narratives fed to us by governments, by religions. The actor is human and gets swept away like the rest. It is partially maddening not to go along with what society tells us is real. But be honest with yourself, we unwittingly give away our inner sovereignty as we bow down to the made up truths we are told. We base our realities on other people's stories. Even our own experiences are subject to other people's interpretations. This we must stop. Feedback is fine, but we have to take ownership of what we discover now and forever. By being the authors of our own discoveries, we take control of our own mind and create our own destinies as characters in the book of life.

In every situation, ask yourself: What exactly is the story about and why are we telling it? After training thousands of actors, I discovered the main issue actors run into: the fear to create and define new stories and walk through uncharted territory of the human experience. Most actors lack direction and rely on other people to tell them what 'to do.' But it's not the fault of the actor. We were taught to be followers, not powerful creators. We were taught to fear what others think of us, to fit in. However, the opposite of fitting in is what makes stories tragic, glorious, and hilarious.

In order to get you to have more fun acting, I invite you to have a humor about being incorrect, not fear it. In this way, your natural abilities will shine. Many actors I have coached worried out loud about never being enough, or not knowing how to give casting and directors what they want in a scene. All anyone wants to see on camera is for you to discover each moment for yourself. I have developed what I now refer to as the 'myth of talent.' I don't believe in natural talent. Skills are developed some way or another and here are the 3 pillars of talent, that anyone can develop.

3 Pillars of “Talent”

Before you attempt the dance of acting, expunge this notion of talent from your mind, it serves only human ego in a negative feedback loop that gently excuses us from digging in and putting everything we have into our passion. Most people block creativity by saying to themselves: ‘Why take the time when there are people with natural talent?’ This fixed state mentality immediately stunts the actor’s growth. Talent is simply a competitive way of saying skill. Let me be the one to tell you, you are infinitely talented, skills are built. What people in the West think of as talent is actually a combination of three fundamental truths that in combination create talent.

1ST PILLAR: PREPARATION

Those who prepare the most are usually the most successful and are seen as more talented. Preparation is vitally important because it’s what we are in control of. The director will fall into the belief of the moment because you discover a deep truth that is so real, its not on the page. You only get those moments of discovery when you prepare and know the scene in your bones. If any mistake is made, preparation allows you to pick up the pieces and keep going because you always know where you are and your purpose.

Our preparation does not need to take a long time, but it does need to be extremely specific. We must prepare an *active* story instead of a *passive* story for the character. This means we must prepare to care. Actors often take everything personally in real life, but as soon as they begin to act, the sharpest of blades becomes casual. Remember, the part you play is the only life this character will ever live, just like you. This is your life, the only life

you'll ever live so you better make it count. Preparing the story is as simple as defining what is important to the character, what they discover and what they choose to do about it. It's one thing to logically understand how to craft a story but we also have to prepare our instrument to perform the story and take ourselves through the discovery trance of every moment.

Prepare yourself to be an explorer of the unknown, while others watch. In the moment of a scripted performance, it's an exploration of navigating unknown humanity as much as it is a rehearsed event. Our vessels must be practiced. We must be expert listeners and discovery machines. We must be flexible and agile in our mind, spirit, and in our movements. We must practice absorption and move with impulse, unfettered by society's fabricated walls. We build up walls over time out of comfort, to stop us from realizing our creative potential. By practicing being in the moment, and preparing specific stories to be in the moment with, we access our creative power which will come out in the performance as confidence. Confidence comes when we fall in love with the story and prepare a transformation. Having a process by which to prepare is vital for your talent to shine. We all have natural talent.

2ND PILLAR: EXPERIENCE

The more experience you have doing something, the more effortless it becomes, and the more talented you seem to be. After a long time practicing the same game, you make it look easy. For example, I have played soccer all my life. I didn't start out playing well but I quickly improved because I played all the time for the fun of it. I grew up building muscles in my feet running up and down the rocky shore of Lake Texoma, kicking a ball against a concrete wall in my isolation. I also played chess early on, thanks to my mother, and I became a great strategist. The combination

of these experiences, along with learning to play percussion at a young age, makes me “talented” at many things. So many skills are transferrable in many ways. For example, an officer from the military can be fearless and a good listener because they are trained in crisis intervention. These years of experience is exactly what an actor needs to start out their training. Teachers have profound experience listening and responding, so I find they are easy actors to work with.

Over time we make things look easy, this is not natural talent. Talent does not appear overnight across the world; it grows from an environment that develops talent. In acting, the person is actually called the talent. This implies anyone could be the talent, it’s whomever is the actor for the part. If you have prepared mentally, physically, and spiritually, and gained experience over years of focused practice, what separates you from the next actor? As any performance coach knows, the answer is *fear*.

3RD BEING FEARLESSLY SPECIFIC & DANGEROUS

The master key to talent in acting is fully preparing, and then in the moment you must be fearless when you are told to abandon what you prepared. You will feel like you are being told you are wrong, and so you must let go of the need or desire to be right. As humans, we cannot be right about what other people want, we can only be right about what we want, and even then, we often fool ourselves. We must practice being fearlessly specific in our choices as actors, without worrying if the choice is deemed wrong by the director or casting director. The principles laid out in this book will give you guidelines for how to prepare and make powerful choices. As long as you prepare, you cannot be wrong. Your idea for the story is a gift to the director to gain more details about what the story could mean. Bringing the gift of a specific choice gives the director a clearer picture of what they are

looking for. They will have a more specific direction for you the more specific you are with your story choices.

My good friend and voiceover instructor at Story Quest Studios, Liz Reeder Neubauer, told me back in 2006, “The people that make it in this business are either really smart, or really dumb.” I realized years later what she meant. The people that know nothing, the ‘dumb’, they get to discover and experience everything for the first time when properly guided by a director. They have no fear because they don’t think to worry about the situation. Ignorance is truly bliss in the acting world. Then there are the ‘smart’ people, bless our cynical hearts, who think too much to experience the truth of a moment of connection. We think about all the things that could go wrong, because there are so many. We think of all the moments we could have done differently. Over thinking people think there is a right and a wrong way of doing the scene. We want to act, perfectly. Because of this, we will always fall short. When ‘smart’ people prepare, they prepare so much that they end up convincing themselves there is only one right way to do the scene and any differing view is trying to sabotage us. We are so worried about being right that we don’t realize the characters we play are always wrong. Maybe its smarter to be dumb in life and know nothing, only to discover along the way and change.

It’s a monumental challenge to be fearless when we have not prepared. When you walk into an audition and stand before the casting director, all they see is if you are prepared, specific, and fearless, or if you are unprepared, nervous, and vague. All you have to do is prepare and discover. You are only afraid to act because you are afraid of *doing it wrong*, an ironic Westernized blunder. Realize all we, any audience, wants to see is you being fearlessly specific. The script does not clarify all the facts of the story for you. You simply fill in all the gaps of the story with new

specific facts about the character that help define the relationship and inform how you behave in the interaction. Each relationship/ need causes different behavior so therefore by being specific we are exploring the human condition, which is always flawed. This should obliterate your focus on the concept of doing the scene right or wrong. By being specific, your idea will be completely unique to you and will therefore be different than what the director had in mind. This is what the director needs of you if they are looking to achieve powerful realism. Your specificity will help create new understandings of the story, therefore you must be fearlessly specific, even if you think it could be wrong. You can only be wrong if you are vague and block taking specific directions. Characters are always wrong in the story, so you actually have to embrace being wrong. Your talent comes out when you prepare and take new directions fearlessly.

Again, there is no right or wrong in storytelling. There is only the exploration of the cliché' vs specific storytelling. You simply need to make a choice and commit to that choice spiritually until you are given a new direction. The direction will either come from a director or your inner director. Think of impulse as your inner director which you get to question without being yelled at. Don't let your ego control the creation of a moment. A healthy ego will allow moments to exist and an unhealthy ego will grasp at controlling the moment to feel comfort, often at the expense of other actors' comforts. Your ego is the part of you that refuses to admit you are wrong when you know you are wrong. Question yourself more than you question others. You'll discover better answers once you learn to trust yourself instead of doubt yourself.

Just as directors need actors to be fearless and confident in their decisions, we also need actors who are ready to change and have fun going bravely in a *new* direction, opposing the direction we

previously committed to. The best story always evolves into more than it ever could have been in a fixed state. This book will teach you how to guide the story, but you must meet this concept half way. Meaning, you must use it, in earnest, and pull the entire trigger on every discovery you make. The Discovery Technique requires you to slow down and commit your energy towards discovering for yourself again, the meaning of each moment. These discoveries are not written in the script for you, and the director usually doesn't have any better answers to the questions you have than you do. This book is the blueprints for becoming the pro-active, pro-actor, pro-creator.

Chapter 2

The Discovery

Technique: Preparation



DISCOVERING DISCOVERY: PREPARATION OF THE STORY AND MAKING CHOICES

The principles I'm here to lay out for you are basic building blocks of how to define a moment and a story. My specificity has only come about by the need to communicate clearly with my film team and actors. It is necessary for me to define what the story is if I am going to guide others into acting it. If you want to create singularity, you must create clarity around a log line, or short summary, to every idea. Aren't all circumstances to an extent imaginary from our individual perspective? The actor is the authority of truth in a moment because the truth must flow through you to tell the story with sincerity. People only know the truth when they see it or feel it hitting them. Yes! The discovery of the truth in the story is what creates impact, so you must define what the discovery of truth is for every story you tell, no matter the genre. I am here to simplify the process for you, so that when you get an audition or job interview you will know how to prepare a transformation.

RELATIONSHIP EVENTS

Every story is a specific *relationship event*, broken up into smaller relationship events we call scenes. If we break down exactly what is happening between the characters and add the unexpected and limitless fuel of hope and fear, we have a powerful *relationship event*. In your improv studies, instructors will ask what the “who, what, where” of the scene is. These are the building blocks of storytelling. I refer to this as the relationship event, because what the players and audience truly need is to be clear on the dynamics of the relationship. Then we need to know how the relationship changes in order to tell the story.

We must be masters of storytelling, which includes mastering the understanding of *why* a story is being told. Your performance of the story hinges on understanding the story’s theme, or underlying primal message. I always ask actors three things when I approach a scene:

1. What is the specific relationship between the characters?
2. What happens in this scene that changes or challenges the relationship?
3. What does this change imply about the purpose of the story?

At the end of the day, the *why* is the most important aspect of a story. No one really cares about how you feel. We want to know what’s the story and why are you telling it? Give us a call to action, or a new truth that will change our perspective of reality. I have heard too many directors and instructors say that our goal as storytellers is to produce an emotion in the audience. I respectfully disagree, and urge other directors to be more nuanced in their approach. As humans, emotions are nothing new and we don’t need to be pushed to feel the same way over and

over like a media mind control game. A sociopath tends to be the kind of person that attempts to manipulate emotions. Why are actors trained to be sociopaths? I think it is better for the actor, and the audience, when we focus on delivering discoveries and realizations. The ocean of emotion will pour through this dance of revelations.

When defining what a scene is about, instructors in other modalities might ask what your 'need' is and/or what your 'action' is. I ask what your "discovery and decision" is. The actual mechanics of a moment simply boil down to discovering and making decisions on what to do about the new truth. You just have to write it down and define it for your self, no one is there to truly do it for you. The challenge is allowing the moment to take you, and letting go of how you think the scene is supposed to go. The experienced actor is in an open state of discovery, not in a closed state of a rigid planned action and forced emotion. The experienced actor discovers new needs in the scene, and yet more details of the need keep coming, changing the quality of the character's behavior and actions. Unexpected emotions are then allowed to flow in this state.

Our behavior is a function of relationship. Each relationship we have serves a specific need for that relationship to fulfill. As is gleaned from basic human psychology: our behavior arises out of that specific need and evolves as the relationship evolves. We always need new things from one another. By preparing a specific relationship event, you are grounding yourself in a perspective and a story to discover from, biologically.

We must define the relationship event and write it down, being specific about every element and origin story. It isn't written in the script for us, so by defining it and writing it down, we create the personal dynamics of the story. Once we are confident

because we have created so many details that we get lost in the story, we are ready to tell the story as actors.

Principles of Discovery

Let's explore how to use discovery as a dynamic theatrical device and the mechanics of discovery that I've observed over my 20 plus years as an actor and storytelling educator. I will delve further into these concepts in the full book, but the foundations of these ideas are all you need to launch yourself into the newness of the action.

Discovery Principle #1: Whatever you discover is true... *to you.*

This applies directly to being the character in a story. Thoughts are thought and when they actually lead to decisions of truth, they become discoveries. Information comes in through our senses and we synthesize this data into meaning, right or usually wrong. We are all human, and by default, imperfect. Therefore, we are in a constant flux as we discover our own misconceptions and actively realize newness into our existence. Our experiences are subjective. We are biased based on science. As actors, let us take this frame to the stage itself. In the act of discovery, the individual *chooses* what is true or false, right or wrong, real or unreal through their unconscious biases. We must sit in this a moment and meditate on the meaning of this concept, for it is far too easy to breeze past this like a bird looking for worms, forgetting that the whole world is a stage. Fortunately, due to reading this, you can now take responsibility for your own discoveries, re-evaluating your own biased conditioning. After reading this book and practicing these fun and mind-expanding exercises, you'll be able to tap in and make creation a conscious activity. Be prepared to discover new depths of yourself, your stories, and new life. Acting and living using the Discovery

Technique is the cognitive behavioral and narrative therapy of your dreams.

The power of discovery comes from each discovery actually being a secret you reveal to yourself, and secrets are absolutely sacred. That's why we owe it to ourselves to slow down in each moment and honor the significance and power of every discovery we make. The active participation of being aware of our expansion actually fulfills and completes the expansion itself. In other words, through active discovery, as opposed to passive, we carve a path to fulfill our own prophecies. Actors must choose a character path and be as specific as possible. In the discovery of details along the path, a point of no return will be reached and the truth will finally hit you, you become the character. The next direction will become clear because it will present itself to you like the mist over the ocean parting, uncovering powerful direction of inner truth, which cannot be forced. The truth, my friend, is more dangerous than the lie, because the lie comfortably excuses us from facing *new* truths. The new truth changes our inner character from the inside out. We, the actors and storytellers are never the liars, we are the detailers and truth transformers. The actor is the player on stage that admits they are on a stage and creates a transformation to illustrate a truth about what it means to be human and alive. Those artists that choose to have no point to their stories fail to be alive and are of no consequence to you or I.

In every scenario, the discovery technique is just a matter of focusing your attention on discovering more data and information about the scene, what is happening between you and the other person, and what it means to you. For the actor, or any creature for that matter, this means that listening itself is the most important skill you can develop. The more active a listener you are, the more data you will discover. Immerse yourself in every aspect of the person across from you. Don't plan your action

upon them like the western sociopathic culture directs you. Just like in science, the action will be revealed when the analysis of data is complete. The action is a chain re-action. The only difference is that as actors and storytellers, we don't use the boring term "data." From hence forth, the concept of data and information about a character or given circumstance shall be referred to as... *Secrets*. Secrets are sacred.

Which leads me to principle #2: Discovery is the agent of changing the character and creating emotion.

As the Artistic Director of Story Quest Studios, one of my best decisions was to bring on screenwriting professor Matthew McDuffie to teach. It was he who first introduced me to the theatrical concept of *discovery*. He described the scene writing process like as, "The Algorithm of emotion. A character enters the scene with a desire and an expectation that gets smashed by a *DISCOVERY*. That discovery produces an emotion which leads the character to a new decision." It took several times of hearing this screenwriting lecture for it to fully dawn on me as a live performer. I kept wondering... 'Why aren't actors taught this?'

This epiphany that actors don't know about discovery moments, created a *domino effect of discovery* in me I will never forget. A limitless feeling of abundance seeped into me on a cellular level. No matter how fast or slow, an organic process of storytelling and endless creativity can be born in you as it was in me and thousands of other people and working actors that use this technique to bring story to life.

Which leads me to Discovery principle #3: The Dawn Effect. We know for a fact that the dawn is coming, either it rises or we don't. That's a universal truth. We expect the dawn, yet it's always an intoxicating surprise how beautiful it is because it never

rises the same way twice. We do not know how we will respond to the dawn. We can only surrender to it and let it wash over us. We get lost in this discovery every morning and every sunset when the light meets the darkness. The shifting from light to darkness and then back is a powerful transformation that changes us on a cellular level. We discover more details about this experience every day, and we change a little every day. Therefore, our experience of the dawn changes with our connection to the universe and to ourselves. We change a little bit every day so we can never act out a scene the same way twice. We have to honor the Dawn Effect and go into every situation as if it were the dawn and you listen to every detail, even though you've seen it all before, you have to this again for the first time. We know the situations we are entering but not the details. We don't plan our actions out. In a way, we actually plan to discover. For example, you take your car in to get a diagnosis. You go to the doctor to discover how to fix what's wrong. You go to school to learn. We should go to work to discover a better life. We have an expectation and a goal, but we have no nuanced plan of emotional action. Furthermore, rehearsal of moments is not as valuable as digging into the character's discoveries we can only discover more details about the moment, and be ready for them by preparing the possible meanings to focus on by analyzing the story and mining it for transformation. The details of our discoveries are what create the nuances of our actions. By shifting our focus energy from taking action to making discoveries, you surrender yourself to the moment, and we become the character.

The Compound Effect

The 4th principle of discovery: The compound effect of discovery is the most powerful force in the universe. Change is inevitable, so if you consistently focus on the new data and what it implies about other data you will realize more and more of the truth. The

truth is always incomplete as our experience of the universe is limited, so we are slowly discovering more and more about the truth, and the more of the truth we discover, the more our world changes around us, because our understanding of the truth shapes our view of the world. When you focus your discovery energy in a specific direction, day in and day out taking small steps in the same direction, a phenomenal amount of energy billows till there comes a point of no return and then new direction becomes clearer and clearer, fulfilling the prophecy of transformation. The compound effect of focused discovery is dangerous and can change anything. This is why journalists are murdered because they discover too much of the truth. Discovery is like water. Any problem you or a character has is like a wall of stone. Over time, water will overtake the stone, little by little, dissolving the stone as the solution becomes clear. Do not rush to action, discover more and allow the discovery to become the action through the compound effect.

DISCOVERY PRINCIPLE OF CHARACTER AND IDENTITY.

The Discovery Technique completely changed my life and many of my students lives. It turned my sense of identity inside out. In the midst of creating this method I discovered a “new” and ever-evolving self. Others might say it is my “original” self, but I have a different perspective. The *Discovery Principle of Identity is this*: Our character is a combination of what we discover about our origin story and what we choose to do about it. By focusing on discovery, we unlock our authentic voice as the character. I realized this way of creating character after reading an article that reminded me of a very important dynamic: We judge ourselves by our intentions, and we judge others by their actions. I thought this duality was fascinating because our identities are a combination of how the world sees us and how we see ourselves.

We see ourselves through our intentions, which are formed by our discoveries. Others judge us by our actions which are often not planned and done before enough discovery was put in to the situation. To understand the character, you must understand how their mistakes are made, what makes them imperfect, what they desire to do, and what they actually do. For example, if someone discovers they are cheated on, I know about that person based on the action they take. I will know them more by understanding the discoveries that lead to them to take that action. The details of our discoveries are our secrets, all everyone sees from us is the action, the surface layer. We must discover deeper into the discoveries of the character to give authentic stimulus to the action.

This discovery leads me to be far more empathetic than I could ever have imagined. Now it is difficult for me to judge any of the characters I play as wrong in any way. Our existence is too complicated to be wrong, so we have to let being wrong go in order to live the life of the character in a story, including our own.

Discovery Principle #5: Discovery is the Agent of Connection Being in the Moment

Being in the moment is one of the most elusive things an instructor will attempt to teach their students. This is why I have forced myself to boil it down to its essential element, discovery. By discovering something in the moment, you are in that moment. Meaning, if you discover something about the person across from you, a connection is born and you are in the moment with that specific connection. As soon as you discover something outside the two of you, your connection is no longer the focus, but now has a basis by which new discoveries can be made. By discovering details about the environment, using all your senses, you are actively participating in the present moment. By actively

discovering and being aware of the present moment, you are living in the moment. Through the connections we are actively creating in the moment, we are living in the moment. When we discover meaning in any moment, we are in that moment and only that moment. So when you are with someone and it seems like they are somewhere else, they actually are.

ON ESSENCE OF CHARACTER AND DISCOVERY

We develop our essences in our earliest discoveries about relationships and reality. These early discoveries are our baseline for connection and how connections work or don't work with other people. As time passes, our essence expands into our spiritual core, how we connect to the world around us and beyond. We can only discover from our experiences that have shaped our overall persona and perspective. Our essence becomes the lens through which we define the world. In Victor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946), Frankl explains how he detached himself from the horror of death in a concentration camp by finding and creating meaning for himself. He describes how he had to decide to be creative and miraculously keep a sense of humor. In other words, no matter what situation you are in and what experience other people have around you, you are the one that gets to decide what your experience means, and it's always your secret. You can play any part as an actor, you just have to know what secret the character holds, and what the new world means to you, personally.

Take a moment for that to sink in. When you change the meaning of the world to you personally, like in storytelling, you create new possibilities for others to discover. I invite you to tap into your infinite power through the marriage of creativity and clear communication. You now have a responsibility to both. Yes, you

reached a point of no return, so let me remind you how to create a character:

We are what we discover and what we choose to do about it. I know about a character by the choices they make and how they behave. If they get jealous and kill, that tells me how weak and unstable they are. Discover a new form of yourself that is more fearless about discovering new forms of yourself. It is vital for the actor to be flexible in spirit and unjaded, like a child, but with the experience and knowledge of an ancient oracle. It's vital for the actor to access a point of view that is unbiased by their limited experiences and stereotypes, only to be filled with the all of the character's biases to tell the story. Sometimes, it turns out pretty, most of the time it's not... and that's okay because art is a reflection of life, and vis versa. There must be conflict for us to discover solutions, to lead us to transformative resolution.

MENTAL HEALTH FOR THE ACTOR 101

Before reading the entire book and diving into acting, we must address the mental health of the actor, because I believe we were previously trained to be sociopathic in nature in our preparation of roles, forcing and planning psychological actions and emotions. We were also trained to think that we are only actors and should wait to be picked from the digital cloud to perform. Nothing can be further from the truth I have discovered. We actors are creators and must choose to create as a practice. We can rewire our current psyche to embrace the future and our creative spirit that has been stifled over time by society, possibly even by our family and friends. We are so creative, that we create the notion in our minds that we are not creative. However, if we take that very same discovery energy, we can choose to discover the

opposite is true. We change in each new environment and with each new connection. We can change ourselves internally and externally, unconsciously at first until we become aware of our discoveries and the power of intentional exploration.

Our identity, therefore, is far more fluid than many people are capable of realizing. This excites the change makers, those brave souls that are ready for everything to shift into the next paradigm. You must create the environment of changing the paradigm from within. Most people define themselves by prescribed belief patterns and labels of prior events. I am here to reveal to you; *we are what we discover and what we choose to do about it...* Yes, we all have a different origin story. But with discovery, you can be, and do, anything. This releases us from the shackles of past mistakes and attachments that do not serve us nor the people we want to serve. We do not see your past when you are acting, we see you, right now. The world is a stage, so release yourself from the fear you identify with and put on an amazing story for the world to discover.

James Dean said, "Acting is the art of 'not knowing.' I love this idea because it is filled with truth and mystery. We, as the character, cannot know what is going to happen. But the actor paradoxically does. So, in this concept of acting, the actor goes around practicing knowing nothing. While this is artistic at its core, it's confusing to the average human. We must avoid boiling things down into mysterious concepts created to be vague enough to point out your flaws while hiding its own. One of my little quirks, I cringe when something is defined solely by *what it is not*. The positive way to express 'not knowing' is "discovering." We are always in a state of not knowing and discovering, then making a decision about it, always fearing if that decision is the wrong choice.

When was the last time you looked up the word discovery? Discovery is a special word we often take for granted. I had never looked up this word until I started to explore the concept myself. Even as a musician and actor this word somehow flew under my radar. In the first dictionary I looked, I found that to discover means: *to find something or someone unexpectedly*. I love this definition because the unexpected is an essential element of *magic* in storytelling. We cannot expect what we discover in a story, so this is the definition I use.

Discovery is the process of realizing truth and meaning, *realization*. Let's take this into the storytelling context. No two people or characters are the same, meaning they will automatically want different things they feel the lack of in any moment. Herein lies the understanding of inherent conflict, built into everything we do. One layer of duality that always creates this conflict is the need to take care of others which often competes with the need to take care of ourselves. Because no two people experience the same moment in the same way, a fascinating dance occurs and we discover outside the lines of ourselves through each other. This is what makes the theater so powerful and fascinating, this is what brings people to the box office, night after night, the need to expand. No two humans share the same reality, so the question lingers there, the elephant in the room... What is real? I might discover a shooting star in the sky and you might discover it to be a UFO. We, as humans, discover what is true to us in the moment. This will change, moment to moment because discovery is a pendulum of our subjective experiences. We create meaning and have our own personal experiences and our own personal narratives, based on what we allow ourselves to discover. The process of realization of our true needs drives us to create and destroy. In all great story telling the characters discover a new need to destroy the current

paradigm, and they will have to discover the danger that comes next.

We can allow for profound discoveries, or we can block them. We can allow other people to discover for us, but in doing so we place all trust in them like they are God. A scene may seem simple on the page, but to commit to the character's discoveries in the story takes a spiritual bravery which comes from practicing a process of surrendering. It can neither be "easy" nor "hard". Remove the word "try" from your vocabulary, you are either discovering something specific or you aren't. We use these seemingly innocent words to qualify and excuse ourselves from commitment, but the ideas of "difficult and hard" are useless and destructive to the creative mind. As storytellers, we must reframe all problems and difficulties as creative challenges and move fearlessly to discover every detail of the challenge. Discovery is like water: you blast it at a wall for long enough and the wall dissolves. Within your relentless creative new spirit, every lynch pin in the way will be discovered, and in the clarity of the moment, the old truth will dissolve into a new truth.

As we dive deeper into the psychology of being an actor, you will notice that our emotional experiences as actors and storytellers are based on "facts" we created that define our expression as artists. Every connection changes over time because of psychological proximity, so too do the facts change through this proximity, and how we define them. Our job as actors is to create *new* memories to flesh out a character in order to create depth and truth. We dwell on the details of these new memories, allowing them to entrance us in new beliefs. Science has proven that even our own memories are interpretations and recreations of past facts. The lines of reality are blurry at best because we can convince ourselves of anything as humans. I'm dragging you with me down this rabbit hole only to save you from the pitfalls of

leaning on your own personal emotional memories to shape your performances. When we use our own trauma to tell other people's stories, we are constantly bringing it back to be about our experience, instead of discovering this new story, expanding into the new experience. We get comfortable with the familiar emotional reality we have constructed for ourselves, good or bad, it's what we know, and we don't like being told to let go of it. I invite you to discover outside of what you think you know. I invite you to access the natural wonder that got buried deep inside you over time.

We are experts on our own story, so we focus on it by default. Our story is the only one we think we can't possibly be wrong about. No one can tell us how to change our story but ourselves, and the truth from our story trumps the truth of the director's story or anyone else that stands in the way of our expression of what we think is true. Therefore, we become stuck in our perception of truths, taking that stuck perception and emotion into every single story we tell. This is why actors claim, "My character wouldn't do that." But, of course, the character can, you just have to let go of your perception of the truth for a moment and tell a different story through the lens of a different set of beliefs. I invite you to slow down and define *Acting* a new light.

What struck me most, out of all the definitions, is the Archaic definition of discovery: to *disclose or divulge a secret*. When I first read this, another domino effect of discovery poured through me. I realized that all great storytelling is about the revealing of dangerous secrets. I say dangerous because power creates the potential for danger, and fear drives all story. A moment of discovery within a character is a tiny unit of change resulting from divulging a secret to themselves. Thus, each moment of discovery is a tiny unit of bravery for the character peering into the

unknown. The act of stepping dangerously into the unknown drives our stories forward and keeps our audiences hooked.

The act of revelation is a combination of “discovering” and “revealing”. In the story realm, think of everything we discover as a secret revelation, unspoken. Every character in a story is on a quest to “uncover” the truth. This is why I call acting the *Dance of Revelations*. We move through fear as the character from one revelation that spirals our soul fearlessly into the next. In the 13th and 14th century definitions of “reveal” and “revelation,” both words are made known by “supernatural” or “by divine agency.” In other words, we don’t exactly know how we discover new connections and ideas and pull them from the ether. We’re all limitless mystics. The very act of discovery is a moment of magic. Actors are magicians, suspending the disbelief of the audience in order to deliver that which is most valuable to discover: A story of *Transformation*.

Discovery is by its very nature, spontaneous and unexpected. Details we discover in the moment are by default, new. This makes discovery the most valuable device in our tool box as storytellers. In his books, Grandfather of modern acting, Stanislavski, always stressed the importance of creating “*newness to the action.*” This language was translated from Russian and is confusing to the western mind. Think of it like this: We can only discover the truth, not anticipate it. When a new truth is discovered, we transform and a new action arises out of the new truth. Actors operate best when directed through what we discover and what decide to do. This keeps us, and thus the audience, grounded in the truth and on the edge of our seats wondering, “What’s going to happen next?”

When we watch you discover new connections of truth, we live vicariously through you. By creating a roller coaster of discovery

moments that contradict one another we keep ourselves surprised and our stories surprising. By creating a process to *discovering the opposite is true* in every scene, we take our characters through the greatest change possible. Conflict embeds itself in the opposites of what each character expects and desires, and that allows for impact in the story. Like every art, this is easier said than done, and discovering the opposites takes practice and fearlessness. We must commit to our character's reality. What is the character's greatest hope, and what is the character's greatest fear? Experience every detail of each and you become the character.

Impact comes from transformation. For example, one moment you, the character, can discover how much you love your partner, only to discover the opposite is true when you discover they are cheating on you. This profound process of leading yourself to discover the opposite is true creates a transformation within you and newness to the action. By creating a practice of discovering opposites, we can instantly tap into powerful storytelling.

An audience is unaware of this intentional pendulum of discovery and will consistently be surprised and impacted by your use of discovering opposites. This is how great scripts are written. This *dance of opposites* creates dramatic irony and hooks the audience into needing to know what happens next, and how. Discovery is the fabric of magic. We create magic by discovering and revealing the unexpected. Discovering the opposite is always unexpected and creates the magic. That magic is available to the actor at any time. These discoveries can become increasingly personal and lead to more and more profound transformation that will affect your life, not just the stories you tell. All you have to do is discover that you are wrong, and the opposite is true.

Chapter 3

THE ACTION OF DISCOVERY



To discover' is the character's constant *psychological action* which drives the character's *physical activities*. This is where I depart from other acting modalities. I don't focus on the resulting actions and emotions, because those arise from your discoveries through *impulse*. Our actions erupt as emotional sparks out of the flames of our discoveries. Actions are emotional, because we make decisions on what to do with the emotional center of our brains. Therefore, by discovering the opposite is true in the scene, you create the action of the scene which is to seek the truth, always, and then to do something about it.

Discovery is limitless. Therefore, you are limitless if you choose to focus your energy on discovery. *Discovery energy* is divine creative energy. It is a special type of energy that we *expound* to empower ourselves to *expand*. This energy is primal, birthing newness into the world often violently. In moments of great change our awareness peaks to guide us safely into a new state of

being. I am suggesting that discovery itself the “flow” state. By discovering details about the present moment in real time, we are by default in the moment. Discovery is a choice; you must exert the energy to discover and change. Just by discovering these words and what they mean, you are realizing your own limitless.

We must play the game of story creation as the actor, much less interpretation. So, my first acting scene study is called “I’m Discovering.” I have actors simply say that and then continue with any story, identifying the who/what/where. This is a variation of the widely known “Yes, And” in all improv training. However, when I have actors do yes, and, they often end up blocking each other using the words, “yes, but” or they will question what the other person has said instead of adding to it. By choosing to listen and discover in every moment, you tap into the only tool you need to improvise, be it comedic or not. Through discovery, we are capable of absolutely anything. Playing *creation games* is the fun part. Let’s do that instead of tearing one another down.

A DANCE WITH EASTERN CULTURE

In my research of ancient cultures and philosophies, I discovered the Tao. I became aware of the differences between Eastern ways of thinking versus Western ways of thinking. Traditionally, in the West, we are obsessed with action, being right, and winning. In the East, surrender and absorption allows people to live in more harmony. The thought of *discovering* as the act of absorbing and synthesizing information struck me. Discovery is the absorption of new information, plus in the same moment, it is the realization of meaning that comes with it through subconscious associations of the truth. Did you ever wonder why people jump to conclusions that you did not intend in your interaction? It’s because the story you presented isn’t clear to them. Through clarity of communication in storytelling, we create alignment in ourselves

and others. Through the compound effect of connection and alignment, the artist finds themselves on a path of community enlightenment.

The storyteller must understand that the special moment of epiphany is a reflection of human enlightenment. I have often asked my students if there was a moment in their lives in which they made a massive discovery and there was total alignment and they knew exactly what to do. All my students nod their head yes. I go on to ask in my classes: does it feel like a beam of energy shooting upward from your head? They all nod yes. This is the moment we need to see on camera. By guiding ourselves through these massive transformations, we guide our audience through massive transformation. This is how storytellers get to save the world.

Within the Discovery Technique, the phenomenon of *enlightenment* occurs when our discoveries and actions align. Buddha said, “Happiness is when our head, heart, and actions align.” The head and the heart are our centers for discovery.

An epiphany is a moment of revelation. Creating moments of revelation is, in itself, the job of the storyteller. I tell my students we are *transformational storytelling brands*. I realize this could sound like a gimmick to some, myself included. However, stories are simply *guided transformations*. By realizing this over and over again, we create a mystical and limitless habit of change through discovery.

This self-guided meditation we call storytelling is broken into two parts: preparation and performance. By intentionally experiencing a specific series of discovery moments, we trigger an infinite realm of others in connection. We transform. In other words, we form a specific trance for ourselves to stumble through (and the

audience). These discoveries cannot be planned out, because the Discovery Technique is about discovering details in the moment to make it spontaneous, like improvisation. In fact, all scripted acting is improvised. The text is never improvised, but the subtext is always improvised based on the present moment. Each take you can and will discover new details that lead you to react in different ways. The words are the same, but the inner life of the character changes through your specific improvised discoveries, which can never be exactly the same because time has passed and every moment is the *new now*. After ten years of teaching acting and twenty years of acting myself, I found that this is the key to explaining realism and powerful acting. The text is fixed, but the subtext is improvised based on active listening and discovering meaning. The more meaning you discover as the character, the more the story means to the audience.

In this form of achieving realism in storytelling, once we realize meaning, we surrender to this meaning through our reactions, we never plan our reactions. Discovery cannot be faked. Either you are discovering specific details of the given circumstance of your problem in the moment, or you are not. When we watch the movies on the big screen, we're glued to the discoveries that happen in the bones of the characters that give birth to angels and demons. We are fixated on the moments that change lives.

We must stop planning out our actions and emotions. *Actions and emotions are simply reactions to discovery.* When you force these reactions, the well of truth runs dry. We must discover powerful things then surrender ourselves to the resulting action. Yes, plan to discover, but you don't have to rehearse these discoveries. Keep them growing inside of you like dangerous snowballing secrets that are dying to live free.

By discovering specific details in each moment and allowing those discoveries to affect us, we are doing an amazing job as actors and storytellers. No one can tell us we are doing it “wrong.” By listening to discover and allowing what you discover to impact us, right and wrong does not exist. This is why I tell actors to be fearlessly wrong. It’s not that I am telling you to be purposefully wrong. I’m saying that we have to be fearlessly specific in our work, knowing it will not match the vision of the director. This is the gift you bring the director and to the story and it is what sets you apart from other actors. Never apologize for your unique choices. Your job is not to be right, it’s only to be extremely specific.

All people live in fear of being wrong, making the wrong choices, and it paralyzes their ability to make any choice at all. We actors exemplify this ironic behavior. One of the most important things I will remind you is that we cannot be right and therefore we must fearlessly be wrong. We cannot read the mind of the director, and the director actually does not know what the right answers are for your part. Every acting roll is an exploration of discovery so you must commit yourself to discovering new details of every story, which will take you outside of your cage of previous perceptions. You must commit yourself to discovering the unknown. That’s why most people are afraid to act and will tell you they cannot, although that, too, is an act. We, however, were born to act. We were born to change fearlessly in the moment without hesitation. We were born to be wild.

1 THE ACTION OF CONNECTION

When you discover details about any subject, you create threads of connection to it. When you discover details about another person, you subconsciously form a personal connection to them through your focus. If they are discovering details about you in the same time, the threads of connection combine and a specific relationship begins.

When you enter a scene, your attention effects how you connect to your scene partner, and the story itself. What do you notice you are focused on at the beginning of a scene? To create a physical environment, place your focus on discovering details of your immediate environment, relating these details to your character's problem at the same time in the story. Immerse yourself in this new world by discovering your problem is worse than you thought. By discovering details about your problem, as the character, you are grounding yourself in the story as the character. Then when another character enters the scene, you will discover them from this new perspective. Your specific discovery of each other helps identify the relationship between you. Just by discovering simple details about your scene partner, you create invisible connective threads between the two of you. When your scene partner discovers details about you, the connection is solidified. When two actors are sharing discoveries, a personal bond evolves between them. If actors truly listen to one another, there is a real bond. We create chemistry by listening with intension. In other words, you can choose to connect and have good chemistry with anyone. You just have to start with something uncomfortable, eye contact and vulnerability. Next time you have a "chemistry read," or a call back with another actor to see if there is chemistry, remember that connection is a choice. Start listening and discovering details about the other

person. Be fascinated by them, and observe how they react in a mutual fascination.

We have all been told as actors to be more personal. The action of connection is how we make more *personal choices*. We become more connected to our scene partners (and our loved ones) when we spend more time focusing on them and discovering new details about them. Also think of it like this, when you discover your opinion about something or someone, that is your personal connection to them. This is a powerful tool for specificity, because whatever connection and relationship you create as an artist, that's what the audience experiences. Furthermore, when you discover conflict between you and another character, you're creating possibilities of consequences which keeps the audience on the edge of their seats. The actor must connect to these consequences personally and commit fully to the discoveries of danger to the character's life. Commit to the danger because characters have only one life to live, just like you. Every character you play travels through your sense of discovery. Thus, you are the character.

The most powerful kind of connection is in the realm of love. Love is not an emotion; it is a deeply personal discovery of connection or often it is the discovery of the need to connect. By discovering mutual love, you tap into a divine abundance of spiraling positive energy.

2 THE ACTION OF BEING IN THE MOMENT

Through improvisation, we use discovery to address several challenges that frustrate actors daily. The *discovery effect* grounds the human mind in the moment. This can be described as such: When you discover a detail about the present moment, through your five senses, you are in the moment. In my basic

improvisation exercises, we start a scene by discovering an activity and environment, then we discover what it means to our story as the character to be there. When interacting with a partner in improvisation, we have an activity and discover our partner's activity, thus we actively discover the possible connection between our characters, the evolving meaning of the relationship arises out of our focus on *discovering the connection*.

After initial discoveries about the environment and connection, I instruct the students to begin speaking out loud what they are discovering, moment to moment. The dialogue that arises begins with "I'm discovering..." and continues with what each actor discovers. This is an improvisational scene technique breakthrough. It doesn't matter how the scene goes. There is no right or wrong, as long as there is a focus on listening to discover details within the setting and situation and say "I'm discovering" before every line of dialogue.

All an audience really wants is to see is you discovering new things in the present moment that *change* you. I see every story as a detective story because the main character is set on a mission of discovery to solve a problem. So, play "I'm Discovering" like a Sherlock Holmes and Watson scene if that helps. Then you will see that every character is a Sherlock Holmes, just not as smart.

3 THE ACTION OF CREATING MEANING

Few of us like to admit it, but we live in a meaningless void. Humans, however, possess a unique power to this world and possibly the universe. We are meaning making machines. Through discovery we connect the dots to create meaning. When you discover specific details as you act, you realize how these details relate to other previously discovered details. When you

discover what specific interactions mean, words on a page become truth through your speech. *Meaning* will come from somewhere deep inside of you and it will have meaning for everyone who sees it. No one can discover meaning for you. You, as the character in the story, must discover and create your own meaning in each moment. For example, you as the character, must discover in the present moment what it means to need revenge and why. We will see it in your eyes, feel it in your energy. It is not created by the words, which the actors cling to. If you are performing a scene and you are given a line such as, “I love you so much!” The meaning of this love is first discovered by you, the actor, and then revealed through you to us the audience through your eyes, not the words themselves. The meaning becomes real as soon as you discover it for yourself.

The creation of meaning is the most important subjects we, as storytellers and humans, can breach. So, lean in. The Discovery Technique is a way of generating meaning in a meaningless existence. Humans are creatures that create meaning *through storytelling*. We reveal meaning to get other people, an audience, to believe in that meaning. Furthermore, clear and intentional communication of meaning requires you to practice specific storytelling. Two people can witness the same event, but it means something different to each of them. That’s why it’s so important to create specific moments that ground you, your scene partner, and an audience into what the events of the story mean.

The rest of my book will delve more into the importance and details of this concept. We constantly rewrite our own story and create new meaning for ourselves in our real lives in order to be healthy and successful artists.

4 THE ACTION OF EMOTION THROUGH TRANSFORMATION

Have you ever noticed that you felt powerful emotions in times of great change? When transformation occurs, we feel the impact. When you move to a new town, it feels overwhelming because all of the newness to discover. By creating an idea of spiritual transformation, like taking the peaceful you to the gates of war, you will tap into your deep emotions by default. Our emotions are guided by our discoveries. If you discover deeply, you will feel deeply.

As humans, we are feeling emotions all the time. We are *feeling machines*. As Stanislavski, reminds us in his book, *An Actor Prepares*, words cannot possibly represent what people actually feel. This is why approaching acting through emotions could not only be harmful to the actor's craft, it can harm the actor's mental health. No one should be told what and how to feel because we are all different.

Has anyone ever told you what to feel, as if there were a correct emotion for the scene? Maybe this scenario sounds familiar. You're in the middle of an important scene and the director yells 'cut!'. The director, or your instructor, comes over.

"Look, this scene, it needs more anger, more rage. Sound good? Dig in, go get it. Okay? Next take!"

As the director walks back to their comfortable chair, emotional confusion sets in. The only emotion you might feel is the rage you have for the director to be so superficial like that in dealing with this sacred story. Did the way they described the emotion make sense? Was there a clear reason the director or instructor wanted this cliché emotion? Did you get a sense that if you focused on trying to produce that vague emotion that you were absolutely stuck, dead in the water, emotionless, frozen, a fake, dead inside with your own personal form of tormented secret actor terror?

Maybe it's just me. But if it's you, too, now you know what is happening and how to avoid it. Raise the stakes on the discovery moment to get the energy the scene needs.

The topic of emotion is a primary point of departure from other acting modalities that focus on concepts of emotional memory, which was created and ironically abandoned by Stanislavski himself. By dwelling on the emotions of our personal past traumas, we purposefully entangle our biased experiences with the experiences of the story we are telling from the character's perspective. The story has a different bias which does not come from our lives, and therefore requires us to pull from the given circumstances of a different reality, requiring you to expand different ways of being within you, shifting your own reality to tell the story. Discovery is expansion. The truth is whatever you discover it to be.

Everything that occurs to us, everything that happens, we filter through our experiences. How we discover information has been programmed in us throughout our development. All of our experiences go with us no matter what. Before acting, I suggest people go to therapy in order to unblock themselves from the past, allowing new feelings and discoveries in the present. Some people use acting classes as therapy, but that can be dangerous for the actor and their class mates and should be redirected to qualified therapists. Acting instructors are not therapists although they position themselves to hear all your trauma in front of the class and diagnose you.

Acting is a game of opening oneself and throwing ourselves into the fire of a specific story, ready to discover and feel anything. This takes a rare kind of bravery that allows a person to know if they are an actor or not. Then the human flaws get in the way, allowing emotion to cloud our judgment.

The Discovery Technique is a technology you can use to move characters to action with emotion, without forcing emotion or action. To get closer to realism, actions and emotions should not be defined or planned out. The words we use for emotions are not helpful because our understanding of emotions are vague biased notions of the past that change over time. Humans are so talented at attaching their identity to the past. We often get caught up defining ourselves by the conclusions and emotions of past events. This practice of dwelling on past emotions, basing everything we create off these connections as if they were the universal truth, is a trap for the actor that wishes to be in the present moment with their scene partner. The focus on emotion is a trap for the human that wants to rediscover what it's like to live again for the first time. Without prescribing an emotion, we allow ourselves to discover for ourselves once again.

Instead of defining your past feelings, mere fleeting memories of emotion that change as time passes, *focus on the now*. The meaning of interactions will change if you *listen to discover* what changes. Emotional impact comes from transformation. For example, when we move to a new place that we are not familiar living in, we experience an overwhelm of emotion due to the simple profound change taking place. Whenever there is great change, emotions follow that we can't possibly describe with words. There is always great internal energy expounded in times of great change. This energy is "e-motion," energy in motion. *Transformation is the exchange of energy from discovery into action*. It is built into the human experience, so take yourself though discovering an experience, and you will feel the emotion appropriate to the story. Never force an emotion or make it a plan, allow it to flow freely like water and surprise yourself.

Emotion comes from discovering spiritual meaning, not from the void of clichés. When we don't understand our emotions, it's

because we don't understand the situation we're in, or we haven't discovered exactly what it means to know what to do about the situation. Once we solidify the story in our mind, our feelings make logical sense, to ourselves. This is how powerful storytelling is, and how it's achieved. We are not aiming to produce an emotion in the audience, that is not valuable in and of itself. We should be more clearly aiming to reveal important secrets that offer the audience magical gifts of unexpected value to discover, wrapped in the secrecy of your storytelling craft. By energetically committing to the discoveries and transformations, the audience feels like they are transforming with you. One ironic key to acting is to be open to emotion and surprise yourself at every turn, with no focus on emotion.

Next time you're confused about a scene or situation, emotionally, sit down and walk through this exercise. It will allow you to feel the flow of discovery, uncovering your authentic emotion along the way.

1. Discover what happened, the event you're processing. Write it down like a story.

"I expected _____, I discovered _____. This means _____ so I decided to _____. I then discovered _____, so I decided I had to _____.

2. Decide on the meaning of the transformation that leads to the new decision. Write it down. What does this story mean to you? Discovering and changing in each certain way has its own set of belief systems and meanings attached.

3. To act out the story, speak this discovery path into existence using “discovering” instead of “discovered” to keep your emotions in the present.

I thought _____ but now I’m discovering _____...
And it means _____ so now I’m discovering
_____ and I’m deciding I need to
_____.

Discovery is a fluid state and therefore our emotions flow like water. A torrent or a trickle. Either way, don’t let anyone define what anything means for you. Discovery of self is for you and you, alone. Like Steve Covey said in 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, “Your response is your responsibility.” We must commit to discovering unexpectedly, and to transform.

Discovery is the agent of change. If you truly discover the depth of something, you change based on what meaning you allow yourself to discover. Discovery changes our decisions. Discovering we are wrong is how we transform.

I can’t urge you enough to discover the importance of guiding yourself to discover you’re wrong, and changing.

If you want to really throw yourself and a scene partner for a loop. Try this improv exercise I call “Being Wrong is Right”.

1. The only purpose in the scene is to discover new ways of being wrong to build the given circumstances. For example, you can be discovering you, as the character, were mistaken, or purposefully bad about facts in the story, or that you are revealing how you are bad or wrong morally.

2. You must reveal how you are wrong to the other character as if you're revealing a secret.
3. "Okay, so the truth is... _____." Or, "Look, I was wrong about _____"

The scene starts physically in terms of being wrong in connection with the environment, then a personal story arises between the characters as they reveal how they are wrong, spiritually.

My personal belief of right and wrong is that the concept is ill conceived by the western consciousness to shame us into control patterns. I urge you now in your real life, discover what everything means for yourself. Right and wrong has been embedded in our stories and it's too easy to embed it in our life and our approach to storytelling. The western concept of good vs. bad really helps to communicate clear storytelling by creating a clear and biased perspective, however as the artist we must be unbiased and see beyond the western construct of good and bad. Our awareness as storytellers must be paramount as to the meaning our story delivers, and how to best use good vs bad to craft the most powerful story we can imagine.

Discovering you are wrong is the key to excellent acting, and coincidentally is the key to any growth. Every story is a journey of a character or group that takes actions and discovers they are wrong, changes, then realizes their problem is different and discovers the understanding that solves the problem.

Discovering the appropriate action, not planning the action itself, solves the problem. Discovering the reason for action in the moment is our art. This leads the filmmaker to produce the action.

ON THE SUBJECT OF TRUTH AND BEING YOURSELF

Whatever you discover becomes true, to you. You become your discoveries if your actions align with what you discover. You cannot fake a discovery, so a specific discovery is by default always the truth in that moment according to you. You can never have an incorrect discovery. Reality is subjective, but what we discover in the moment to ourselves is absolute truth, even if it vanishes into thin air in the next moment with a new discovery. If a director does not believe you, shift your focus to what you are discovering as the character and ground yourself in what that means to you in this new and evolving perspective of the character. That is your truth, and no one can take that away from you. To be believable, focus on discovering details in the moment and believing in whatever you discover, fully committing to creating danger in the consequences. The truth is what you discover it to be. As storytellers, the truth is always dangerous. To be authentic, we must identify the details of the character's experience that you realize are far more dangerous than you thought.

FRAMING DISCOVERY FOR STORYTELLING

I strongly believe the evolution of the actor's craft will be to study the vast power and effects of creating discovery moments. When you play a character or perform a scene, you're creating discovery moments to yourself and thus your audience who observes and lives vicariously through your experience. The secret to the mastering Discovery Technique is leading yourself as the character through a guided *discovery trance* of realizing more and more dangerous meaning hidden in the different realms of the human conflict. Let's break this down and focus on these types of conflict in storytelling in terms of relationships. A character is a combination of relationships, but let's boil it down to these aspects for simplicity.

Human v. Nature; Human v. Human; Human v. Society; Human v. The Self.

Human v Nature: This conflict has to do with the physical challenges that the outside world provides to make the journey of the character more difficult. It could be the intense weather that makes the character's goals impossible, or it could be that they are sick and dying. Either way, nature represents the physical elements of a story that stand in the way of the character achieving his or her goals. For example: It's so cold he discovers the roads are iced and he can't get to his family. Ice, heat, rain, and dirt, all elements of the outside world have an effect on the character and the story the audience sees. You must view everything in terms of connection and creating meaning through creating specific connections. If the main character seeks love, perhaps they are deformed by nature so that love is the most unexpected conclusion for a character, such as in Richard the 3rd. Nature will present itself in any and every way possible. Akira Kurosawa is a famous filmmaker who is well known for adding weather elements to paint the stories. The blockbuster, Indiana Jones, is famous for dropping the main character into a bed of snakes.

Human v Human: This is the logical force that drives the story, or the good guy vs. the bad guy element. When two characters want opposing things, a story is set in motion. Think of this as a relationship equation, like a word problem. This conflict is about humans competing or fighting with other humans for love, money, power, you name it, people fight over it. This has to do with our classic primal drives like defeating a bad guy, or just a conflict between roommates over who is going to do the dishes. Here's a simple example: Ted discovers he needs to confront Jim for leaving the dishes out. Batman has to stop the Joker and the

Joker has to stop Batman. Specific opposing human forces define this relationship.

Human v Society: This conflict is the *spiritual* or existential aspect of the story. How we relate to the greater human consciousness helps paint a deeper picture of who we are and who our character might be on a journey to become. For example, Batman is isolated in his castle, alone, disconnected from the rest of society, which only leads to his character's downward spiral. Star Wars has a whole world that needs saving and all the characters find themselves having to make the decision to sacrifice themselves for the greater good. This is a spiritual connection to something bigger than the character. Perhaps its loyalty to the crime family, perhaps it is connection to a church or organization. It can even be about how you fit in with a group of close friends. Our characters experience connection with the rest of the world, that helps paint the picture as to who the person is inside. What is your connection with the world, has it changed over time? Remember that nothing can remain the same and we will always discover newness to the action if we care to look.

Human v The Self: This is the *emotional* aspect of the character's inner life. As humans, we are faced with our own duality and are torn by our own contradicting desires and needs. We must understand how the character contradicts themselves and what they are hiding even from themselves to avoid the pain. Each story is about a character's emotional and spiritual secret, and thus their transformation. For example: Jim is so ashamed of cheating on Jane that he discovers he can't look at himself in the mirror anymore. Secret jealousy, secret love, secret sorrow, these are the inner things that drive the character emotionally through the story. What do you see characters in stories secretly struggling with? Often times it is connected to a traumatic event in the past. You have to know understand and define the

character's greatest fear and there only hope. You must define how the character is in their own way, and in doing so, you might discover how you are in your own way.

In approaching making choices on how to craft a character, start from the inside out for realism. Start with defining the dynamics in these four realms. These four worlds of conflict keep us on track in a specific story and give us an ocean of conflict to discover and hold our attention as actors. Otherwise we would trail off and think of other things, distracting from the story at hand. When a story is well thought out the actor is free to discover all potential possibilities. If you follow the principles I lay out, you will achieve *impact through transformation*.

Don't get stuck attaching yourself to previously established labels and beliefs. Storytelling is the *revelation of secrets*; therefore, we must be the masters of our own fearlessness and discover beyond ourselves as artists, constantly expanding into more and more powerful storytelling potential. This means we must be the ones to change. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' in transformation. Our job as actors is to be *fearlessly specific*. We are the dancers, and each specific step we take teaches us about the next step. Acting, the *dance of revelations*, is eternal.

In my classes, we improvise everything. Even when the scripted scenes are memorized, I tell actors not to worry about the words and improvise. Let the script supervisor worry about the words. This of course is to achieve realism, because in real life we are not worrying about getting the right words. For theater and TV, the words are very important as the writers have more control over the final product, not so in film. In real life, we are experiencing reality in four realms which correspond to the four kinds of conflict. We are not thinking about getting the words right. In life

we find ourselves lost in the trance of one relationship event after another.

FOUR REALMS

I approach the Discovery Technique through these four realms in part due to my resistance flexibility training with Bob Cooley, author of “The Genius of Flexibility.” One of the many concepts Bob teaches is that each stretch has four effects on a person, in the four worlds of our experience: The physical, logical, spiritual, and emotional. It struck me that we as actors must form a technique for preparation in all these realms. Only then will we deliver the lines with authenticity and specificity.

We must train in all four of these realms to be the best storytellers we can be. In the physical world we must train in combat, horseback riding, singing, dancing, and other special skills. For the logic we must practice improve exercises that help us remain logically grounded with our scene partners and what the conflict resolution path might be. For the spiritual world we must practice discovering meaning in all connections we discover, developing our powers of connectivity. For the emotional world, we become aware of how what we discover effects our emotional life.

The focused use of discovery plants a sense of spontaneity deep inside you and every moment of the scene. You will learn once again to play and see the world again for the first time, not as a child but as a storyteller. When you perform, the audience will forget they are watching a performance because you are discovering details within the limitless universe of the story, unrehearsed. We simply experience your character’s journey as if it were our own. Discovery is not pretend. Discovery is the living truth. Your entire being - your physical, logical, spiritual and

emotional experiences are all expressed through your discoveries and realizations which cannot be forged by another person. A single discovery will travel through these four worlds within us, with the final world being our emotional reaction.

I will describe these four realms through approaching a single moment in a script in which a character, Sally, slaps another character, Bill. In script formatting, we never write what inner truth a character discovers in the description of the picture. We write what can be seen and what can be heard. The truth is revealed in the *subtext* of the dialogue. Words cannot fully represent what you are discovering at any given time. So, we develop our craft as actors by playing improvised scenes to discover unexpected details that lead to new associations and meanings.

Physical discovery:

We experience physical reality through our five senses. Anything that happens to you first occurs to you in the physical realm. From Bill's perspective in the slap scenario, he is getting slapped. The activity of the slap itself is a physical discovery. Before Bill is slapped, there is a moment he discovers the hand flying at his face. If Bill looks at Sally's face, he will discover the physical tension in her expression. Bill will discover the physical effect from the slap. The audience needs to believe the slap was real. Therefore, in the staging of a slap, the actor must react to the slap with the same amount of energy the slap first delivered, and time the reaction to match the physical discovery of the contact, in the exact trajectory of the slap.

In any scene, have a physical activity that grounds you in your location in the story, and in the present moment. What are you seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting? For example, out

in the woods you can be making a fire or setting up a tent, or making food. The more specific your activity is, the more you will build your five senses around it and we will believe you and go along with what happens next. Again, in a script, all the writer can express is what we see and what we hear. The characters reveal the rest in their behavior and dialogue.

For a physical scene study with a partner, mentally build the physical environment around you using “I’m discovering...” For example: “I’m discovering a long hallway in front of me. I’m discovering many paintings along the walls, paintings of animals on a farm.” Take turns adding elements of the environment until every detail is vivid in your imagination. Then recount all the elements to one another and walk to the specific place in the room that you discovered the object to be. Then begin a simple scene by creating a relationship event, using every physical element you created.

Logical discovery:

The logical aspect of discovery, ironically to me, is the most awkward to describe. It’s almost like there is no real logic to a discovery, and yet your discoveries must be grounded in logic for them to mean anything concrete. We take in the specific physical data and logically we connect the dots to form the basic plot, nothing personal. We categorize the data into fight or flight, positive or negative. It’s reminding yourself of what is previously established as normal, and how this event compares. Logically, you will discover if the five physical senses combine to trigger something out of the ordinary. In a moment of discovery, we run through all the related files in our mind to find an appropriate place to logically store this new information. Logical discoveries are more about keeping the physical body safe from immediate physical or psychological harm. In the slap scenario, Bill will

logically discover that he is being slapped, and the force and nature of the slap will help him determine if there is actual danger. Logic is selfish, it's cold and calculating. The brain has no heart. Think of the character Data from "Star Trek."

When unexpected things happen to us, we often take a few moments to process the event, just to ground ourselves as to what happened, logically. That's why I created an improv game called "That just happened!" where characters must improvise a scene and say the words "That just happened," and then describe specific details of the moment before the scene that leads us to the current dynamic. You'll never say what it means, you'll just express what happened and your subtext will reveal the meaning. The compound effect of logical discoveries of what just happened will lead us to an ironic creation of the present moment, and the spiritual discovery.

Spiritual discovery:

A relationship between two people is only an imagined connection with nothing physical holding it together but physical symbols such as rings. By hurting one another physically, we instantly create a new relationship spiritually. Logically, Sally is slapping Bill, so spiritually Sally is abusing Bill. Or she could be defending herself, or standing up for herself. Whatever the audience discovers becomes the truth. The power of a relationship causes depression, wars, and world chaos. Whenever we make a discovery out of the ordinary, our logical brain tells us if we're safe, and our spiritual brain then kicks into gear and decides what this extraordinary transformation actually means.

Usually, the unexpected discoveries we make are about other people. We as humans tend to define and label our relationships because we seek to understand how to behave in the current dynamic. Yet we often avoid defining relationships because we want to remain free from convention and isolation. This dynamic will always create unexpected conflict.

From what I understand of this mystical element we call our spirituality; it has everything to do with our connection to anything and anyone. It's our connection to ourselves, connecting us to creation. With specific connections, we realize and develop specific meaning, on camera or in life. They are both the same, we create meaning by choice, you just have to focus. The spiritual discovery leads us directly to the emotional discovery.

Irony is the realization of contradicting elements forming a bond, yet still opposing one another to form absurdity. *Dramatic Irony* is simply irony used for storytelling. We use this to write our scripts, and our characters often discover the irony in the performance, just to draw the audience into realizing the dynamic. Characters do not have to realize the irony of their own situations, sometimes only the audience will if the story is crafted that way by the writer and director.

One scene study to practice is doing an improv scene where the goal is only to discover the connection and meaning of the relationship, and in doing so, it changes. This is a powerful addition to one of my favorite improv games, "And That Means." In my version, I added the word "we" to force the actors to stay on the subject of the relationship at hand, as we often avoid this out of comfort. No one wants to commit to a relationship unless it's on their terms, and even then, the terms are that they can change the terms at any time. When one party is submissive in the relationship, they silently agreed to the terms. If all parties

agree on the terms of the meaning of their connection, peace exists. When parties no longer agree to the terms or their relationship, they secretly go to war to create new terms that fit their personal agendas.

Emotional discovery: You will have an emotional reaction to everything you are about to hear. *Humans are feeling machines.* Based on the last decade I experienced working with actors, and gaining a unique understanding of the human experience through what I learned from Bob Cooley. I discovered that what we feel, emotionally, is a result of what we discover spiritually. Our discoveries are like water and over time create a river of energy which is your current identity. Change is the only constant. *Emotion is energy in motion.* Because they are feelings and not words, words cannot define or describe feelings and emotions adequately. This creates a terrible irony in the way actors are trained, constantly being told how they are supposed to be feeling by directors and instructors. Fortunately, there *is* logic to emotion, it is the physical exchange of energy in motion. The more energy an actor commits to a moment, the more we can tell the actor cares. In the physics of acting, Einstein's concepts apply: every action should have an equal and opposite reaction. The emotional reaction occurs when you realize what an event means to you, personally. You cannot plan the actions and reactions, you can only set the energy in motion and let the dominos fall into the ocean of discovery. If there is no energy, there cannot be an emotional event. The absence of energy is the void of emotion. Even feeling empty inside takes energy and transfers energy. The Discovery Technique avoids approaching the work in terms of emotion. Every discovery you make is a creation of emotion. The more profound your discoveries are, the more profound your emotions become.

Previously, humans were at the whims of their emotions, but science now shows we can guide our emotions by reframing our experiences and redefining what they mean, spiritually. In other words, you will feel what you convince yourself to feel, and now you can take steps to feel better. The good news is because we're always in flux, we're never wrong, and we're never right. We're human. Humans feel emotions all the time, but we're never able to truly describe our emotions with genuine detail. In the moments we are experiencing deep emotions, explaining them logically is next to impossible. The only way to do it is to describe what we are discovering to be true.

If and when a director or instructor tells you what to feel, you will not be able to feel that cliché emotion, it's impossible. Do not boil in resentment that they have prodded you to do the impossible, practice this instead. Ask them, "What is my character discovering in this moment of the story to make them feel this way? And What are they deciding to do about it?" They will then be forced to frame the story in exactly the way that will inform your performance without giving you a terrible direction or line reading.

Here's a fun improv game to play. I call it, "You Seem!" Players will begin a scene like all other scenes with an activity. Each player will start associating their activities with discoveries that make them energize with emotion. Then, one character will tell the other character how the other one "seems" like the other is feeling or doing. For example, "Bob, you seem upset about that pencil." The character, Bob, will respond by going into depth in their imagination creating a reason they might be feeling like that, connected to the pencil. Bob will attempt to describe only the emotion from his character's new perspective, nothing else. Then the other player will justify why their scene partner is feeling that way. Then the partner will agree and add to the justification until

the event balloons and both characters are escalated with emotion, feeding off and growing each other's energy in motion. Then switch rolls!

You will notice that your emotion will feel like real reactions as soon as you attach your focus on the ever-changing flux of connection. This flux of connection must be defined in every scene in order for us to commit energetically. If we don't understand what is really happening in a scene, our emotional performance is obsolete. Therefore, I created this concept to keep us on track, *the relationship event*. Go back to that chapter from time to time to remind yourself you need to define every scene in order to act it. Who are the characters? What is their specific dynamic? How does their relationship change in this scene and what are they deciding to do now?

Chapter 4

The Discovery Technique: Performance



REVEALING AND DISCOVERING SECRETS

The key to the storytelling aspect the Discovery Technique spirals us back to the understanding that all story is the act of revealing and discovering secrets. I arrived at this idea because if they weren't secrets, the characters and audience would already know the story. By making a story a secret, you create the need to know. Now that you have the principles of creating dangerous action through discovery you can create a fear of missing out on the story.

By shifting our perception in this way of how to view a story, we shift the delivery of information not as impersonal facts, but as personal secrets, sacred and meaningful. Actors are always asked to be more personal but not taught how. Creating and having

secrets is the secret sauce to being personal. These personal secrets of the character become central to each story. All the action in a story is created to keep dangerous secrets hidden, or to expose dangerous secrets. Think of *secrecy* as a valuable theatrical device a speaker must use to hook the listener into needing to discover more. The secret pulls the audience in and creates the need to know why it's in fact, a secret. The use of secrecy raises the stakes, because only danger would require secrecy. In this way we tap into the primal instinct of our own body and thus the audience by default. By avoiding the use of secrecy, the storyteller creates a sense of normalcy and must be done only for that purpose in a story. In your improv, create different stories with varying stakes of secrecy from none to a hundred to see how your energy and connection to your scene partner changes. An example of a low stakes secret is wanting someone's cookie. A high stakes secret is like poisoning that cookie.

When you discover your powerful secrets, you captivate your audience with your honest revelation about what the secret actually means. The essence of performance is built on what secrets you are revealing and why, through your behavior, not words. By creating secrecy in your scene work, you also create intimacy and connection. In life, if one person reveals a secret, it is customary for the other person to return the connection by revealing a secret of their own. This is why police officers seem to be letting you in on a secret to build rapport, for their report.

If the story is not a dangerous secret, I doubt there is a real need to listen to the story. If you want to get someone's attention, lean in and create secrecy. All great stories are dangerous secrets waiting to be revealed. All great storytellers are waiting to reveal and discover dangerous secrets. Great storytellers are dangerous

and must choose to be healers with their power or become self destructive and reclusive.

CREATING DANGER THROUGH DISCOVERY

Building upon the concept of secrecy, is the concept of *creating danger*. A single discovery is an act of creating and facing a danger, the unknown. All stories are driven by the fear of danger. If we as the performers are not discovering the secret danger of the situation during the telling of the story, the audience will usually miss it. So, in the moment of every scene, shift your focus to discover how it is getting more dangerous for you.

If you can raise the stakes in your discovery moments you can create more of a sense of danger. One way to do this is create a more dangerous origin story for the characters relationship. For example, in a script there may be a break up. If unspecified in the story, you have to make the choice as to how long the couple has been together and what the relationship means. If the break up takes place after a year, there will be more fear to discover than a break up after a day when there is little to no commitment. All the details of the break up come into play to raise the stakes, like losing a ring, lying about an addiction, or cheating. Every character wants to change in a story, the trick is to create a specific transformation that is dangerous and risky for the character to make. Then we want to lean in. We love watching a shy person try to talk to someone they have a crush on because it feels dangerous. Who cares when a confident person goes for it, boring! This is another example of how opposites can be used to create a dangerous tension in the character and the story.

Knowledge is power, so the most dangerous person is the one that has discovered the most. That makes them the most at risk at the same exact time, like a journalist that finds out too much

about what's happening at the top. If you know about someone's skeletons in their closet, you become a possible threat. This puts you, as the threat, in danger of being neutralized. All secrets can be weaponized against us in real life, and so they drive all story. For example, in a school drama, one student threatens to reveal a classmate's secret crush to the school if they don't go along with their plan to rob the school. The point is, our secrets are dangerous or they would not be secrets at all. By making secrets more dangerous, we create a greater need to protect them. Look at all your favorite dramas, they are built entirely on secrets and the growing danger they create.

In terms of power, the individual with the ability to discover the most is the most powerful. The act of discovery is the foundation of exploring of the unknown. We never know what we're going to find until we make the choice to look. We tend to block discovery from occurring out of fear of change. Our biases creep in when we're faced with change. If we are fearless, we begin to understand there are no real limits to what we can discover. Discovery itself becomes our tool to create profound and impactful moments on stages, screens, and living rooms. By taking us from one unexpected discovery of danger to the next, you lead us to need to know: *what happens next?*

ON DISCOVERY AND GENRE

As you may have heard before, every genre is still a drama. Secrets are the danger that drive every type of drama. Raise the stakes on how dangerous your secret is, so that when it's discovered, it destroys you and transforms you. Being specific will release you from the cliché and forced acting. The heart-breaking details will eventually take hold of you if you focus on what they must mean. Creating a story of ultimate danger and love for your character will make the audience need to know what happens

next! Of course, the genre has a correlation with how you discover secrets. For comedy you will discover the urgent need to compete selfishly and be fearlessly ugly along the way. This allows people to laugh at ourselves, we need this kind of play in our lives, the key is always to connect it to transformational storytelling.

DISCOVERING CONNECTION AND NEW NEEDS

When you hear action, or when the curtains rise, you must discover yourself being swept away in the discovery of the story. Discover the meaning of the connection every time you see another character, especially for the first time. This will make you notice more to draw from. All an audience really wants to see is the actor discovering they are wrong and needing to do something about it. That's why we have to play active characters, no one needs to practice playing passive characters. When you hear action, you already know what you need, and you discover you were wrong, launching you into disarray and arriving at the discovery of new needs. The only way to practice this is by having fun in improvisations with other actors.

IMPROV EXERCISES

What connects all improv schools is every scene is built of the "who,what,where:" who are the characters, what's happening, and the exact location. Let's break this up to practice a variety of discovery muscles. I always want the actors to have physical activities in every scene at the top before speaking to get them into the story through embodiment first. This helps clue us in on where the story takes place, who the person might be, and what is happening. Then I have them establish a relationship event and see what happens. There are different parameters that I have learned to play with and here is a short list for you to play with as

actors in your performance groups. You'll see how easy it would be to create ones specific to your group. Remember to always agree with the logical reality of the scene with your scene partners and say 'yes, and.' Yes, but, is not a yes. If you get stuck say 'I'm discovering' and anything you say after that is the truth that will reconnect you into the scene.

DISCOVERING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Scene partners will start activities that really involve the environment in a meaningful way. By utilizing the 5 senses, one can quickly start coming up with ideas about the many different environments we can create for a story to make discoveries from. What does it smell like, what is the weather or temperature? What is in the physical space in terms of objects? Take turns discovering aspects of the room out loud and agree and add onto what the scene partner is creating. Through this physical game you will discover and agree on a relationship and then the scene is done.

DISCOVERY OF LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP

The logical relationship is the superficial relationship like a transactional scene with a clerk selling to a customer. Also think of it like co-worker or sibling scene, any archetype relationship is a logical connection, it is the context on the surface. In this improv, create an activity that includes the other person in some way either by eye contact or proximity and positioning. From here define the logical connection between the characters, are you cooperative or competitors, in what world? From there, all you have to do is discover something personal/spiritual between the characters and decide what you will have to do next about it, the it's done. The spiritual discovery is ultimately where every story is

headed and we practice getting there through logic. This is ironic and hilarious.

DISCOVERY OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

One of the most important improv exercises I stumbled upon in my exploration of storytelling is constantly discovering that you are wrong. Start with an activity, and somehow find a way to be bad at it, or wrong about it. Create a logical connection, and be bad or wrong about it. Admit and apologize about being bad or wrong every step of the way to define the story and relationship. This is a race to the bottom between the characters, taking blame and responsibility upon themselves in this new world. Both characters must be wrong and admit it in order for this to work. Along the way you will discover the ultimate way of being wrong in the scene and you will speak it out loud as the final decision the creates the greatest transformation, and the scene is done... creating something hilariously wrong. I hope this teaches you that anything is possible if you are fearlessly wrong and discover new ways.

I describe more improv exercises in my complete works of volume 2, to be released in 2025. Now you have the building blocks of creating your own using opposites. Keep practicing being in the moment and connecting in the moment, discovering meaning you didn't even expect. This is a magnet for your closeup. This makes you the magician in the show.

Chapter 5

Conclusion



Before writing this book, I noticed actors were directed to focus on actions and emotions. I now invite you to view discovery as the main action of the scene, allowing space for all motion to arise from the discovery of truth. When we, as an audience, watch you discover, we get to peer deep into your soul and realize what drives you. You reveal your heart and everything else, the good the bad and the unspeakable emotion. In redefining what acting is, *discovering*, we realize what living is. There is no difference. Those living in the “real world” are liars hiding behind their fancy clothing and fake backdrops. They are pretending not to be acting. This book was written to question what it really means to act, and to pry open the bars of reality so we can all get a better grasp on ourselves, on our own terms as individual human beings, free thinkers, and artists. I am that voice in your head that is done being told what to think, we are done taking orders. It’s time to discover for ourselves again as a generation, to take humanity back into the path of humanity. It’s time to love for ourselves as a collective.

Remember this above all else: the deepest story has the greatest impact. Think little of winning or losing from the western perspective, but the best story within yourself becomes a constant state of winning through consistent powerful storytelling. The laws of attraction apply to great storytelling, if you create the powerful story you will gain attraction for any direction of your choosing. This is another example of the compounding effect of discovery. When given the opportunity to act or tell a story of any kind, give the world something to discover. By cultivating storytelling, you master your life. You understand events on new levels and are able to transform YOU to create meaning in the world, adding value for others to recognize. By absorbing this book, I promise you have become a deeper storyteller. The implications and benefits of this will baffle and delight you. Also, remember what my grandmother Gloria always said after Shakespeare, “Above all else, to thine own self be true.” Discover for yourself, once again.

TO BE CONTINUED: VOLUME 2

I’m discovering that whatever you do with this secret will be spectacular. I can’t wait to see the life changing ideas, movies, and stories you discover, just by realizing what all this means. However, I’m sure you now see this rabbit hole goes far deeper than even I could have imagined. That’s why I released volume 1 of the Discovery Technique, to fully prepare the rest of the book for publication and creating online learning modules, giving me time to discover more ways of adding value. This is the key to doing business, which I get more into in volume 2, digging into the story of how I became a co-founder of a trillion dollar tech company based on a creative conversation at Tupac’s Birthday and movie release party of All Eyes on Me.

Volume 2 will go deeper in the details of how we craft and execute auditions and how we work with scene partners. This book was meant as a powerful handbook for the actor to understand the kind of inner commitment it takes to be a professional storyteller. I will also expose some of the worst times in my own life and how the discovery technique saved my life, helping me crawl up from the bottom one step at a time.

In the meantime, join my game changing classes online or at the studio in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at www.StoryQuestStudios.com. We're now doing Voiceover, screenwriting and filmmaking as well, because the actor is their own gatekeeper and we have to do it all or will be waiting to be picked forever. Reach out if this resonates with you. StoryQuestStudios@gmail.com. I am geared towards making tomorrow a better place for everyone through storytelling.

Discovery itself is infinite. Through the compound effect of discovery, we tap into uncharted realms of possibilities within ourselves and the universe. When we enter the flow state of expansion, anything is possible. We become our discoveries. Now you know the secret. You can either discover your limits, or discover you are limitless. Discovery is the act of magic, and we are the magicians. The only question remains, what will you create with this secret?

Index of Concepts



Acting: Discovering as a Character in a Story

Discovering: Finding something or someone unexpectedly. A tiny unit of experiencing something new. A valuable theatrical device for actors and storytellers that places us in the moment and in the body/mind of the character. The key tool for realism in acting.

Discovery Energy: The energy required to commit fully to a discovery. Nothing is difficult, it just takes full commitment to the discovery and this energy gets you through the fear of the unknown.

Relationship Event: Defining who the characters are, their specific connection, and how the connection changes in this scene before leading characters to a new decision/direction/discovery. These events are made and defined by sharing or hiding secrets in the story. The connection transformation must be defined to be on the same page with the other actor and director.

Transformation: Massive Change is transformation. This occurs in story when the character discovers they are wrong and must decide to transform in order to solve a personal problem. Impact in story comes through transformation.

Activities: What you do with objects, not people, for example: Chopping wood, cooking, or cleaning a gun. Often referred to as 'business' on a movie set.

Psychological Actions: what you do psychologically to people, for example: To guilt trip or to get them to love you. The key principle in this book is that our discoveries fuel our actions, so by focusing on the actions we actually force the action and abandon realism for more robotic acting. The trick is to reframe actions in terms of discoveries and watch the magic. For example, instead of ‘to guilt trip’, discovery you are guilty and discover the need to deflect it on the other character.

Compound Effect of Discovery: Discoveries are made and lead to other discoveries and combine to create massive change over time, or in one scene. The discoveries a character makes in one scene will change their lives. This becomes the story.

Subtext: The subliminal meaning of the dialogue, or text. Creating subtext is achieved by discovering something specific about what you are saying before you say it. The subtext creates the tone of the connection between you and the other person looking at you.

Active Choices vs Passive Choices: As a rule, choose active choices in which the character cares about what’s happening and discovers new needs that drive them. Passive choices can work when it creates irony with the use of opposites. For example, when the activity is very dangerous, it’s interesting to have a passive person at the wheels, it adds to the tension and danger.

Realization: When a character has discovered and arrived at what it means to their reality, they have made a realization. This has to do with defining relationships and identities of yourself and others. This is what happens when it feels like the truth hits you about someone you thought you knew. Of course, this can and will change when new discoveries lead to new realizations.

Dramatic Irony: When something happens that was least expected based on expectations of a character or relationship, like a dog and a cat start out enemies and become best friends. Or there could be irony in the duality of a character, like an assassin that's taking intimacy classes. Irony is an escape from the cliché using a dance of opposites. The difference between paradox and irony, irony is more fun.

Story: Ideas we create to connect and communicate, like this one.

Thank you for listening, and may this change your story forever.