

# THE ART OF ACTING 7: NECESSARY HABITS FOR THE ACTOR

By Bob Fraser

These are bottom line (absolutely necessary) habitual behaviors that every actor must possess.

## *YOU MUST BE ON TIME*

If you can't get anywhere on time now, you'd better learn how before you attempt the "real world" of show business. On a big film the money is going out the door at about 30 grand every 20 minutes. On a network TV show the rate is only slightly less. If you are ten minutes late for a job that pays five hundred bucks - you will be heartily disliked by the producer and everybody that works for him. People will scream at you. If you are late for an audition, the casting director will worry that you won't get to the job on time. If you're late for a job, that casting director will also have people screaming at her. Understand? NEVER BE LATE.

## *YOU MUST BE ABLE TO WORK A LONG DAY*

There is no such thing as an eight-hour day in show business. In forty years, I've had about 23 eight-hour days. And two of those were because somebody died. If you cannot work a long day, you are unsuited for success in show business. IT'S LO-O-NG HOURS.

## *YOU MUST BE AN EARLY RISER*

I know it's nice to laze around in bed when you've got a day off, but this is a habit you cannot afford. Grasp the idea that if you want to be in the movie or television business, you must be the kind of person who can get up at five in the morning. All the time. Period. If you work in the theatre, your early rising will fall about 10 AM - because you work into the night. But if you plan on working in "the industry" you'd do well to make early rising a life-long habit. WAKE UP THE ROOSTER.

## *YOU MUST BE A PLEASANT PERSON UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES*

Early starts and long hours mean that you will be spending (on average) about half your life with co-workers. If you are a pain in the a@# - you will be heartily disliked by other people who are also working 12 hour days. Word will get around. It will be harder to get work. BE NICE.

### *YOU MUST LOVE THE WORK*

You have to keep your “creative juices” flowing during the entire 12 hours. If you don't love doing this kind of work, being 'on' for 12 hours is impossible. Don't forget why you are doing this. LOVE.

### *YOU MUST BE WELL-GROOMED AND CLEAN*

You are not the part. Even the guys who play bikers and bums wear deodorant. The teeth are clean. The breath is pleasant. Etc. I know this seems nit-picky, but a co-worker who literally “stinks” will get a reputation and lose opportunities because of it. I've seen it happen. And when it comes to casting people, who see hundreds of actors in a day or two – well, that's their number one pet peeve. Far and away. CLEANLINESS IS IMPORTANT.

### *YOU MUST NOT COMPLAIN (WITH ONE PROVISIO)*

Those actors on sets who complain about the dressing rooms, the food, the director, the co-star, the costume people, the lack of work, the hours, the script, or pretty much anything – are labeled as “complainers” or a@#h\*%s and they are rarely appreciated or tolerated for very long. Besides, complaining about circumstances doesn't work. People near the bottom of the ladder who think it's “smart” to gripe about every little screw-up, are putting a bulls-eye on their butts. Don't become one of those people or you will find yourself near the bottom of the ladder for a long, long time. Nobody reaches out to complainers. Nobody, including you, even likes complainers. If you want to be thought of as someone NICE – DON'T COMPLAIN.

(The proviso to this is that you must never let anyone abuse or berate you – in those cases, complain to the authorities – loud and often).

### *YOU MUST NOT SPREAD RUMORS*

Rumor-mongering is the first sign of someone who isn't really interested in the job at hand – someone so bored or so shallow that they must talk about other people. When you hear someone say, “Oh, I worked with (fill in the name of a movie star), he's a pig.” – excuse yourself and go somewhere else. You do not want to be around this sort of person. 93.3 percent of all rumors are false. The other 6.7% are probably none of your business.

Again, people who are rumor-mongers are labeled and eventually work dries up. Talk business, talk philosophy, talk about the weather – but avoid the temptation to talk about other people (except in the most glowing terms). Watch the stars when they are asked about other performers. Have you ever heard a star say, "She's an idiot." No, they are always upbeat, positive, complimentary – because they know the rumor mill is a two way street. If avoiding this sort of thing is good behavior for stars (and most behave this way) then what's stopping you from adopting the same habit? NO RUMORS.

#### *DRUGS, DRINKING, AND SCREWING AROUND*

I'm sure you know what people think of people who are more interested in sin than cinema. You will be labeled. People will not forget. Work will be harder to get. JUST SAY "NO THANK YOU."

#### *JEALOUSY AND BAD FEELINGS*

Jealousy is one of the main causes of "messing up" on one of these crucial behaviors listed above. Jealousy leads to bad decisions. Bad decisions lead to bad results. And jealousy allows you to blame others for your results. You begin to believe that things aren't fair. You begin to look for "reasons" for your lack of progress. They will be well argued reasons, no doubt – but an excuse by any other name is still an excuse. Jealousy is a bad path – it's a step on the wrong ladder– you're on the wrong street – you're a stranger in a strange land – GET A MAP.

The same goes for other "negative" emotional reactions. Self blame. Frustration. Fear. Anxiety. Worry. This is business. "There's no crying in baseball." Besides, wallowing in your emotional reaction slows down your forward progress toward success.

#### *GIVE GOOD VALUE FOR THE DOLLAR*

When you habitually give 100% of your energy to the work – you will get more work. It's a mortal lock.

Much Success,

Bob Fraser

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