

## Sample article or blog post.

### HOW TO BE A BETTER ACTOR WITHOUT KILLING YOURSELF WITH “THE METHOD”

Daniel Jordano

Brando, Pacino, James Dean, the Actors Studio, Lee Strasberg: These were great actors and institutions all connected with what came to be known as Method Acting--but were these personalities great because of the Method, or in spite of it?

Sigmund Freud popularized psychoanalysis at the turn of the century. His central idea was that people's deep seated experiences at a young age lead to unresolved problems in the present. The goal is to bring unconscious conflicts that cause the patient's symptoms to his conscious mind in order to resolve them.

This emphasis on past events and emotions undoubtedly influenced theatrical pioneers like Constantine Stanislavsky and later Lee Strasberg. Stanislavsky is well known for Affective Memory, in which an actor recalls past experiences in order to relive the emotional state and transfer it to the character. Strasberg later developed Sense Memory where the physicality of a prior experience is re- enacted in order to provoke an emotional response that would fit the character.

In the last 50 years, many behavioral experiments and psychological research have resulted in a deeper understanding of how people actually behave in given circumstances. The findings of this research is evidence of the truth that people are more focused on their “ideal future” than they are on the past.

Many, more recently defined psychological concepts such as: cognitive dissonance, actor observer bias, etc., have contributed much to our understanding.

For example, cognitive dissonance is the feeling of discomfort when simultaneously holding two or more conflicting ideas. In Leon Festinger's research, he chronicled the followers of a UFO cult that believed in an impending alien caused apocalypse. When the prophesied time came, and no apocalypse with it, the followers faced serious “cognitive dissonance”. Were the followers victims of a hoax? The cult had a strong motivational desire to reduce this discomfort.

Rather than accept the idea that their cult was wrong, the majority of the cult members ( who had sold all their possessions) accepted the theory that the aliens had given them a second chance and increased their proselytization fervently.

This research demonstrated the incredible capacity for men to rationalize their behavior in order to minimize cognitive dissonance. This is a concept that is much more useful to the actor in creating a character than the recall of real, past, and personal emotions.

I expand on this research in my humbly titled book, THE BEST BOOK ON ACTING : How to Become a Better Actor Instantly Without Killing yourself with “The Method”. Discover the psychological secrets of the LIFE ACTING SYSTEM.

The book can be downloaded for FREE on Amazon for three days December 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> .

I developed the Life Acting System in order to make the process of character development more scientifically sound, and surprisingly, much easier. I attempt to free the actor from pointless sense memory exercises, (“Hold the imaginary teacup. Feel the warmth of the tea? Can you smell it?”) that

have nothing to do with actually creating a character.

For far too long many actors have had to deal with “gurus”, who maybe directed scenes well, but have not given understanding to actors on how to get where they need to ---on their own! The Life Acting System helps you become a better actor because:

1. You wont be overly focused on emotion, past or present,, (often pushing or unrealistic) but on the INTENT of the character
2. You wont be “in your head” in performance trying to juggle the balls of technique, emotion, and connection. You will be too busy DOING!
3. You will understand the crucial difference between Homework, Rehearsal and Performance.

Life Acting focuses on what the research reveals....the extreme egocentricity of the characters we play! Using very simple questions, we achieve the objective that our characters must focus on their present situation and not on their own personality, emotions or past!

Most actor's use whatever works for them, but traditional “Method” techniques tend to lead to an overemphasis on emotion; an overemphasis on the past of our characters, and even an unnecessary scraping of the psyche in search of “real emotion” We respect the legacy of those that came before us, but as artists we must continue to adapt as we learn more and more about the nature of man. As we learn more, we become better actors.

Bio:

Daniel Jordano ([danieljordano.com](http://danieljordano.com)) is a veteran character actor and writer, best known for his starring role in Harvey Weinstein's *Playing for Keeps*. He is a veteran of stage and screen and is currently working on an upcoming cable network series. The Deadline for free download of his book on Amazon is December 5<sup>th</sup>.