

How a Christian Actor Gets into Character

by Rich Swingle

www.RichDrama.com

[Find this sheet online with live links and things Rich thought of after this went to print at www.RichDrama.com/ChristianActorPrepares.]

*There are no ready formulas for acting; it is an art, not a science. The actors' talent and creativity and how and when it blossoms and flourishes is ultimately mysterious. Acting, however, is a **craft** [George Escobar: Craftsman NOT Artist] as well as an art. The actor can acquire tools and practice techniques that can strengthen or deepen their instincts, imagination and creativity; technique serves the imagination.*

—Richard Feldman

Schools of Thought on Acting:

Constantin Stanislavski (The Method), Sanford Meisner (Listen), Viola Spolin (Improv), Patricia Mauceri (www.PatriciaMauceri.com) many, many others

Things to consider in your approach:

Start by asking the Lord: Should I do the role? How should I do the role? Read the full script and any materials upon which it's based.

Talk to the director as early in your process as possible.

Ask Uta Hagen's Nine Questions:

1. WHO AM I? (All the details about your character including name, age, address, relatives, likes, dislikes, hobbies, career, description of physical traits, opinions, beliefs, religion, education, origins, enemies, loved ones, sociological influences, etc.)

Pray about the spiritual life of your character.

If your character speaks with an accent consult IDEA (International Dialects of English Archive): www.DialectsArchive.com

Figure out how your character moves.

Work with director and make-up artist on long lead items: hair and beard.

2. WHAT TIME IS IT? (Century, season, year, day, minute, significance of time)
3. WHERE AM I? (Country, city, neighborhood, home, room, area of room)
4. WHAT SURROUNDS ME? (Animate and inanimate objects-complete details of environment)
5. WHAT ARE THE GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES? (Past, present, future and all of the events)
6. WHAT IS MY RELATIONSHIP? (Relation to total events, other characters, and to things)

7. WHAT DO I WANT? (Character's need. The immediate and main objective)
8. WHAT IS IN MY WAY? (The obstacles which prevent character from getting his/her need)
9. WHAT DO I DO TO GET WHAT I WANT? (The action: physical and verbal, also-action verbs)

Mark your script:

Your lines, your beats, your verbs

On Set:

Warm up your instrument of communication.

Be flexible. Listen to the director and your fellow actors.

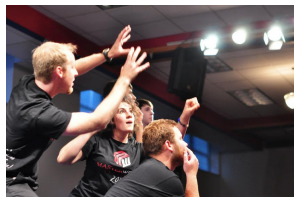
Derole: physically step out of the character, mentally tell yourself you are no longer that character, emotionally cut soul ties.

Great Resources:

Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatre in Dialogue (Engaging Culture) by Todd E. Johnson, Dale Savidge, Robert Johnston and William Dyrness (Aug 1, 2009)

The Storytelling Church: Adventures in Reclaiming the Role of Story in Worship by Jeff Barker

Rich Swingle has been involved in the performing arts full-time since 1995. He's performed and/or taught in 27 nations and just returned from Sochi, Russia, where he and his wife Joyce led a team of performing artists during the Winter Olympics: www.WhoistheFish.com. Join him in Rio in 2016. Sign up at www.RichDrama.com/Updates to get the announcement and follow the Swingles' worldwide travels. He has performed in five of the films featured here: a quirky clerk in *Christmas Grace*, a newscaster (voice only) in *Creed of Gold*, a soup kitchen owner in *In His Steps*, a suave realtor in *Princess Cut* ("Behind the Scenes" shown here), a slave trader in *Polycarp: Destroyer of Gods* ("Script to Scree: The Making of Polycarp" shown here).



Rich is teaching a week long acting camp in the Colorado Rockies: www.ChristianFilmCamp.com

He is directing *Much Ado About Nothing* at The MasterWorks Festival theatre program: www.RichDrama.com/MWFTheatre. Training and performances in IN, PA and NYC, including an Off-Broadway theatre!

Rich is a board member for Christians in Theatre Arts (www.CITA.org), another great way you can connect with Christian performing artists.

www.Films.RichDrama.com

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Acting Verbs / "Objectives"

accept	cajole	demean	evade
acquaint	calculate	denigrate	evaluate
acquit	call	denunciate	excuse
addle	catch	deny	execute
address	caution	detect	exploit
admonish	censure	deter	facilitate
affirm	challenge	devastate	feed
afflict	charge	dictate	force
affront	charm	direct	frame
aid	chastise	disconcert	free
ail	cheat	discourage	frighten
alarm	check	discredit	frustrate
alert	cheer	disencumber	fuddle
allow	chide	disgrace	gag
allure	clarify	disgust	gauge
amaze	cloak	dishearten	gladden
amuse	coax	dispirit	goad
anger	coddle	displease	harangue
antagonize	coerce	dissuade	hassle
anticipate	command	distress	help
approach	commend	divert	henpeck
arouse	con	dodge	humble
arrange	condemn	dominate	humiliate
assess	confide	dramatize	humour
assist	confirm	ease	hurt
astound	confound	educate	hush
attack	confuse	elevate	hypnotize
authenticate	consider	elicit	imitate
baby	consign	elucidate	impair
badger	convince	embroil	implicate
baffle	correct	enchant	impress
bait	corroborate	endear	incite
beckon	court	endure	indict
befuddle	cover	enflame	indoctrinate
beg	criticize	engross	induce
beguile	crucify	enkindle	indulge
belittle	crush	enlighten	insinuate
berate	curse	enmesh	inspire
beseech	dare	ensnare	insult
bid	deceive	entangle	intimidate
blame	declaim	entertain	interview
bless	deduce	entice	intrigue
bluff	defame	entrap	invite
boost	defraud	entreat	judge
brainwash	defy	entrust	lambast
bribe	delight	eradicate	lead
bully	delude	estimate	lecture

libel	placate	repulse	study
liberate	plan	resist	stymie
lure	please	retract	substantiate
magnetize	pledge	revolt	summon
malign	pontificate	ridicule	supplicate
maneuver	pose	sanctify	support
manipulate	pray	satisfy	suppress
marshall	preoccupy	scheme	surprise
mask	press	scold	swindle
mend	prevail	scrutinize	tantalize
mimic	prod	sedate	tarnish
mislead	promise	seduce	tease
misuse	promote	settle	tempt
mobilize	prompt	shake	terrify
mock	propagandize	shame	thwart
mortify	propel	shroud	tickle
motivate	propose	shun	tolerate
muffle	propound	sicken	torment
muster	prosecute	simplify	torture
mystify	provoke	slander	trammel
nag	provoke laughter	slur	trick
nauseate	purge	smother	trouble
negotiate	purify	snare	tyrannize
notify	pursue	sober	unburden
nullify	quash	somber	understand
obliterate	quench	soothe	uproot
offend	query	spellbind	urge
oppose	rally	spoil	vacillate
organize	read	spur	validate verify
orient	rebuke	spurn	victimize
overlook	reject	squash	vilify
panic	rejoin	squelch	vindicate
parrot	release	startle	warn
patronize	relegate	still	wheedle
perform	repel	stir	woo
perplex	reprehend	stretch	worry
persecute	repress	strike	wrangle
peruse	reprimand	strip	

Verb List is from :

Playing: An Introduction to Acting. Kuritz, Paul, Prentice-Hall. 1982

With nine of the top Action Verbs to Have in Your Toolkit from *Backstage* (marked in **bold**)