

C L A S S @
The Nest

Class @ The Nest

Who Am I?

An ever expanding discovery of self + character

These are some steps to help you dive into your character for film, TV, Theater, even class/scene study work or auditions! (steps differ slightly for audition work so please contact me if you are looking for Audition coaching Bird@NoisyNest.com)

Do the fucking work. Take your fucking time. Try not to skip ahead.

Phase 1 :

Introduction: Read through your *clean* script. No highlighting yet.

- Write down all of your first impressions.
 - *These first impressions are not to be judgements of the character or blocking ideas, these first impressions are character based and artist motivation based.*
- Write down what excites or scares you as an artist.
- Write down your goals and the risks you will take to achieve your goals.

Discover Character: Make note of the following instances in the text. Make no ‘assumptions’. (Dig deeper in phase 2!)

Playwright says about my character	Other characters say about me	I say about me	Is this a true statement based on textual evidence?
John is quick to anger			Yes, because...
	John is always late		No, because...
		I am boring	No, because...

Clean Slate: Black out arbitrary blocking or emotional notes ie: ‘*he moves upstage*’ or ‘*she crosses to the sofa*’ If the written blocking does not add to the story, it was likely blocking added by a stage manager before publishing during the first produced run of the show.

Discover Habits + Behavior: make note of major behaviors that the playwright has given you ie: *she pours herself another drink* or *he limps*. You now have to justify that behavior before you ever get on your feet and walk through it. Also pay attention to the given behaviors for your scene partners. If you are on stage while your wife pours herself another drink, you best notice that and have an opinion on the matter. (not that you’d overtly react to it, just notice the behavior and let it speak to how you go about your next line)

Phase 2 : Who am I vs Who are they?

Discover and deepen your understanding of **yourself** and as your **character**.

Answer the following questions fully and honestly about yourself, then about your character. I suggest approaching this as a 'stream of consciences' exercise. Answer from your gut and don't be alarmed if your character's answers differ from yours. Don't limit yourself to just these stock questions, dig deep and see what comes up. You are responsible for creating the world in which your character lives, using textual evidence first, then expand using your imagination. Revisit these exercises as rehearsal goes on.

1. Personal Narrative

- What story do you tell the world about yourself?
- Is this portrayal accurate?
- What you want people to think about you?
- How does this effect the way you present yourself to the world?
- How you dress, how you choose to speak, who you choose to associate
- Why do you present your life this way?
- Do you feel like your true self?

2. Social / Public Narrative

- What story does the world tell you about you?
- How are you typically treated by people you know?
- How are you typically treated by strangers?
- What judgements do people have of you?
- Does this story make you feel like your true self?

3. Personal Truth:

- What story do you know about yourself?
- What is the truth of *you* alone in the dark when no one is watching?
- Who is the 'you' you wish you could take out into the world. What holds you back?
- Who do you wake up as?
- Who do you shower as?
- Who do you dream as?
- What are your non-negotiable core beliefs? Do you live life accordingly? (Expand on this with the *Skeletal Structure* worksheet!)

4. Feeler - Thinker - Doer:

Figuring out which order these dimensions take on in every-day situations; conflict, love, fear etc. First answer for yourself, then for your character as your character. Look into what consequences, if any, arise because of the innate order for each event.

- Our Feeler-Self - leads with emotion, empathy, sympathy etc
- Our Doer-Self - makes work, takes action etc
- Our Thinker-Self - makes plans, solves problems, and searches for meaning.

In conflict I am a _____, _____, _____

In intimate relationships I am a _____, _____, _____

When I'm stressed I am a _____, _____, _____

When I'm happy I am a _____, _____, _____

At work I am a _____, _____, _____

In conflict with strangers I am a _____, _____, _____

In conflict with my family I am a _____, _____, _____

In conflict with my partner I am a _____, _____, _____

and so on

Now you can layer in *coping mechanisms!* Yay! Coping mechanisms are **the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions**. Coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while helping them maintain their emotional well-being.

P h a s e 3: Solo Rehearsal (For all purposes) vs. Partner Rehearsal (Class purposes only!)

Solo Rehearsals are an imperative part of finding the truth of your character. Take this time to sit with your script, review worksheets and provided materials. Enjoy the expansion, improvisation and imagination of this time. Ask yourself all of the questions and discover the answers- just make sure everything is founded in the truth of the character and story.

Partner Rehearsals This is where you get to try out the things you learned from solo rehearsal WHILE staying open and curious in a head-to-toe state of listening. Just because you've made choices for your character does NOT mean you get to strong-arm the whole scene accordingly. You do not need to discuss your character's 'motives', 'beliefs' or even too much about 'relationship'. People are rarely on the same page as each other, why would your characters be?