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Teaching Philosophy

My philosophy as an educator is rooted in providing clarity and structure within a safe, engaging learning environment. Training in the performing arts requires students to engage their entire being—mind, body, and soul. It demands vulnerability, discipline, imagination, and a willingness to give of themselves in ways that can often feel overwhelming. I believe it is my responsibility as an educator to cut through that complexity and provide clear, concise instruction that helps students understand not only individual techniques, but how the elements of actor training work together. Whether a student ultimately chooses to use my specific techniques is less important than their ability to understand the purpose behind them and determine which methodologies best serve their unique artistic process.

Trust is the foundation of learning. I strive to establish that trust by creating a clear structure and set of expectations for every class, then consistently honoring them. A teacher must bring a reliable framework into the classroom. When students understand what is expected of them and know they can depend on their instructor, they are better able to relax, take risks, and engage fully in the work. I pride myself on connecting with students on a personal level because I believe that genuine rapport creates the conditions for rigorous professional training.

This is particularly important in my Acting I courses, where incoming freshmen are often navigating an unfamiliar academic and social environment. Many are away from home for the first time, separated from their established support systems, and learning to trust both their peers and a new instructor. I begin building that trust through ensemble games and exercises that cultivate play, teamwork, and imagination. Play allows students to relax and access an essential element of actor training. Teamwork teaches them to rely on one another for support and constructive criticism. Imagination provides the foundation for creative exploration. By establishing these fundamentals first, I can welcome beginning students into the work without overwhelming them, gradually layering more complex skills and concepts as they develop.

The core principles I seek to cultivate in my students are **Imagination, Agility, Precision, and Passion.** Imagination sparks creative possibility. Agility allows actors to move dynamically between tactics and objectives. Precision develops through specificity: understanding what they are doing, why they are doing it, and what they believe they are doing. Finally, passion, energy, and an understanding of their own natural abilities bring vitality to their performances. These principles inform both my approach to teaching and the progression of skills I hope to develop in my students.

My approach to actor training is strongly influenced by the Stanislavski system, particularly its emphasis on the physical life of the actor. I believe the body is essential to storytelling, and I incorporate

a variety of physical methodologies into my teaching, including Spolin's Improvisation, Bogart's Viewpoints, and SAFD (Society of American Fight Director) stage combat methodology. Each offers a different avenue for developing an actor's awareness, discipline, and expressive capabilities. Stage combat, in particular, teaches students to replicate precise physical actions while maintaining the safety of their scene partners. This cultivates a heightened sense of responsibility, spatial awareness, and physical precision that translates directly into scene work. I value the opportunity to provide students with layered training across multiple methodologies, giving them a broad and adaptable foundation.

Ultimately, I want my students to become independent, thoughtful artists rather than performers who simply learn to respond to direction. I believe individualized instruction is most effective when it is grounded in a shared understanding of the craft. Students must develop a strong set of skills and learn when and how to apply them in service of the story, the director's vision, and their own interpretation of the character. These elements must be continually balanced. While we often attribute an actor's success to instinct, I believe that instinct can be cultivated through years of deliberate, structured training.

I view my responsibility as an educator is to demystify the process of acting. Through focused, consistent instruction, I aim to give students the tools to understand their choices, recognize the purpose behind their work, and determine what best serves them as artists. If students leave my classroom with the knowledge and confidence to make those decisions independently, I believe I have given them one of the greatest gifts an educator can offer.