

Chapter 16 - Directing Two: Working With Actors

1. What should be your process to find the strongest actors for your project?

The process to finding the strongest actors for your project starts in the audition. You should always be kind and let them try their own creative way first. If that isn't what you're looking for, you politely ask for them to do it your way. When directing them in the audition, you also need to be looking for how well they listen to your directions and cooperate with you.

2. What is the job of the casting director?

The casting director's job is to look through hundreds of headshots from actors who sent them into you in search for the role. After they choose roughly 10 top actors they know the director would like to see, you, the director, sees those selected people's auditions face to face.

3. What is the best way to handle the audition process?

The best way to handle the audition process is by being as positive and kind as possible. You always give them room to be creative on their first try and once they are done, compliment them and politely ask for them to do it your way.

4. What is the purpose of a table read?

The purpose of a table read is to get the entire cast together to read through the script. This helps everyone to get to know each other and understand the full vision of the film.

5. What type of language is most useful when directing actors on-set, and why?

The type of language most useful when directing actors is action words or verbs. This leads to a specific action from the actor. You don't want to use adjectives and phrases like "be more happy" or "be more sad". This will encourage actors to make faces rather than genuine emotion.

6. Why is it important to understand the purpose of a scene BEFORE discussing it with your actors?

It is important to understand the purpose of a scene before discussing it with the actors because if you don't know what should be happening in the scene, no one will. If the actors come up to you with questions about their character, the setting, or anything else like that, and you don't have an answer for them, they will not be able to act accordingly. This will ruin your film without a doubt.

7. What is the purpose of Uta Hagen's "six questions a director must be able to answer"?

The purpose of Uta Hagen's "six questions a director must be able to answer" is to help you be fully prepared for your actors. If you are able to answer the first four questions, you've provided them with background. If you are able to answer the last two questions, you've found the point of the scene.

8. Why is it important that you as the director, as well as the actor, understand a character's background when playing a scene even if that background is not explicitly stated in the script?

It is important that everyone understands the character's background since this helps to make a 3D character, even if the audience never finds out the character's background. If the actor is told the background from the director, they are able to get

more into their head and understand what drives the character, what their reasoning is, etc. This will help tremendously with the directing and acting in the film since the actor is not just repeating after the director.

9. How do you keep actors from getting bored doing the same thing over and over again?

Two main ways you can keep actors from getting bored is giving them breaks and keeping stand-ins on set. The actors will be saying their lines over and over again. If they are given freedom to take breaks, get food and rest, this will help them to stay creative and happy. If you keep stand-ins on set, this will help for when the actors leave to take a break, but you still need people there to block a scene for lighting, etc. This way, the actors will not be standing for hours doing nothing but standing.

10. Write 500 words on your own philosophy of working with actors. How do you plan to handle them? What will be your process?

My own philosophy of working with actors starts with communication. Giving them creative freedom to act how they think their characters would act is key, in my personal opinion, and would help with overall confidence in each other as actor to director. Always being opened to new ideas from the cast and crew are also very important. I would imagine this makes the set much more personal as well. More like friends making a film together other than one leader barking orders to workers. That being said, being kind and loving is key, but also putting your foot down and showing you are indeed boss is also very important. I would want people to see me as a kind, fun leader. But the key word there is leader. Nothing will get done on a set if everyone is goofing around and relaxing. I would want people to know how important it is to keep on schedule and help make my vision come true, no matter how fast a specific task needs to be done, but always work in a kind way. When working with actors specifically, I would make sure to listen to every single thing they say, make sure they know I heard it, and give a kind response back. Whether it is declining their idea, or

telling them they have an excellent point. When handling the actors, I will always make sure to remind myself how hard they are working, and what will keep them happy. If no actors or crew are happy, the set will not look pretty. The way I would handle this is by taking the great advice in the textbook which is to give the actors plenty of breaks in between filming and keeping stand ins on set at all times. By giving the actors breaks to get coffee or lunch, this keeps their energy and and brain working instead fo getting fully drained before the cameras role. It's important to remember the actors will be saying there lines 15-20 times a day for however long the shoot is. Give them as much freedom as possible to stay relaxed and ready to shoot. As for the stands in, this is how the actors will be able to take all of their breaks. Having stand ins never occurred to me before, but after this lesson, I understand just how important they will be. Overall, I will try to keep a calm and lead set by making everyone comfortable, while gaining the crew's trust in me as a leader.