

Hi guys – and welcome to session 2!

Today we explored character work...

We started the session playing 2 games; 'I got you a present' and 'Why are you late?' If you want to find out a bit more about these games and how you can play at home check out the link below;

<https://youtu.be/UYnraPteZ1k>

We then had a quick chat about what the word 'character' means. The definition of character is '1. The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual or 2. A person in a novel, play or film'. Does this sound right to you? And if so what are some of the qualities you think could make up a 'character'? Maybe you have your own definition which is a little different...

We then moved on to using our letters from the homework to help us create a character. We read out the letters and in a group gave each other ideas about what sort of character is coming out.

It could be a family member – maybe your grumpy granddad. It could be a pen pal or a friend who you haven't seen in ages who is really kind. It could even be someone from another planet who sees the world in a very different way. Try reading your letter aloud and see what character you can come up with.

Once we had made a decision about who these characters were we did an exercise called hotseating.

Hotseating is where the director or the group ask the actor a series of questions about the character. However the actor needs to stay in role the whole time and answer the questions about the character. This is a great exercise for getting to know your character so you can get into their mindset, and think about how they speak and think.

Questions that could be asked include;

What is your full name?

How old are you?

What do you do for fun?

Do you have any family?

Where do you live?

If you had to describe yourself in 3 words what would they be?

It would be great if you could try this at home – maybe you could give your friends or family a list of questions to ask you or they could come up with some themselves. Or you could always do it alone and write the answers yourself – making sure you stay in character whilst you do it! Spend about 15 minutes in character answering the questions. If this is confusing take a look at this video;

<https://youtu.be/LW3KkF3jVtw>

After we had got into the head of our characters, we performed our letters again, but this time doing so in the manner of our characters; so trying out a different voice or way of speaking, sitting or moving a little differently etc. Try this out yourself – are you able to change one way about how you sit or speak to help you become the character now that you know a little more about them. It may be quite different to how you performed the letter before.

I then introduced the group to Stanislavski – a drama practitioner whose work has influenced how many actors perform today especially when it comes to getting into character! One of his ideas that we specifically looked at was his ‘Magic If’. You can hear me talking about this and his work here;

<https://youtu.be/0lzitxfyuyM>

We then used the idea of the ‘Magic If’ when performing our letters again. We set ourselves different scenarios for performing e.g. when you were writing the letter you found out lockdown was happening again, when you were writing the letter you were just about to go out for the first big party/social gathering since lockdown started, when you were writing the letter you had just recovered from the virus, when you were writing the letter you were on holiday by the beach.

Either you can use some of these ideas or you can come up with your own scenarios. How did this change the performance? Did you draw on any of your own emotions to do so?

And so we came to the end of the session again!

For next week;

- Take a look around your local area – is there an object/building that has been used a lot more or a lot less than usual e.g. a postbox that hasn’t had anyone sending letters recently, a bike that’s been brought out of the garage, a sun lounger that is getting sat on everyday, a gym that hasn’t been used for months.
- Choose one object/building and write a short monologue from it’s point of view giving it a character (how old is it? Is it a specific gender or race? Is it grumpy? Excitable? Does it have a dodgy knee? Or it missing it’s usual visitors? It’s family?) So the postbox could be lonely, the bike could be really tired etc.
- It may be easier if you think of adding a dramatic moment to the monologue e.g. someone comes to post a letter or the bike breaks but you can simply just write what they are feeling if you want.
- Bring it along to next week!