

Takeaways from Actors' Think Tank, March 31, 2022

Mel Churcher - Acting Coach and Mentor

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Tyler McKenzie

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I was thrilled Mel could join us this week for Actors' Think Tank! As always, her knowledge is invaluable. I loved hearing about "the magic circle" it breaks acting down to its simplest form, the willingness to just jump in and play!

Dina Laura

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"Because you can be everything in life, you can be everything in your temporary life. You jump into a magic circle and say, 'I am'". We merge two worlds as actors - your personal world and the world of the character. Thank you, Mel!

Greg Wagner

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I liked her being in the circle philosophy- would have loved to explore that a little more. Perhaps in the future, we can have questions submitted before hand so we have more interaction with the speaker. It felt slow at times...

Craig Woolridge

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"Actors, you have to jump into someone else's shoes. Learn how to get fully into the circle".

Rich Henkels

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Roles make choices, actors don't. If you are the character, the character is making the choices. So that is where an actor's focus should be, in becoming the character, by asking "why?", with regard to everything about them.

Rosalyn Jamal

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My takeaway from Mel is the "magic circle." In the circle, the actor IS the person, not playing them. According to Mel, we can play whatever role we want, if we BELIEVE, and are free like children. Never stop asking why, tell a story and know that life is in the eyes.

Ana Hoffman

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'The hardest thing to do is fly free and take away decisions. If you ask the question 'how' you're putting all the reins on yourself—you should be surprising yourself when you act.'

Sandra Bulk

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I love the image of the "Magic Circle" and having a big, physical action and short phrase to help me drop into character and then step out of the "magic circle" and return to myself. I will incorporate this into my prep!

Gabi Faye

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Let go of the idea that you have to "feel something" in the take. Remember in life we suppress and push away our emotions. The important thing is how you made the other person(s) in the scene feel and how that translates to what the audience feels watching you. Lovely and helpful way to look at acting.

Shelley Brietling

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Ask yourself "How", how you need to be alive and fresh in the moment.

You are there in the moment-Fly Free- and take away certain decisions on how you are going to play the character.

Jeannette Nina Plenzick

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Jumping into the magic circle, merging two worlds, shiny eyes and "I am ____" ... Hear through your solar plexus and it will always be real, you'll never be wrong. I can't pick just one! So many gems in one hour. Thank you Mel!

David Elliot

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Take-away: The exercise of recording yourself telling a story.

I understood "jumping into the circle," but as Tyler mentioned I find myself learning the lines and then formally reviewing the "thoughts" behind each line and determining I should determine this line like this and..., etc. The exercise is very helpful, insightful and in some ways comforting - I do jump into the circle when I am me!

Erin Ashley

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"Never stop asking WHY about your character. Create as many details about their life as possible."

Ana Hoffman

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The hardest thing to do is fly free and take away decisions. If you ask the question 'how' you're putting all the reins on yourself—you should be surprising yourself when you act.'

Mike Provenzano

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So many great bits of information!! I really love the comment made about feel free in you're acting and find joy by finding what your character would find joy from. Thanks for a great hour!!

Victoria Stevens

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Takeaway: I had a light go off in my head when Mel Churcher was talking about always asking the question "Why" and not "How". I find myself thinking a lot about the "How" questions and not enough of the "Why" questions. I am going to implement that into my scene analysis with future scripts.

Mariel McIntosh

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"Never stop asking yourself the why and how questions" about the character you're portraying. "Be the kid in the playground and step inside the magic circle", doing so will allow for freedom.

Lindsay Michelle Reed

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If you ARE the person instead of observing the person, then you are trying to survive in the scene and the light in your eyes can be seen.

Justine Reiss (heart rock gal)

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Don't Focus on the HOW in a scene (how we say things /

Do things) live in it - the same way you tell a story and it's interesting.

Paul Blumenthal

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Mel strongly recommends that we practice breathing and posture techniques, as it will benefit our acting.