



Notes from Actors' Think Tank

11/10/2021

**Rev. Brian Patacca, Life & Career Coach
(Assistant: Summer Mastain)**

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10:00

Brian emphasized that he is not an actor and he does not want to be known as an actor. That was a part of his journey that led him to his coaching career.

11:11

"Castability is the hook that makes you memorable." Brian loved the slates, complimenting the clarity of our self-descriptions. In his experience, about 50% of casting directors love typing and 50% hate it. "Typing" really came about in the last decade and, in his opinion, it doesn't pigeonhole an actor, rather it is a jumping off point that leads him to see us in any number of different roles.

11:58

Brian is a recently ordained non-denominational reverend. Regarding the spiritual connection between an actor and the craft, Brian asked everyone to close their eyes and think about the moment we first knew acting was our calling.

13:27

"The universe organizes itself according to desire." Brian explained that we have to listen to our deep, resolute desire. If we are willing to believe "this is intended for me," it makes the day-to-day work so much lighter. He suggested going on a "disappointment diet" by allowing yourself, for example, twenty minutes to sit with a disappointment, but then setting that aside and re-evaluating what you want and where you want to go next.

15:56

"Be determined each day not to leave your potential unfulfilled."

16:52

"Your acting is the greatest expression of self-care" because you are doing what is your deepest calling. You are special and everyone is special. (Rich referenced the poem "Desiderata.")

19:50

“Always be in the moment.” Brian held up a model of a Japanese torii gate, explaining that such gates are at the entrances of every Shinto shrine in Japan. The gate is painted bright red – “vermillion” – to remind people to be present and mindful before they enter the sacred site.

If, for example, getting an email from your agent or manager immediately triggers anxiety and feelings of dread because you might need to rearrange your schedule to fit in a self-tape, Brian recommends that you mentally “pull over the car” and take a moment to acknowledge that this is a trigger for you, settle in, and open the email with more awareness, rather than anxiety.

22:28

Brian acknowledged that the actor relationship with representation can be very dysfunctional. He noted that what actors do for a living is make up stories. Unfortunately, creatives tend to make up stories about everything in their lives. He encourages actors to “focus on data, not drama.” In other words, rather than making up a story about why you haven’t booked a lot of work or heard from your rep in a while, reach out and request a list of submissions and look at what types of auditions you’re not getting that you would like and focus your efforts on changing that.

25:58

Rich mentioned that Oscar Torre starts each day with a “thank you” list. Brian prays to the universe (a “spiritual shower”) in the morning and often needs an afternoon spiritual “pick-me-up.” He recommends taking a few minutes in the morning and again in the afternoon to focus on mindfulness, meditation, prayer, etc. - anything that helps you feel centered and grounded – except the news.

We need to teach our brains that we can set ourselves up to do things and see them through to completion. Each day, Brian starts by making the bed. He suggests we pick the most achievable portion of our day and do that first. Instead of focusing on an entire email, just get the first sentence done and acknowledge that you successfully completed that task.

29:40

“The definition of a miracle is our ability to choose anew.”

31:10

Brian believes in “little victories” or “wins.” If you are enthusiastic about something and see it as a win, then it is. No one else gets to decide that for you. “Newness” doesn’t determine what is a win. It could be something from 10 years ago that you take a new look at and embrace as a “win.”

33:20

When you think of marketing, remember that people want to keep up with you. “Give me the dignity of getting to know you better.” Be respectful, but don’t worry too much about bothering people, and don’t read into it if they do not respond.

34:43

Any time you connect to someone, it is a reason to thank them via email or social media, etc. Emails are normal; it doesn’t have to be a handwritten note. In whatever way you keep up with a person is fine. We need to teach our brains that we can set ourselves up to do things and see them through to completion. Each day, Brian starts by making the bed. He suggests we pick the most achievable portion of our day and do

that first. Instead of focusing on an entire email, just get the first sentence done and acknowledge that you successfully completed that task.

36:00

Always be kind and gracious. Think of marketing as a form of kindness and self-help. If you haven't reached out in a while, it is okay to narrate your actions at the beginning. Brian calls this the "cubic zirconia cure." In other words, it is okay to acknowledge in your message that you have been remiss in reaching out. For example, "You've been on my list for so long and I just wanted to reach out..."

"It is never too late for gratitude" even if you had an audition with someone ten years ago, you can still reach out.

40:00

Acting is a kind of service to the community. People can suffer from what Brian called "terminal uniqueness." In other words, telling yourself that your experience is so unique that what has worked for someone else won't work for you. Brian acknowledged that we are all unique, but there is wisdom in what has worked for others that we can learn from.

41:47

"Being witnessed is one of the most powerful experiences we can have." Listening and watching someone is giving that person a gift of being seen and heard and witnessed.

45:00

All spirituality can be summed up in two words: Be kind.

Find a way to see your marketing as a form of kindness. You are providing a service by giving people the opportunity to know you. (Brian referenced Uta Hagen's "Respect for Acting")

50:26

The best teacher is annoyance. Evolution is driven by annoyance. Brian evolved from actor to coach when he became annoyed at different stages of his life (he got annoyed with his day job, so he quit to act; he started an accountability group and realized he liked coaching; he got annoyed with acting and decided to become a coach). Happiness helps you embrace risk. His transition has been joyous.

1:04:00

Actors can get caught up in constantly updating headshots, resumes, reels, etc. It is okay and necessary to keep those things up to date, but do not get hung up on having credits to show that you are able to perform. If you have a self-tape that shows you can do it, that is enough to bring you in for an audition. Don't let a lack of credits stop you from pursuing your goals.

1:08:00

Think of your social media profile as part of your marketing, as opposed to just a way to get followers (unless you are an influencer). It is your job to stay connected to people.

1:10:00

It would be selfish of you not to act. People need it. Your pursuit of acting is a service to them. The people in your life change because of you, not only your audiences.

Brian's assistant Summer dropped two links for Actors' Thank Tank members:

1) More than 40 templates for reaching out to agents, managers, etc.

<https://www.dearnewagent.com>

2) Free training: Make Agents Want You

<https://makeagentswantyou.com>