

Takeaways from Actors' Think Tank, February 2, 2023

Jeff Hardwick - Casting Director

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Jeff Neckonoff

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It was great meeting and learning from such an experienced pro like Jeff Hardwick. There were just so many tidbits to absorb and learn from. What I got out of it is that I should consider taking an Improv class.

Victoria Stevens

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Jeff gave some great advice today that benefitted everyone. One thing that really helped me and I will keep in mind the next time I audition is to not play it safe. To definitely bring yourself to the role but be willing to take risks. I have a hard time with auditions because I censor myself and really critique everything I do in each take. I do believe this comes out in my auditions which hinders me more than helps me. I am going to take bigger risks now and see where that leads.

Rich Henkels

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Jeff talked about that "glazed look" actors have in their eyes when they are getting a re-direct or some kind of direction, that tells them their minds are somewhere else in that moment. We HAVE to stay in the moment, listen, learn, and react appropriately.

Thomas M. Harding

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I never really thought of the benefits of Improv on other aspects of the industry. It only makes sense that it's reflected in adjustments via Directors and such on set or in the audition process. A good skill set to work on. I also loved the part about no audition on the windshield. As Jeff said, "If you're good...work will find you."

Shelby Hightower

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I appreciated Jeff's overall sentiment of getting out of your own head. If you do good work, then work will come to you - don't worry about it. Just keep making it your own and forget the self-criticizing.

Roz Jamal

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My takeaway from Jeff is that in the world of self taping Casting Directors are looking for personality to determine if the actor will be fun to work with, so don't be afraid to show personality, don't play it safe and aim to be memorable. Per Jeff, "if an actor is good, work will find them." Jeff was an excellent guest.

Luca Cundo

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What a great quote; "No auditions on the windshield".

Stacey Marie Keba

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When it comes to slating, don't try anything fancy. Just be a nice, confident version of yourself. Confident is the key word!

Mike Provenzano

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Many things you said today resonated with me. I think the one that stands out the most is to stop self-criticizing yourself and let it go after your audition. I tell people I forget about my auditions once they are done and as you said, if you're good, work will find you. Thanks again for all the tips.

Gabi Faye

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Improvisation is a skill all actors should possess. It is not just about being funny, it is being able to roll with the punches, take direction and adjust as needed. What a great way to think about the flexibility actors must bring to work to set themselves up for success.

Shelley Brietling

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I was so excited to have Jeff except my invitation to be a guest speaker on Actors Think Tank. I knew he had so much to offer us, and he did not disappoint.

There were so many golden nuggets of information Jeff had given us, but if I had to choose one, I would say what stuck out in my mind the most was the idea that we as actors have not failed. This is the one thing that I hear from other actors and why we get so discouraged. We work hard at our craft, studying, working, learning, growing and when we know we did our best in the audition room, or on a self-tape and still didn't get a call back or book the job, we feel we have failed. This is a mind set we must get out of our heads. What Jeff has said is that we did not fail, there are so many reasons as to why we did not book the job. We must understand that Casting Directors remember us, remember our work and know when the right part comes along, they will call us back in. It's the calling back in, that

reinforces us to continue doing our job and doing it well. Jeff states, "If you're doing good work, the work will find you".

This is something I have to keep telling myself, it will definitely motivate me to keep doing my best. Because my best is what I have to offer.

Thank you again Jeff, so much for your time and expertise. It was a wonderful session!

Kaitlyn Diehl

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Thanks for joining us, Jeff! You had so many great nuggets to share! I really enjoyed the story you told about the Canadian actress who you remembered and got a role for because you valued her talent. If you're good, the work will find you. That's very encouraging. I will continue to keep honing my craft!

Mariel McIntosh

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I really enjoyed this session with Jeff and his insights from a casting director's point of view. I loved that he mentioned how important having improv skills are and how having it can transform an actors' craft. Sometimes, as actors we may shy away from it or feeling we are not good at it because it seems so intimidating. I liked that Jeff broke it down to its simplest form. "Improv doesn't always mean funny... or making a new choice. It's just listening and adjusting."

Jackie Diehl

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I think it's so interesting that Jeff notices when an actor gets that glazed over look in their eyes and he can tell when they're not REALLY listening... I think we've all experienced that at some point in conversation with someone. The importance of really listening, being in the moment, and adjusting to what's going on is my takeaway. Thanks Jeff 😊

Paul Blumenthal

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As a casting director Jeff was asked about his criteria for auditioning. He succinctly stated that you must be a "Well What Was That" and not give an average audition for the same role ... otherwise you won't be considered. Unless specifically asked by casting, put your own spin and interpretation on it. Don't play it safe. Be memorable, don't be afraid to go for it.

Craig Woolridge

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"If you make a great impression, you will be remembered even though you didn't get the job".

Dina Laura

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"If you're good, work will find you. Don't worry about it." That is music to actors' ears everywhere. Thank you so much, Jeff, for being informative, interesting and most importantly, KIND. We were so lucky to have you as a guest!

Rosalyn Charles

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You too must market yourself. Take the time to follow-up with industry professionals, especially casting agents/directors. Drop them a note every now and then. Down the line it, could turn into a booking.

Jamie Vaughan

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Jeff was an incredible resource of information and it was great to have a huge sports fan as a guest. My favorite takeaway was when he said "enjoy yourself, get out of your head and don't self-criticize. The work will find you."

Justine reiss

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Improv is great for actors and people in business are even doing it.

I spot right away when I'm talking to an actor face to face, they've done a read and now I'm giving a note. I recognize that SELF TALK that's going on in their heads, and they are not present, didn't hear a word I said. They didn't listen. Improv teaches you to listen, say yes and- then react.

Jeannette Nina

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An amazing one hour loaded with great gems! "When you are good, the work will find you." This is my new mantra for 2023!!

Marcie Ryan

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The importance of improvisational skills in order to effectively make adjustments, which also helps to show you are listening.