

# How to Rehearse with a Scene Partner

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There's a saying used by many directors over the years that goes "time is money! And we are running out of both!" I find this little epigram to be both cute and poignant. The one thing in life that is equal to all people is time and therefore we must be very careful how we use our time in order to ensure lasting success and fulfillment. So that being said, let me please walk you through a productive self-driven rehearsal process to maximize every precious minute you have with your scene partner.

1. **Accountability** – Hold yourself and each other accountable for things you can and should be doing on your own. A good scene partner will strive to "lift" up or challenge the person they are with through dedication and hard work. Make sure you are well prepared and memorized. Put in the work personally so you are not slowing down the process.
2. **Memorize Again, Every Time** – Having #1 in control don't overestimate your skills. Begin every rehearsal with speed memorization. Challenging yourselves to go faster each time you meet. Look for weaknesses, make a note and get better.
3. **Sharing is Not Always Caring** – When discussing the play be sure to agree upon the facts but also know that it's ok (and I often recommend) keeping your personal choices to yourself. Put simply if your scene partner doesn't need to know your choice then don't waste time sharing. A fact that should be shared is something that can be found in the play. For example, we both have the same father who walked out on us when we were 8 years old and therefore we can agree his name was John because that would make sense based on other facts found in the play. A fact that need not be shared would be something like a personal connection to the coat you are wearing. Perhaps your character received the coat from a past relationship and it holds sentimental meaning. This is good work and something you should absolutely spend time on personally but your scene partner doesn't need to know this information.
4. **Be Supportive and Honest** – Do NOT critique one another! This job is best saved for your acting instructor. Even if you are right, being a coach and a scene partner is sticky business and can lead to lack of trust between scene partners. What I recommend instead, is being honest about not feeling connected, or communicating that you don't understand a certain choice or stating that you were not affected by the last thing that was said. In return be open to these ideas and avoid getting defensive. If your partner is not being affected be humble enough to hear them. Then as a team you get back to work and try those moments again.
5. **Actually REHEARSE!!** – That's right stop talking, set the timer and do nothing but rehearse for the time allotted. Below I'm going to give an example of a timed out highly productive one hour rehearsal.

*One Hour Scene Study Rehearsal Template (Assuming scene is 10 minutes in length)*

*5 minutes – Vocal warm ups*

*10 minutes – Speed memorization*

*10 minutes – Run the entire scene at half speed focused on deep connection and listening*

*5 minutes – Discussion on what to work on. This should be the area that needs the most work*

*20 minutes – Work deep on problem area of the scene repeating if necessary the same few lines until you feel you have finally got it right*

*10 minutes – Run the entire scene at full speed*

You will notice by the above example that an hour will go by really fast. If you are not careful rehearsals can become a grueling waste of time and realistically you could spend 3 hours together getting half as much done as described above. For my Master Level Courses our students need to spend 3 hours minimum outside class working on their critique from the week before. Have fun rehearsing and mastering your craft!