

# The Reality of Doing

*From Acting Coach Scotland by Mark Westbrook's*

*"The foundation of acting is the reality of doing." Sanford Meisner*

I don't personally teach the Meisner approach, the technique that I created is based on his ideas but the application is very different, but one of the most important ideas that I have drawn from Meisner is 'the reality of doing'.

Most people believe that acting is about pretending something. Meisner made it about doing something for real.

At Acting Coach Scotland, we believe that acting is about doing real things to real people in real time.

Doing real things means attempting to change someone for real by doing something real to them under the surface of the scene. Not being some character pretending to do what they would do if you were them, or in their situation.

Real people means being present with the person in front of you, not some character, the actor. Do something real to them in response to something that comes out of the moment. Stop acting.

When I see a scene, and the actors pour nothing into empty glasses, when they hug when they should have kissed, when they talk but do not attempt to do something to the other person beneath the surface of the words, when they respond to what was said, not what was done underneath those words -it is absent of the reality of doing.

Do what people really do. Follow your impulses in the same direction as the character's goal. But most of all do what people do, don't pretend. It is empty.

This is far from talking about 'being realistic' that's not helpful. Realistic would mean we would see 4 hours in the life of a melancholy 30 year old (Hamlet), an evening in the presence of a sulky teenager (Juliet).

Listen to the other actor, really listen, listen to them with all your senses, take them in, don't just listen to what they are saying. That represents but 7% of their whole communication. Listen to what they are doing and respond to THAT. That's the truth of the moment.

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and the author of Truth in Action, his book on acting.*