

Terms from *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen

1. **SUPER OBJECTIVE.** – The purpose for which you carry out your physical actions and scene objectives. What does the character want in the course of the play?
2. **SCENE OBJECTIVE.** – To realize a clearly defined SUPER OBJECTIVE through a logical sequence of actions. (“I need”, “I want”)
3. **BEAT.** – A beat begins when under a different set of circumstances when “an immediate objective” sets in. It ends when that objective has succeeded or failed and new circumstances set it.
4. **SUBCONSCIOUS OBJECTIVES.** – The “motivation” or “why” of the conscious need or want.
5. **OBSTACLE.** – What’s in the way of what I want?
6. **THE FOURTH WALL.** – To build a private fourth wall anchored to something that can really be seen and is really there and secondary to everything else on stage.
7. **CIRCUMSTANCES.** – The obligation to find everything given you by the author in the stage directions about time and place, as well as in the dialogue of the play or hidden underneath the words of the characters, to find out not just what happens, but under what circumstances it happens.

NOTE: Don’t confuse an obligation with a desire. Actions which result when I have to clean house are totally different from those when I want to clean house. Always define your real objectives with needs, wants and desires. What you have to do may be an obstacle to what you want.