



Actors' etiquette (or "how to have a successful rehearsal")

Congratulations and welcome to rehearsals! Here are some DOs and DON'Ts to make the rehearsal process great not only for you, but also for the other actors, the director, and the play as a whole. They will also free you up to actually work on your character.

DO be honest about your schedule.

DO show up on time.

DO watch and listen. You never know what you can learn.

DON'T direct other actors or give your input as to how they should play their character. This is a big "no-no." There is one director. Focus on your character.

DO bring something to the table to work with. During many first day rehearsals, the cast sits and reads through the play together. You do not need to give an award-winning performance during this time, as of course this may be your first time reading the whole script, especially as a full cast. But do have some thoughts about what you are reading. In other words, do not only read your part, but make sure you also listen to what the story is about, think about the main conflicts of the story, and consider how your character fits into moving that story/conflict along.

DO learn your lines. It's hard to trust actors who learn their lines at the last possible minute. Aside from being unprofessional, it's stressful for the other actors. The director will let everyone know when they have to be "off book." This is the date you are expected to rehearse without a script in your hand. The first time everyone is off book, you and others will undoubtedly stumble over some lines. That is natural. But everyone can tell when you just don't know your lines and you are faking it. No one should be afraid of what is going to come out of your mouth from night to night.

DO your homework. Rehearsal is not just during scheduled hours with the rest of the cast. Aside from learning your lines, you should also be rereading the play, learning the background of your character and learning what motivates your character's words and actions. Even if you are on stage for only ten minutes, you will have a lot to work with, and it will show when you arrive at your next rehearsal. If you are having trouble "finding" your character, seek guidance from the director. He or she will be happy to help.

DON'T take anything personally. If the director wants you to do something or "play" the character another way, don't obsess about how bad you are. That is the rehearsal process. At least you brought some work to the table. Just take the direction, and do it well. Don't argue your point. If you see another way, do the director's way first. Ask if you can show her/him something else as well. If she/he prefers it her/his way, do it.

DON'T talk about another actor's work to anyone. It will get back. If you find that someone is not as talented as you would like them to be, keep it to yourself. If you feel that you are not getting enough from another actor in a scene that you are in, make it your character's business to make it work. Let the director work that out.

DO follow the director's instructions. Don't interrupt. Don't make suggestions. Wait for a break.

DO write down your blocking (even when you think you can remember it).

DO write down your notes (even when you think you can remember them).

DO take direction ONLY from the director. If someone else gives you direction, smile and say thank you, but continue doing what the director has asked you to do.

DO show respect to other cast and crew members involved with the production. Every production is a group effort. Courtesy goes a long way to make all cast and crew feel they are valued for what they do.

DO perform every rehearsal. You will be tired, but try your best to perform as if you have an audience.

And, most importantly, **DO** have fun!