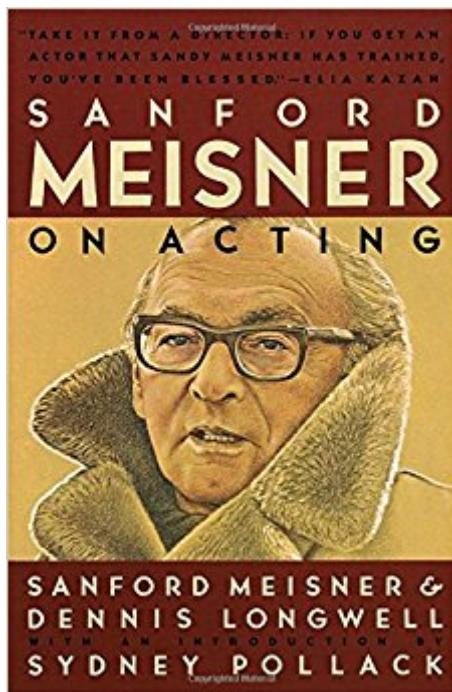


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Sanford Meisner On Acting



Synopsis

Sanford Meisner was one of the best known and beloved teachers of acting in the country. This book follows one of his acting classes for fifteen months, beginning with the most rudimentary exercises and ending with affecting and polished scenes from contemporary American plays. Written in collaboration with Dennis Longwell, it is essential reading for beginning and professional actors alike. A Throughout these pages Meisner is a delight—always empathizing with his students and urging them onward, provoking emotion, laughter, and growing technical mastery from his charges. With an introduction by Sydney Pollack, director of *Out of Africa* and *Tootsie*, who worked with Meisner for five years. "This book should be read by anyone who wants to act or even appreciate what acting involves. Like Meisner's way of teaching, it is the straight goods." A •Arthur Miller "If there is a key to good acting, this one is it, above all others. Actors, young and not so young, will find inspiration and excitement in this book." A •Gregory Peck

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Customer Reviews

Sanford Meisner has been called "the theater's best-kept secret," and *Sanford Meisner on Acting* by Dennis Longwell gives some insight into what techniques the hugely influential drama teacher used in his 50-plus years of work. One of the founding members of the Actors Studio (with Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, and Harold Clurman), Meisner developed his own special lessons based upon his understandings of the great Russian teacher Stanislavsky. Turning away from the sense-memory exercises common among his colleagues, his training focused instead on a realistic approach to

imagination and creativity. Unlike many other educators associated with "the Method," Meisner had little tolerance for self-absorption or striving after strong emotional effect, instead preaching that clarity of purpose and efficient use of the psyche are the actor's greatest tools. Longwell's book follows a class of eight men and eight women through one of Meisner's 15-month courses at New York's Neighborhood Playhouse, with extensive transcripts taken directly from Meisner's notes to the students on the basis of their exercises. With an introduction by director Sydney Pollack, one of the many influential artists who studied with Meisner (the book includes accolades from Maureen Stapleton, Arthur Miller, Gregory Peck, and Eli Wallach), this is an excellent introduction that helps to demystify the work of a great theatrical teacher. --John Longenbaugh

Meisner, a member of the Theater Guild and the Group Theater, has devoted most of 50 years to teaching acting and is one of the great unsung resources in American theater. This book is not an acting text, but a journal of a 15-month course taken by 16 adult actors. We follow them as they progress from early exercises through preparation to detailed scene work. Meisner emphasizes emotional truth and acting as the reality of doing. His students find the course difficult, but most improve markedly. Not all survive. Though Meisner is not well, he is a superb teacher and his enthusiasm is undiminished. This is required reading for all actors and those interested in acting.

Thomas E. Luddy, English Dept., Salem State Coll., Mass. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I think that every person with creativity invested in them has the potential to be a great actor. And I don't mean great as in melodramatic or characterized. I'm talking about truth. Living and breathing truth on and off the stage. Seeing acting as a lifestyle. I strive to be one of those, yet I find people acting in a modern era of self reinvention on the stage and screen in the cheap ways. The tit for tat, earn your moneys worth quick scheming forms of acting. I believe those versions to be Uta Hagen and Lee Strasberg. It sounds pretentious but all too often are modern actors just being performers. I say that because I've been there. I've been a performer. But to be a true actor I think you need to be a student of Stella Adler or Sanford Meisner. Personally, I am an Adler disciple but I would only ever recommend him over everyone else. Everyone else, that is except for Stella. But if you want to enjoy acting. To get up and enjoy some truthful acting, then he's the man for you. And even then, I would beg you to read him anyway for the insight he can give you from a perspective of a teacher determining whether or not an actor is doing their best.

Sanford Meisner is one of the greats in the acting field. He shows his ability to teach and inspire. This book is also very well-written and understandable, even to the novice actor. Thank you Sanford, for thinking about your fellow actors enough to help them along their way.

This book provides the novice student of the dramatic arts with an introduction to Mr. Meisner and his genius. If you appreciate the work of his students and their progeny, you will want to know more about him and his technique. This book does that. A great quote, from page 114, is "Acting is a scary, paradoxical business. One of its central paradoxes is that in order to succeed as an actor you have to lose consciousness of your own self in order to transform into the character of the play. It's not easy, but it can be done."

This is a thorough book and essential for anyone who wants to study the craft of acting. I recommend it as well as other classic texts. It is important to remember that most techniques are aiming towards the same goal...truth in acting. Actors should try many techniques until things click.

The mentor to many of our finer actors carefully explains the foundation for developing acting talents.

I heard Meisner mentioned in a directing class I was taking, and got this book to learn more. Since then I have learned more about the man, Meisner was an amazing teacher, and if only some of what he could teach comes across on these pages, its an essential read for anyone aspiring to act or direct, especially in film or television. It's not a page turner, but there are so many techniques in here I find it best to read a little bit at a time and let it sink in.

I recently came across Mr. Meisner's approach to acting. Recently audit one of his students class in LA and I didn't quite understand his approach by just attending one class, until I read his book. His approach is simple yet sometimes difficult to understand if you have any misconceptions of what you think acting should be. You got to read it a few times and keep your mind open to learn. It's a must have!

This book offers much insight to meisner's technique and his own teaching style, as it is given directly by him. Because it's written as a third-person master class, it isn't very direct at times, but the benefits of this book greatly outweigh that. I particularly liked that Meisner includes brief

personal moments and thoughts from his life outside the classroom in every chapter and you can truly see how he feels about each student's progress. I also feel this book is a very good companion to the DVD "Sanford Meisner Master Class." I wouldn't recommend this to someone completely new to the Meisner technique, but it is very helpful to those who want to look farther into it.

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