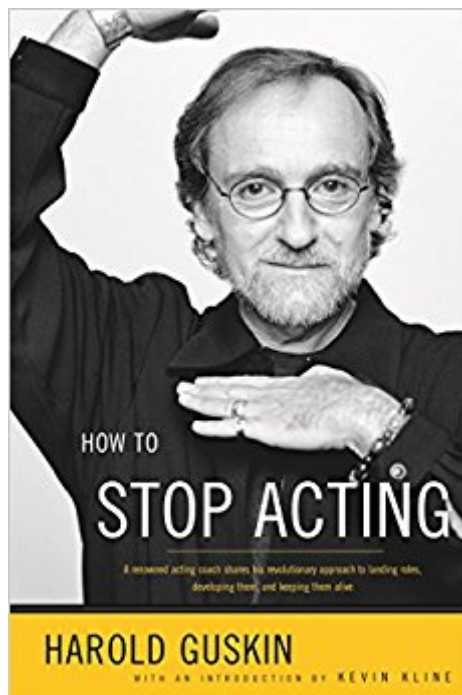




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How To Stop Acting: A Renown Acting Coach Shares His Revolutionary Approach To Landing Roles, Developing Them And Keeping Them Alive



Synopsis

"The Great Guskin" (John Lahr, The New Yorker) shares the approach he uses to help actors land roles, develop them, and keep them alive. Harold Guskin is an "acting doctor" whose clients include Kevin Kline, Glenn Close, James Gandolfini, Bridget Fonda, and dozens more. In *How to Stop Acting*, Guskin reveals the insights and techniques that have worked wonders for beginners as well as stars. Instead of yet another "method," Guskin offers a strategy based on a radically simple and refreshing idea: that the actor's work is not to "create a character" but rather to be continually, personally responsive to the text, wherever his impulse takes him, from first read-through to final performance. From this credo derives an entirely new perspective on auditioning and the challenge of developing a role and keeping it fresh, even over hundreds of performances. Drawing on examples from his clients' work and his own, Guskin presents acting as a constantly evolving exploration rather than as a progression toward a fixed goal. He also offers sound and original advice on adapting to the particular demands of television and film, playing difficult emotional scenes, tackling the Shakespearean and other great roles, and more. His book will find an eager and appreciative audience among novices and established actors alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

No, this isn't a guide to helping introverts learn how to loosen up and be themselves. Rather, it's a new perspective on auditioning for theater. "Acting doctor" Guskin, who's worked with Kline, Glenn Close, James Gandolfini, Steve Martin and others, explains his strategy, which, at its core, states

that actors do not have a responsibility to create characters, but to be continually responsive to their lines, wherever their inclinations take them. It's an honest, non-gimmicky take on a perennial problem. With specific anecdotes (e.g., "Peter Fonda came to me in 1993, he wanted to rethink his acting") and concrete advice (e.g. "take it slow" and "let the script guide the research"), Guskin covers various acting scenarios, from the stage (including Shakespeare) to film and television. He imparts much wisdom, yet counsels, "discover what makes you tick as an actor. Use what works and discard whatever gets in the way, no matter how sound the concept." Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

“Ask an actor who the coach of the moment is and no matter whose name comes up as well, Guskin's is mentioned three times out of four.”

The Village Voice
“Reading through these pages, I realize not only how much I learned from Harold, but also how safe he made me feel. The courage to take the risks that pushes us into new discoveries-new emotional territory-does not come without trust. Harold created a place filled with a trust that ultimately freed me to find my wings . . . one role at a time. This book will be invaluable for anyone passionate about learning the craft of acting and for those of us who need to be reminded of the basics of the craft we have dedicated our lives to.”
Glenn Close
“Many actors, newcomers and veterans alike, often wonder why it's so difficult to be as real, natural, and emotionally charged on stage or in front of the camera as we are in our daily lives. Harold Guskin explains how, by habit and misconception, we tend to undermine our potential. How to Stop Acting is a clear and concise actor's guide to living the truth in our work.”
Christopher Reeve
“Harold gives a very sane point of view to a very insane business and a very insane craft. Sometimes, when I read a script, I'm tempted to put on seven different wigs and change everything and do all this stuff-like knock my head against the wall twenty times before I know what I'm doing. Then I'll come to Harold, and I'll realize it's a lot simpler than that.”
James Gandolfini

While most acting books focus on a specific method and everything the actor "should" do, this does a bit of a flip and teaches a "non-method," while focusing on what the actor should NOT do; or rather, on breaking an actor's bad habits- which most tend to have. The writing is simple and straightforward, but the content is quite unique, yet the content isn't quite like what you'd expect to find in a book on how to act- or how NOT to act, in this case. He also includes lessons that he has learned from the big-name actors he has taught over the years, to give the actor a broader scope

from which to view their own experiences and approach to acting. It's not a very long book, and while it does go off on a tangent at times, a definitely a refreshing place from which to undertake a new approach to performing and auditioning if you've been feeling stuck in your career.

I purchased this book to help me in my voice acting. I'm not a trained actor, so I thought it would help me. The basic premise is simple: don't memorize a script, but keep the spontaneity juices going even through a performance. The author gives many anecdotes of his personal life as an actor, and of the students he coaches. I wish there was an a video or recording of an actual coaching session so that I could see the techniques in action. Because of my lack of training in the field, many of his techniques and experiences are over my head. Using this for voice over work is limited, in my view, because most voiceover scripts cannot be read in a spontaneous way, in a different mood each time. It might be useful in an audition, perhaps in finding the proper read, or in discovering a unique approach to the copy. If you're a voice actor, maybe it will help you. Your mileage may vary. If you're an actor, this book will give you a leg up from audition to final performance. Many of the famous names he's coached can attest to his techniques for success. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just beginning you'll find a lot in this book that will help you.

This book has changed my acting radically. For the better!! Harold's ideas have opened me up and freed all the should've's and ought-to-dos! Very hard to express...

Very good insight.

Good read!

given as a gift

Used this in a scene study class in Boston and still come back to it as needed. Clear, good writing about acting in a very practical sense.

I expected nothing from this book, actually! I was afraid of acting teachers who had experience with famous actors (all their practice is based on) when I met Jim Carrey he was a piece of s***, but I made him golden). This is a great book!

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