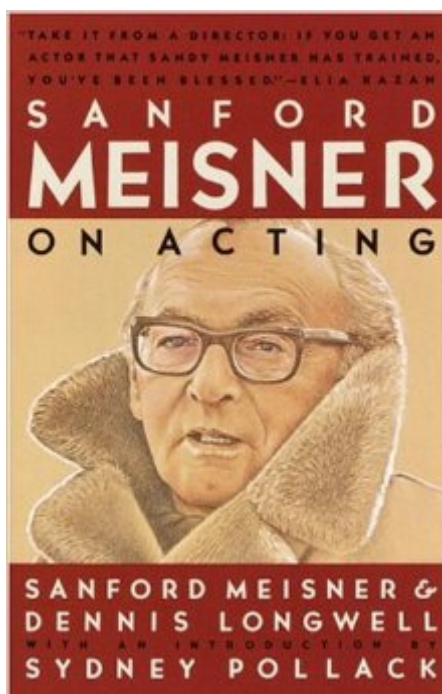


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# Sanford Meisner On Acting



## Synopsis

This book, written in collaboration with Dennis Longwell, follows an acting class of eight men and eight women for fifteen months, beginning with the most rudimentary exercises and ending with affecting and polished scenes from contemporary American plays. Throughout these pages Meisner is 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."--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."--Gregory Peck

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am currently studying the craft of acting at one of the 3 year professional acting academies here in LA. I very much enjoyed reading this book and have done so at this point several times. I would most highly recommend it to anyone thinking about or currently studying the craft of acting. In the first chapter (Setting The Scene: Duse's Blush), we are giving a chronology of Meisners life and how he came to be such a great and beloved teacher. It is also in this first chapter that Meisner recounts the story of Elenora Duse, a legendary Italian actress who played the role of Magda in Hermann Sundermanns Heimat. In the first scene of this play, as the story goes, she is a young girl that has an affair with a guy from the same village, and she has a child by him. Twenty-five years later, or

thereabouts, she comes back to visit her family who live in this town, and her ex-lover comes to call on her. She accepts his flowers and they sit and talk. All of a sudden the actor realizes that she is blushing, and it gets so bad that she drops her head and hides her face in embarrassment. Although we learn that this does not happen every performance, it is this blush that is the epitome of living truthfully under imaginary circumstances. This is Meisners definition of all good acting. The foundation of acting, is the reality of doing. It is this basic premise that is the spine of this book of exercises intended to bring the actor closer to their emotional self. It is an approach that is based on bringing the actor away from the intellectualizing of character analysis back to his emotional impulses and to acting that is firmly rooted in the instinctive.

Since I studied with Sandy for two years at the Neighborhood Playhouse and continued to study with him in his private class after I graduated from the Playhouse, I believe that I can speak with some authority. The book that Dennis Longwell has edited does an admirable job of describing the organic process of learning to act. Please note that reading is not a substitute for "the reality of doing." Sandy was an extraordinary pragmatist and a man of deep sensitivity. However, he was unsentimental; astringent; and gifted with a wonderfully mordant sense of humor. He once said, "I like to think that I prepare artists to survive in a world that doesn't always want them." In a way, he was preparing his students for battle. If he was tough, he did so only in order to be kind. Personally, I really liked him and I always think of him with real affection. Learning from him personally was a privilege and an honor. All in all, he was one of the most extraordinary people whom I have ever known, as well as one of the most influential. In a field all too often occupied by charlatans, he took a stand against pseudo-intellectuality and some self styled amateur psychiatrists posing as men and women of the theatre. His close friends included Harold Clurman and Stella Adler, whose influence he never failed to credit. Sandy didn't live in an ivory tower, or teach in some backwater college. He was truly a man of the theatre, with more than 30 Broadway credits. In fact, he was a very good actor. You can see for yourself in the 1958 movie THE STORY ON PAGE ONE, written and directed by his close friend, Clifford Odets. If you aspire to be an actor, you can get an idea from this book of what is involved in learning the Meisner Technique. Sandy had no "b.s."

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