



DREAM

BRIAN MEDAVOY

MANAGER. PRODUCER. HOLLYWOOD NAVIGATOR.

Welcome to Hollywood

...Now What?

An inspiring collection of blogs

by BRIAN MEDAVOY

MOREMEDAVOY
M A N A G E M E N T

TESTIMONIALS:

"If only more people were not afraid to show they are human and not have a need for yes men/women to constantly stroke you...those who walk alongside you into the storm, at every twist and turn of the tornado -come out fearless and a storm maker themselves..."

"Honestly, just reading through your posts and reading the story of your rise and fall to going back up again reinvigorated my fire to keep going. This is a tough industry to navigate and for an ethnic minority like me it will probably continue to be tough. So for someone of your caliber taking the time to write blogs that help actors and creatives and going to speak at acting school(I watched the one where you spoke at Howard Fine)makes me feel that there are movers and shaker in the industry that are for the actors."

"What drew me to writing this email is your website/blog. Not only is it rare for a manager like yourself to take the time to create content like you do, but the why behind it is the most inspiring. It's not to promote anything, it's not to attain something, it's not for financial gain. It's simply to connect & inspire. That alone tells me exactly the type of human being you are."

"What I assumed would be a typical Q&A turned into a motivational, inspirational and humbling experience. I can't thank you enough not only for your supportive responses to our questions, but also for opening up your vulnerability and allowing the audience to experience your insecurities with you. Rarely do actors get to understand that this industry can effect our partners in the same way. Your advice and insight will be taken advantage of...especially by this actor. What a wonderful feeling to know there are some cheerleaders out there rooting us along the way!"

SHOWS PRODUCED BY BRIAN MEDAVOY:



The Single Guy



Dharma & Greg



Just Shoot Me!



Sweet Justice



American High



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Brian Medavoy, Manager

HOW TO GET A MEETING IN HOLLYWOOD

Ask most people what the first step an actor does to book a role and they'll probably tell you "get an audition." We've all seen those moments play out in film and TV, where the ingénue is standing on the empty stage, giving it everything she's got. And we've seen the light fill the director's eyes as he realizes he's found his star.

These are great scenes. But, like most movie magic, there's a lot of work that goes into that moment of discovery. And most of that work is done in meetings.

Actors who've been working in the business know how important meetings are. They introduce you to people, give you the opportunity to share who you are and what you have to offer, and ultimately build connections and relationships that will help get you into that audition. These meetings could be with casting agents, managers, executives — anyone who's looking for talented actors and can, therefore, help you get what you want.

Unfortunately, actors working in the business also know how difficult most of these meetings are to get. People's schedules are jam-packed, and it can be tough to find the time to meet someone new. But hopefully, this post will banish a misconception that a lot of people have: that some meetings are impossible to get.

No meeting is impossible. You just have to have a strategy to get there. Now, I know what you're thinking.

“He’s Mike Medavoy’s kid. If my father ran TriStar, Orion, and Phoenix Pictures, the doors would be wide open for me.”

I won't pretend there weren't some people who gave me a meeting because of my last name, but the vast majority did not.

When I was moving up in the industry, I never once dropped names — not my father's, or anyone that he knew — to get a meeting. Every person I met with was someone I worked hard to see on my own merits.

I got those meetings through the use of key strategies I've also seen work for countless others who don't have a known name over the years as well.

(Side note: While you may think my last name was an advantage, you'd be surprised. I had a brutal, uphill battle due to the high expectations that same name put on me. If I had started out as a nobody, I honestly believe it would have been easier getting to where I am now. So if you're a “nobody” trying to be a “somebody,” you're in luck!)

Now, on to the strategies you can use to get the meetings you want...

REACH OUT AND SHOW HOW YOU CAN FILL THE VOID

You have your route to the person you want to meet, and you know what it is they're looking for. Now, why should they care about you?

Because you're here to solve their problem.

A void, by definition, implies need. For the person you want to meet, it probably meant that something in their slate/roster/line-up is missing, and they need someone to supply it. And wouldn't you know it? You're just the person to do so.

People love problem solvers, and will be much more likely to meet with someone when they know what this stranger can do for them. So, when you reach out to set a meeting, don't ask what they can do for you. Pitch what you can do for them.

IF YOU GET IGNORED, GET CREATIVE

Let's say you've found the best person to meet with, and how to get in

touch with them. You've figured out their through-line and void. And you've pitched yourself as the perfect person to satisfy their need. And after all that ... you're still met with silence.

Hey, it happens. It happens all the time. This is an industry where you are competing with thousands of people jockeying for attention, and it's easy to get lost in the shuffle.

But that doesn't mean it's time to throw in the towel. I once had someone trying to get in touch with me for a meeting, but (as it often happens) their e-mail had fallen through the cracks. So, they looked at my client list and saw where one was giving a live performance. They showed up there, bumped into me, and struck up a conversation. And there, miles away from my office, the meeting began.

Now, obviously, this doesn't mean you should show up to your person's house and knock on the door. But there's always a million things going on in Hollywood, which means a million ways to run into someone. And, more often than you'd think, people will appreciate the creativity and persistence.

IF YOU CAN'T GET A PERSON'S ATTENTION, GET TO THE PEOPLE THAT ALREADY HAVE IT

Social media offers us unprecedented levels of connection. We can now see who people are following, and how high their level of engagement is. If you can't get a meeting with someone, take a look at their socials. Maybe they're following an actor or influencer that you know, or know someone who knows. Get to know that person, build a relationship with them. And then, when the time is right, parlay that into access to the person you want to get to.

And who knows? If you end up commanding enough attention online, the person you want to meet with may end up coming to you.

IT'S NOT EASY BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S NOT POSSIBLE

Actors and any other creatives entering the entertainment industry have a tough road ahead of them. It can seem impossible to make any headway in landing in the right rooms, meeting the right people. But I've used these strategies in the past, and I've seen them used by others. They do work.

One has to have the mindset that even though someone may be in a certain position and seem intimidating, they are just people. No one is unattainable. They may end up being a total prick, but that's another story.

It will take effort. It will take time. And it won't be easy. But if you're dedicated and strategic, you always be able to get a meeting with someone.

There's always a way in.

WHAT ACTORS CAN LEARN FROM SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND VICE VERSA

Two talent managers — one who reps actors and one who reps digital talent — swap industry secrets.

I've noticed an interesting paradox within the entertainment industry lately. Actors have come to realize social media is a potentially powerful tool in the growth of their career (even the NY Post is writing about it), but struggle to understand how to wield it.

Meanwhile, social media influencers have risen to fame on social platforms, but struggle to parlay their influence into the acting career they desire.

Each side's talents have gotten them started, but they're being held back by their inability to combine both acting AND social media skills in a meaningful way.

To help both actors and digital talent figure out the missing piece of their career equations, I reached out to Amy Neben — who manages digital-first talent — to collaborate on this post.

In the following four questions, we each share our expertise about what actors can learn from social media influencers and vice versa:

Q: WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS HAVE ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BUILD AN ACTING CAREER?

BRIAN: I think of the biggest misconceptions social media influencers have is that a large following is carte blanche to pursue any opportunity they want. In reality, you want the roles you take and the career you build to reflect the brand you've already established in your social media profile.

People follow influencers because they connect with them on a very concrete and personal level. If you make comedy videos, people want you to make them laugh. If you Instagram your trips around the world, people see you as a traveler.

When starting an acting career, I find that it's best for social media influencers to build on that connection and choose projects that will continue to appeal to their followers.

It isn't unusual for actors to underestimate the level of planning and thought that goes into a well-curated and premium social presence. The content required to distinguish one as a unique talent in the vast social media landscape is every bit as dependent on timing, creativity, and execution as the output in more the more traditional realms of television and movies.

Q: WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ACTORS HAVE ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BUILD A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE?

AMY: It's a wide misconception in general (not just amongst actors) that social media influencers don't have to put in much effort to run their online businesses. People assume that many of these creators developed their fame overnight due to a single viral video as opposed to real "talents." While it may hold true for some creators, the large majority of top talent out there run their channels full-time, producing new content weekly, if not daily. The time spent ideating, filming, editing and engaging can be fatiguing, but is worth it for passionate creators to connect to passionate audiences. Cat videos definitely still exist, but digital platforms have advanced and there's now content

available for all tastes. For example, we see people like The Rock and Will Smith now creating premium content on YouTube to stay relevant and engage with their fans in a way that most traditional celebrities are still trying to figure out.

Social media influencers have more success branding earlier on in their careers than an emerging actor might, exactly because of their engaged relationship with their audience. They've built a personal connection & vulnerability, in a way most traditional actors steered-clear from.

Actors in today's evolving digital landscape are challenged to find the balance between making fans feel like they are connecting to them on a personal level while maintaining enough distance & mystique so that they are not pinned in any one way for future acting roles.

My recommendation is to make sure you have rep on your team who understand the digital space, and by this I mean your managers and agents. Right now actors can still hire 3rd party companies to run their social media accounts, but as more and more actors lean in to build a personal connection with their audience, fans will be able to discern when a voice is authentic or when an account is being curated. Digital and traditional are merging, you need the people advising you daily to be able to advise on digital strategy. Believe it or not, there are a number of established traditional managers and agents at companies like Select Management Group and More/Medavoy who have a footing in both worlds.

Q: WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU RECOMMEND AN ACTOR DO IF THEY WANT TO BECOME A SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER?

BRIAN: Even with a large following, an acting career requires every bit of you: your talent, your hard work, and your passion. And that means you will not have the same amount of time to devote to your social media. You can respond to this in two ways: try to burn the candle at both ends, or find a way to fold your social media presence into your acting career.

Posting content as you prepare for auditions, or when you're on set, lets both of your careers work together, rather than competing with each other.

I'd recommend that a social media influencer have a game plan ready that will allow them to use their profile in tandem with the new opportunities they have. An influencer is influential b/c they possess a unique perspective, access to products/services that many are curious about, have a distinct level of charisma, a high level of specific expertise/knowledge, or a combination of any of these traits. If an actor wants to establish himself as an influencer, then it's best to assess what about himself he can share with the public on a continuous basis and what he's adept at that people will be broadly interested in.

AMY: It's inevitable. Whether actors want to or not, this new age of "celebrity" incorporates heavy social media usage. I do not believe there will be another wave of actors (especially younger actors) who lack a personal connection. Madeline Petsch (*Riverdale*) and Millie Bobby Brown (*Stranger Things*) do a fantastic job of maintaining this balance. Brown live-streams on Instagram weekly, and shares Instagram stories with her fans nearly daily. Petsch runs a YouTube channel where she also lets fans see her personality. These practices will only give these two ladies a leg up. They're creating a larger pool of super-fans who will follow them anywhere, and are also building audiences on platforms that they OWN.

The first steps in working towards this is figuring out what you are passionate about. Is it taking photos, recording yourself on camera, or daily vlog snippets? What type of content can you create and consistently maintain?

Focus on the platforms that lend well for your passions. Not every actor needs to be highly active on every platform. Instagram and YouTube are definitely the most highly engaged. If YouTube is daunting, start with Instagram.

Q: WHAT'S THE KEY TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER OFFLINE ONCE YOU'RE AN ESTABLISHED SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER?

BRIAN: This is one area where social media influencers have an advantage, because I believe that nowadays the key to building a career in the entertainment industry is the willingness to take on a variety of roles. So many

of my clients are succeeding in different areas of the film and television business: actors are becoming directors, directors are becoming writers, and so on.

But social media influencers started out as their own writers, directors, DPs, and editors. For many, if not most, it began with just them and a camera. As such, they've developed a high level of resourcefulness to make their own opportunities. It's that level of resourcefulness that will serve them well as they continue to move up in the industry.

Approach your offline career with the same level of diligence, dedication, humility, and respect that you applied to your career as an influencer.

Understand that acting, singing, dancing or any other performance skill require training and ongoing learning in order to attain proficiency and reach a level where people regard you as deserving of opportunity.

AMY: Look at where your strengths are and what your audience is asking for. It could be selling apparel or merchandise, licensing, acting... what does your audience seem to gravitate towards, and then how do you leverage your audience to build a business off of that demand? How do these demands fit in with your passions and true TALENTS?

If you're passionate about acting, take classes and start seriously training. Produce content on your platforms and show proof of success to your reps — demonstrate your innate talent.

If it's product, prove you can convert with a smaller campaign. Prove your talents with fashion design or building a successful marketing campaign and have your reps take the data to potential licensing agents who can then pitch you for licensing campaigns based on your beta campaign. Phase two is leveraging your influence to propel your own talents, not just using your influence as a pipe for promotion.

HOW CAREER MAKING MOMENTS HAPPEN

CLICKS, COOS, AND THE CHILL FACTOR

I talk to a lot of actors who think that succeeding in Hollywood is still a matter of someone spotting you on the street, dramatically pointing, and saying “That’s the one!” Others acknowledge that success takes time, but that’s it – they think that years of plugging away at a low level can suddenly catapult one to stardom overnight. These certainly make for compelling stories, going from zero to one hundred in the blink of an eye.

Unfortunately, stories are all they are.

In reality, success is not a singular moment alone, but rather an ongoing struggle that can lead to something that changes everything.

Even in situations where it seems like someone’s come out of nowhere to immediately hit super-stardom, there’s a lot of hard work behind them that led to the point where they burst onto the national stage. It’s a process, a ride that takes you up and down across the industry. It’s like a plane ride: sure, there’s sudden rises, but more often than not you’re cruising at roughly the same altitude.

In the careers of successful actors, they’re more often than not cruising along at this altitude. These are what I call coos, the moments in your career

where you're just plugging away. You're going on auditions, you're booking guest spots, you're laying the groundwork for success. But you're not necessarily trending, you're not on the front page of *Variety* – you're working. This is the time that a lot of new actors don't think about, but it's the most important time of your career. It's a lot of work and probably not the amount of reward that you're looking for. But it is necessary.

And then, suddenly, all those coos add up until something clicks. A click is when everything crystallizes, where your hard work pays off in a moment that takes your career to a new level. It's Jennifer Lawrence winning the Oscar (and tripping on stage). It's Tiffany Haddish stealing the show in *Girls Trip*. It's Timothée Chalamet having not one, but two star-making turns in *Lady Bird* and *Call Me By Your Name*.

Most people are familiar with those. But just to show how closely clicks and coos are related, here's a few of my other favorites.

[HOW IT HAPPENED FOR MICHAEL B. JORDAN](#)



By 2012, Michael B. Jordan had a steady career in the entertainment industry. He'd been acting for over a decade, he'd worked with everyone from Keanu Reeves to George Lucas, and he'd even had a series regular role on *Friday Night Lights*.

But he wasn't a household name. People weren't submitting him for leads in

blockbusters. His work was a series of coos.

And then he took on the leading role in Ryan Coogler's *Fruitvale Station*. The film had a budget under 1 million dollars, the subject matter was highly charged, and Coogler had only directed shorts. But Jordan believed in the project, and *Fruitvale* ended up being his breakout role.

This was a click for him – years of hard work coming together for him to move up to the next level. And move up he did – *Fruitvale* led to widespread acclaim and recognition, a starring turn opposite Sylvester Stallone in *Creed*, and a role in the historic *Black Panther*. Michael B. Jordan is one of the most sought-after actors in Hollywood, and it all stems from the *Fruitvale* click and the coos leading up to it.

HOW IT HAPPENED FOR GLEN HANSARD AND MARKETA IRGLOVÁ



Sometimes a click isn't just one's work, but rather a moment surrounding it. The Academy Awards are a prime example, as a memorable speech can elevate an artist all by itself. Halle Berry, Cuba Gooding Jr., the aforementioned Jennifer Lawrence.

But when I think of clicks on Oscar night, the first names that come to mind are Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová, the filmmakers behind *Once*. *Once* is a 2007 indie musical from Ireland that was barely seen in this country. But its song "Falling Slowly" is a beautiful melody that propelled Hansard and Irglová to the Oscar stage when they won for Best Original Song.

It was clear from the moment Hansard started speaking that this was a

genuine pair – they made the movie for the love of music and film.

His rallying call to those assembled to “make art,” coupled with Irglová’s stirring words about dreamers, captivated the crowd in the room and watching at home.

Suddenly, people were talking about these two. Suddenly, “Falling Slowly” was being played across the country. And within five years, *Once* was a hit Broadway musical. In the span of three minutes, Hansard and Irglová found their click.

HOW IT HAPPENED FOR KRISTEN BELL



Sometimes a click happens when an actor isn’t even working on a project. By 2012, Kristen Bell was a well-known actress. The titular role on *Veronica Mars* was already behind her, she had recurred on shows like *Heroes*, and she’d crossed into film with projects like *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*.

But there was a moment that fully brought her into the national consciousness and established her as a unique, quirky star: the sloth click. During an interview on *Ellen*, the conversation turned towards Bell’s obsession with sloths. She recounted how her husband Dax Shepard had brought a sloth to their home on her birthday. And then a video was shown of her on her birthday, weeping with joy upon learning there was a sloth nearby.

It was offbeat, funny, and emotionally moving: Kristen Bell in a nutshell.

This odd little moment on a talk show encapsulated the years of work she’d

put in to fostering her image and career; it was the click that paid off over a decade's worth of coos.

The sloth video now has over 26 million views on YouTube, and Bell has gone on to headline both the *Bad Moms* and *Frozen* franchises. She is a true movie star now, due in no small part to the sloth click.

HOW IT CAN HAPPEN FOR YOU

So, why run through these clicks at all? And what can you learn from them?

Well, there are two things that all of these have in common. First, they were all preceded by a long series of coos beforehand. And second, they were all moments of completely genuine feeling. Every one of these folks felt what I call the chill factor.

The chill factor is when a moment takes hold of an actor. It's when they're speaking entirely from the heart, moved to the point of action. For Michael B. Jordan, it was the belief that *Fruitvale* was the role for him, despite the film's low-profile and the risk of a first-time feature director. For Hansard and Irglová, it was their pure joy for their art, expressed to the millions watching the Oscars. And for Kristen Bell, it was the overwhelming love she has for sloths that moved her to point of tears just knowing one was nearby.

I don't believe any of these were calculated decisions. I really don't believe they were decisions at all. They were things that these folks felt so powerfully, they were compelled to act. They all had the chill factor, and thus a click was born.

And this is what I hope actors can take from this, particularly new actors.

You can't plan for a click. You can't orchestrate a star-making moment. In fact, the only thing you can control are the coos.

You can choose to keep plugging away, seeking out and taking roles that will build your resumé, keeping your head above water as you work diligently at your level.

And then trust that, when the moment is right, the chill factor will take over, and you'll have a click of your own.

MY COMMENCEMENT SPEECH FOR ACTORS

It's graduation season and that means it's also time for one of my favorite traditions – commencement speeches. I love commencement speeches because they represent an opportunity for people to share lessons they've learned in their journeys with the world.

So many have inspired me this year and created moments that stuck with me (you can watch some of my favorites at the bottom of this post):

- **Chadwick Boseman concluding his Howard University speech with the Wakandan rally cry, “Howard Forever!”**
- **Oprah Winfrey encouraging USC graduates to “use your gifts to illuminate the darkness in the world.”**
- **Apple CEO Tim Cook addressing Duke graduates with the Martin Luther King quote, “The time is always right to do right.”**

These also got me thinking about what I'd say to a graduating class of acting students if given the opportunity. So, here's...

MY COMMENCEMENT SPEECH FOR ACTORS:

I have the greatest respect for actors.

You've chosen an incredibly difficult career path – one that requires you to give all of yourself to pursue a greater art. It's a lifetime of hard work, competition, and sacrifice with no guarantee of security or success.

Some of you may be thinking, “Yeah, man. We know all of this. Why are you reminding us on our graduation day?”

I don't remind you to psych you out, or to make you doubt yourselves. I give you the risks of an acting career because I know you're all capable of overcoming them since you know in your bones acting is the one thing you were put on this Earth to do.

I want to impart a few pieces of advice to you today. They're the things I wish I'd heard when I was your age, and the things I've instead learned over years of struggle, success, and failure. Let's start with the most important question you can ask yourself:

Why?

FIND YOUR WHY

Why is it you need to be an actor? Why are you setting out to a life of performing?

It's not to win an Emmy. It's not to make money. It's not because you're good at it.

The reason why you want to do this is something deep within you. It's the reason you're choosing to spend your life in this pursuit.

It is the need – for yourself or for the world – that you're desperate to fulfill. I found my why in my childhood.

My mother was a music teacher and wanted me to have the same level of knowledge and passion for music that she did. So, my childhood was a series of trips to musicals, the ballet, the opera.

Being a sensitive, intuitive kid, I was always as fascinated with the people watching a performance as I was with those on stage. So, during the moments of passion and excitement in the performances, I'd turn around and look at the audience.

I still do it. Why?

Because I'm amazed at the effect live performers can have on a crowd.

When you go to Cirque du Soleil, and a man leaps into the air, flips around

four times, then lands perfectly on a balance beam – look into the crowd and you'll see a face you've never seen before.

There's nothing like seeing that look on people's faces.

Some of you may have looked out into the crowd while you were performing and seen one of those faces, the face of someone who's felt something they didn't even know they were capable of feeling. If you have, you know how powerful it is to be the one who touched an audience in that way.

That's my why. It's why I've devoted my life's work to this business. I have a burning need within me to make people feel something they've never felt before.

Maybe that's your why, too.

If so, great. If not, find yours. This is the time to do it.

Because once you know it, you can start living your life with purpose.

FIND YOUR STRIKE ZONE

Once you know your why, the next step is to figure out how your why leads to what you do.

The great author and speaker Simon Sinek's has a model he calls the Golden Circle.

In the middle of this model is your why, a basic truth or belief that compels you into action. And on the outside of that is the what, the specific action you take to bring your "why" into reality.

Now, a single "why" could lead into any number of "whats."

If your "why" is to give power to those without it, you could be a politician, a documentarian, or even in the Peace Corps. People in completely different businesses could have the same reason why they do what they do.

Unfortunately, that means you can know your why inside and out, and still have no idea what it is you should be doing.

Take me: When I was a kid and saw those faces in the crowd, I knew my purpose was to make people feel something. So, I decided to make people feel, I was going to be a performer. I set my mind to acting and did three plays and three movies. Put in the work, understood the characters, ran my lines over and over again.

And, as it turned out ... I sucked.

I was never in the moment, wasn't listening, and even my work memorizing went out the window. If you've ever had those problems, you know how much of a nightmare they can be.

So, acting was a no-go.

I reassessed my strengths and weaknesses, and realized one of my strengths is being a catalyst. I'm great at getting things moving. So I decided to leave the world of performing behind and move into the business of representation. If I wasn't going to make people feel something on stage, I could find those who could and help shepherd their careers.

That's the "what" that worked for me.

I knew my "why" early in life, but it took a few tries to know where my strike zone was. And that's the second piece of advice I want to impart to you: Know your strike zone. And it's not just about "acting" or not acting. It can be more subtle than that.

Kevin Hart and Gary Oldman are both actors, but I doubt they've ever gone up for the same part. And if they ever have, I want to see that tape. Knowing your strike zone is important in any career, but it's absolutely necessary for you. Are you more of a comedic or dramatic actor? Leading roles or supporting? Hero or villain?

You have to know exactly what you bring to the table and how best to put yourself into the marketplace. Don't play to type, or even worse, to stereotype. But know how you want to present yourself, and make sure that's the image you cultivate.

When you know your strike zone, you know exactly what to aim for in everything you do.

BE READY TO FAIL

Once you've got your why and your what, figuring out your who, when, and where should be self-explanatory.

Congratulations, you're ready to go out into the world and...fail.

Be ready to fail.

And, more importantly, be ready to know the macro-failures from the micro-failures. Micro and macro might make you think of economics, which is

just the kind of talk you tried to avoid by going to acting school. But I only use the terms to differentiate, say, losing a part, from losing your house.

If you lose your house, you have every right to mourn. If you lose a part, keep your perspective. In an acting career, micro-failures are common and in the moment it's easy for them to feel like macro-failures.

Back in the early 2000s, I was doing very well for myself. I'd expanded my management business and was producing several shows. I had even won an Emmy.

And then it was all gone.

I got involved in some rough stuff, basically took a wrecking ball to my life. Then one morning I woke up at Betty Ford with a flashlight in my face, and no idea how I got there. It was a moment of failure. And at the time, I think most people would label it a macro-failure.

But I took some time off – seven years to be exact – came back to LA, and got back to doing what I love. I restarted my management company, fostered new talent, and now help make people feel things again. I dragged myself back from defeat, and found even our biggest failures can be overcome. The macro can become micro.

You all have the capacity to do the same – never forget that.

Give. Give. Give.

The final piece of advice I want to leave you with today encompasses every one of those earlier points, because it transcends any one person or profession. It's something we all need to do as often as we can.

Give.

Give, give, give.

Give to those you know and those you don't. Give to those who ask, those who aren't able to ask, and those who simply don't know how to ask.

What came after my moment at Betty Ford was years of struggle, relapses, and a tough road to recovery. And the reason I could never recover myself goes right back to the last three steps of the 12-step program.

Because it's in those steps that you take the work you've done for yourself and bring it out into the world. It's when you give yourself and the strength you've gained to others. It took me a long time to learn this, but it's the only way you fully heal.

Now I give back every single day, whether that's taking open submissions, checking in with my clients when they've had a rough day, or just offering advice to someone in need. Whatever success I achieve, I turn right back around and give it to others.

Giving can help you, but that's not why you do it. You do it because it helps someone else.

It's a simple concept, but the simple concepts are usually the most important.

No one does anything in this world alone – if you're not there for others, you're not going to get much out of this life. I'll leave you with one of my favorite quotes, from Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Thank you and good luck.

CHADWICK BOSEMAN SPEECH

OPRAH WINFREY SPEECH

TIM COOK SPEECH

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ACTOR AND A STAR

Bob Lefsetz is one of the sharpest voices in music right now. I don't mean his singing voice – I can't say I've ever heard him sing – but rather his sharp and critical take on the industry.

In his newsletter, the Lefsetz Letter, Bob's audacious manner and strong POV combine to offer truthful and incisive takes on the shifting sands in the music business.

(Speaking of newsletters, sign up for mine if you'd like me to send you tips about how to navigate Hollywood and further your career.)

Bob's got tens of thousands of subscribers, he's been a regular contributor to *Variety*, and he's survived feuds with everyone from Gene Simmons to Taylor Swift. The man is a legend.

Bob recently made a post on Lefsetz Letter cataloguing the traits of two different types of musicians. I was inspired by the simplicity and elegance with which Bob laid out his case studies, and saw a lot of parallels to the film industry.

So, with Bob's permission, I've composed my own dual portrait of two different types of actors: **the Star** and the **Journeyman**.

STAR

Goes for immediate success.

ACTOR

Thinks about the long haul.

STAR

Walks into auditions with arrogance.

ACTOR

Walks into auditions with confidence.

STAR

Sees certain jobs as “beneath them.”

ACTOR

Understands that an important role can come from anywhere.

STAR

Takes the role with the biggest paycheck.

ACTOR

Takes the role that benefits them as an artist.

STAR

Hangs their pride on one role.

ACTOR

Always moves forward from job to job.

STAR

Sees themselves as someone to know.

ACTOR

Works hard to get to know others.

STAR

Complains the game is stacked against them.

ACTOR

Takes failure as an opportunity to work harder.

STAR

Desperately tries to network with those above them.

ACTOR

Takes time to help those below them.

STAR

Tries to emulate what's "hot" in the industry.

ACTOR

Finds what they have that no one else has.

STAR

Only plays one type of character because it works for them.

ACTOR

Endeavors to diversify their work.

STAR

Signs with the biggest agent in the industry.

ACTOR

Signs with the best agent for them.

STAR

Leaves building their brand to a manager.

ACTOR

Takes an active and collaborative role in building their brand.

STAR

Uses social media to show off their success.

ACTOR

Uses social media to connect with fans.

STAR

Spends all their money on luxury purchases.

ACTOR

Invests their money back into their career.

STAR

Sees themselves as a celebrity.

ACTOR

Sees themselves as an actor.

STAR

Lives for awards and trophies.

ACTOR

Appreciates recognition but knows that's it only a small part of their life.

STAR

Sees an end goal to work towards.

ACTOR

Sees checkpoints in a lifelong career.

STAR

Does it for the fame.

ACTOR

Does it for the work.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION YOU CAN HAVE IS WITH YOURSELF

I think a lot about why.

Specifically, why we do what we do: it's something that I ask any potential client, and it's something I ask myself. Why have I worked as a talent manager for 25 years? Because I have a passion for making people feel something they've never felt before, and representing great talent is the best way for me to achieve that.

But why do I write these blogs? A lot of people have figured that I write these to give advice (after all, many posts are tagged as "Advice"). But I've never seen it that way. That implies that I'm somehow delivering these messages from on high and letting them fall to the masses beneath me.

Sometimes I wish that's how it felt. But the truth is, I don't see myself as an expert. I don't see these posts as giving advice. I see it as starting a conversation.

I DON'T PREACH, I share.

When writing for this blog, I revisit the mistakes I've made in my past so that others may learn from them. I tell my story as an example of what works,

and what doesn't. And, if need be, I take a hard look at myself now and evaluate what I need to work on.

I've been fortunate in the past few months to have a lot of professional success. My clients are all making great strides in the industry, and the More/Medavoy company has never been stronger. But that doesn't mean things are perfect, and with success in one area comes shortcomings in another.

Actors are forced to obsess over their physical appearance, but looks aren't brought up as much in other areas of the industry. But the fact of the matter is, I've gained a fair amount of weight over the past few years, and I'm just not in the shape I used to be. It's tough some days, knowing I don't look the way that I want to.

It's really tough.

It's important to have the self-awareness to face up to the hard truths about yourself, the ones that cause a lot of hurt and shame to admit. But here's the thing about self-awareness: it does no good unless you do something about it. And sharing is a great thing to do.

We've got a really talented intern at More/Medavoy now, one who's been incredibly helpful on these very blogs. And, like me, he struggles with his weight. We've had great talks about the insecurities that come with that, and just in sharing I think we've helped each feel a little less burdened. Because when you share your story with someone, when you help someone else, I truly believe you help yourself.

I'll go one step further than that: you save yourself. I've gone through periods of professional success, and I've had personal deficiencies come with it. I've lost control of a lot more than my weight, and I've ended up sabotaging just about everything in my life. I know that I run the risk of repeating that pattern if I don't acknowledge what could be better. And if I don't share my story.

So, why do I write these blogs? Because I want to share part of me. I want to start a conversation that can help others avoid the mistakes that I've made. I want to help people – for their sake, and for my own.

That's why.

3 WAYS ACTORS CAN AVOID BEING THEIR WORST ENEMY

Any actor setting out to make it in Hollywood faces a mountain of struggles. There's the sea of extraordinary talent to compete with, the years of perseverance you must have within you, and the resourcefulness necessary to get work and be seen. It's a tough road for anyone, and it takes a special type of person to make it through and succeed.

But this isn't a post to discourage you from trying. I wouldn't work with actors every day if I thought the struggle wasn't worth it. To be paid to do something you love is one of the greatest rewards in life, and I believe anyone willing to take a stab at this should have the right to do so.

(That's also why I share tips on how actors can navigate Hollywood each week [here](#).)

This post, rather, is designed to help you manage the struggle in becoming a working actor by ensuring that you are always helping yourself. New actors have enough factors working against them without also engaging in behavior that could dampen their talents or damage their reputation.

The first few years of your career are the most important for establishing what kind of collaborator you are, and you should always endeavor to put your best foot forward. I've seen too many actors fall prey to all-too-common habits

that let casting directors, agents, managers, and the like know that you're not an ideal hire. And then the difficult task of starting your career becomes next-to-impossible.

I've done my best to catalogue some of these habits and offer advice on how to overcome them. Hopefully this will help you come up in the industry. And so, without further ado, I present:

3 Ways Actors Can Avoid Becoming Their Own Worst Enemy

1. KNOW THAT YOU BELONG

Insecurity's an insidious thing. Just a drop of it can gnaw away at you, and while everyone in the world suffers from it at one point or another, it hits harder for those who put themselves in the emotionally vulnerable position that actors do.

"Was I good in that scene?" "Did I say the wrong thing in that audition?" "What am I even doing here?"

Any of these sound familiar? I bet they do—every actor on Earth has had these thoughts at one point or another. Even Meryl Streep and Daniel Day-Lewis have finished a day on set and wanted nothing more than to go back and redo everything they just did.

Insecurity hits everyone. There's no reason to deny it, but there's every reason to fight it.

Because if you don't it will eat you alive. An actor who lets insecurity win will always be in their head, worrying about what they're doing, if they're getting it right, and what everyone else thinks of them. You know where they're not? In the scene. In the moment. They're not acting.

But Brian, you're thinking, it's all well and good to acknowledge a problem. Now, what do I do about it?

This is where it's important to have a support network in place. Have people that you can talk to or call or text when you feel overwhelmed. Have people who will remind you of how good you are, the level of passion that you have for your art, and how you have earned your spot in whatever room you're in.

I know actors who call their parents, or their partners, or their friends, at the end of every day of work. Just to check in, unload their insecurities from the

day, and receive the all-too-necessary reminder that the struggle is worth it.

I believe this is crucial to have, even if you have a professional support team of agents and/or managers in place. Have someone you know, maybe even someone who has no connection to the industry except for you. But make sure they're someone who is on your side, and ready to offer that support at the drop of a hat.

The battle against insecurity is a lot easier to fight when you've got an ally.

2. CHECK YOUR EGO AT THE DOOR

Taking pride in your work is necessary. If you can't advocate for yourself, how can you expect someone to advocate for you?

But while some actors struggle with insecurity, others have the (seemingly) opposite problem: ego.

If you work in the industry for a while, you'll become an expert at spotting egotistical actors. You'll find them camped out in their dressing rooms, berating crew members, and turning down great roles they see as "beneath" them. This isn't a good look for anyone, and it gets you a bad reputation very quickly.

Ego often comes from the same place as insecurity, namely a desperate need to prove yourself. But while insecurity turns itself inward, ego explodes out and makes everyone around you miserable.

And if everyone around you is miserable, they'll remember you are the one who made them that way. People in Hollywood talk to each other, and word of a difficult actor gets around fast. Suddenly, the actor's not getting called in for auditions, their list of contacts gets thinner and thinner, and they find themselves begging for the roles they wouldn't deign to take before.

So, how do you keep your own ego from inflating? After all, if you find some success, is it wrong to take pride in it, or to expect more in terms of work or compensation? Not at all.

But know there's always another actor out there who'd love to have your role, and would take it without any attitude. And by "another actor," I mean "another hundred actors."

Now, obviously, each performer is uniquely talented, and no actor can bring

the same performance as another. But get a bad enough reputation and people may be willing to try someone else just to make the set run smoother.

They may be willing to cast a different actor just to keep the filmmaking process drama-free. Now, I'm not saying that an actor is never safe, or that they can be recast at the drop of a hat. Far from it. But ego helps no one, and if you have it in excess you may find yourself in a position where you are in danger of being replaced.

Don't be that actor. Check your ego at the door.

3. YOU CAN WANT SOMETHING TOO MUCH

This last one comes with an asterisk. If you want to be an actor more than anything in your life, great! You need that fire to carry you through the ups and downs of a career in the industry. But if you want to let everyone you meet know you're willing to do anything to be an actor, then you've got a problem.

I've known actors who emailed me every single day with the same resume, headshot and reel, all with the same demand: "Represent me!"

These are not the actors who check in when there's something new to report, mind you. I'm all in favor of demonstrating to others that you've grown in your career. But more often than not, what I see is actors who give me the same information time and time again and expect my response to magically change. It won't. No one's will.

Here's what will change: people will now see you as "needy" or "demanding" or even "lazy." And none of these are adjectives you want attached to your name.

"Persistence pays off" is a fantastic mantra to follow, but there's a caveat to that. Persistence only matters if you are working on advancing your career on your own, and not simply sending the same information out time and time again.

And this isn't just true for new actors looking for representation. An established actor who finds themselves talking about the same project for months (or even years) on end should take stock of how they're being perceived. Because it's probably not the way they want to be.

Of course, a great way around this issue is to find more work on your own

so that your portfolio is constantly expanding. But while it can be useful to work more, it can be just as good to also live a life outside of the industry.

Do you play fantasy baseball? Do you love taking your dog to the dog park? Are you an amateur magician? Whatever it is, find something outside of acting that moves you, that you love to do, and that takes your mind off of your career.

You'll find this helps you grow as a person, and may help you grow as an actor. After all, the friend you meet at the fantasy draft, or the dog park, or the magic show may be the person who helps you get your next job.

But don't look at these activities as a career opportunity. Look at them as ways to live a more well-rounded life. This way, you will be guaranteed have something to talk about other than your commercial in 2015. You will have some brief respite from the hustle. You'll be able to be a person, not an actor.

And you will thank yourself for the break.

So, there you have it. The three biggest ways an actor can become their own worst enemy—and the best ways to combat them. Now, of course, there are other ways to avoid these bad behaviors. And, I hate to say it, there's a lot more pitfalls that an actor can fall into.

But this isn't a be-all-end-all dictum on engaging with the industry. Rather, it's a reminder for actors that it's not only about the work done on-screen, but also off. It's a guide that's useful to remember and return to at various points in your career. And above all, it's a way to help you become your best advocate.

Because there's a lot of actors vying for success in Hollywood. Make sure you're one of the good ones—in every sense of the word.

THE 90th ACADEMY AWARDS: WHAT THIS YEAR'S OSCARS SAY ABOUT WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

I live and work in an industry built around inspiration. Every artistic work worth its salt started with someone being moved to the point that they had to create something from it. So it goes, when something truly moves me, I feel the need to write about it. And there's no better time to be moved by the strides made in our industry than during the Academy Awards.

This isn't the first time an award show has inspired me to write a blog. Here's one from the **Golden Globes** and **Oscars** from a few years back.

To me it does feel like our state of the union on what we've accomplished in the past year and the challenges we will face in the coming years. It's an emotionally charged showcase of the best talent in the business, and there's always a few moments that stick with you, that make you stop and reflect.

I encourage you to also stop, reflect, and write when something moves you. Not just the Oscars, although it's a fine place to start. But really, any moments of emotion or inspiration are worth documenting. It's where great work comes from.

In so many ways, this was an historic year for the Academy Awards. The

Best Picture trophy went for the first time to a true sci-fi / fantasy film. So many wonderful artists, from Allison Janney to Sam Rockwell to Jordan Peele, received recognition with their first Oscars. And the very occasion of Oscar's 90th birthday marked a huge celebration that saw larger-than-life performances and powerful speeches, from *The Greatest Showman*'s show-stopper "This is Me" to Frances McDormand's rousing call for women to rise.

Everyone's talking about McDormand, and for good reason. It was a caper on an incredible year of reckoning in Hollywood. But what I loved watching Sunday night were the smaller and quieter moments, the little windows into the human condition that give the rightfully-bombastic Oscars a flash of humanity.

I think of when *The Silent Child* won the Academy Award for best Live Action Short. The film tells the story of Libby, a deaf 4 year-old girl who lives in a world of forced isolation until a social worker teaches her American Sign Language. For those who are deaf or hearing-impaired, ASL is a hugely important means of interacting with the world, and writer Rachel Shelton clearly understood this when she signed through her speech as she delivered it. Many may not have even noticed what she was doing, but I have no doubt that there were those who finally felt, for lack of a better word, heard.

I think of the Best Animated Feature victory for *Coco*, a film that showcased the incredible influence of Latin America on our current film landscape. From the moment a delighted Oscar Isaac cried out, "*Viva Latin America!*" as he opened the envelope, *Coco*'s win was a triumph for Latin Americans, and Mexico especially. As producer Darla K. Anderson put it, "*Coco* is proof that art can change and connect the world, and this can only be done when we have a place for anyone and everyone who feels like an other to be heard."

I think of when Guillermo Del Toro finally earned his Oscar for Best Director, and spoke beautifully to the unifying power of film. Pushing back against those who would seek to divide or belittle, Del Toro professed that, "the greatest thing our industry does is erase the lines in the sand." His films, heartfelt fairy tales whose themes transcend their plot's specificity, are shining examples of these lines being erased. I will never forget how kind he was when we first met at Comic Con a few years back. For such a genuine guy to take home the gold is proof positive that hard work, vision, and decency are

rewarded.

And, finally, I think of Frank Stiefel's win for *Heaven is a Traffic Jam on the 405*. Best Documentary Short is not a category that receives a lot of attention, and many may have missed Stiefel's speech. But there was so much in his time on stage that hit me on a gut level, particularly his thank you to his wife. First of all, the fact that Stiefel began his speech by acknowledging his wife and kids set him apart from so many others, who only get to mentioning family when they hear the orchestra playing them off. But as Stiefel thanked his wife BJ Dockweiler, "the source of everything that's gone well for me in the past 40 years," the camera cut to Dockweiler herself, sitting in the audience.



The amount of love and pride she was so clearly feeling, so much so to the point that it seemed almost painful to bear, struck me. In one look, I could see the joy and hardship that goes into the work that we do, the years of sacrifices that must be made, and the level of devotion one requires to create and share their art. The shot lasted for maybe a second, and I'm sure most everyone missed it. But I wanted to take the time to spotlight both Dockweiler and Stiefel, whose passion, captured in a minute of time, moved me more than any number of grandiose speeches or big-budget performances. It was the kind of beauty that makes these shows worth it to see, and it's what will stick with me for months and even years to come.

Thank you, Frank and BJ. And congratulations.

HOW RAISING LIVESTOCK AND CHOPPING WOOD AS A TEENAGER PREPARED ME FOR A CAREER IN HOLLYWOOD

A little over a year ago, *The New York Times* published a profile of the Midland School, a small private school in Los Olivos, California. Midland is a fairly ordinary school in that it boasts an excellent college prep curriculum, and prides itself on sending students to Harvard, Stanford, and other prestigious universities. It's fairly unordinary in just about every other way. It's nearly devoid of WiFi, running water, or electricity, and students regularly chop firewood all day just to earn a hot shower at night.

It's also my alma mater. Hearing that surprises most people, as it still feels somewhat surreal to me. As a pre-teen, I was like anybody else, enjoying life with my friends, getting into my first batches of adolescent trouble before entering those formidable, formative four years of high school. But at the same time, I was raised in a class that afforded me the opportunity to (and practical expectation) attend one of the prestigious boarding schools in the Condor League. While other people I knew sent their children to Thatcher, Tate, Ojai, Villanova, Laguna Blanca, or Robert Louis Stevenson, I was drawn to the one that many considered a joke: Midland. Freshmen at other Condor League

schools got their own horses, Midland students got a whole lot of dirt and life lessons. I wasn't particularly lured by Midland's austere values necessarily, I just had a chip the size of Texas and was so damn stubborn that I just wanted to do something different. Really, I couldn't fully understand the reasons for wanting to go to Midland but in retrospect it really just came down to adolescent contrarianism.

But the more I think about my reasoning for attending Midland in the first place, I'm drawn to some words written by my father for a previous blog:

“Because of the community we live in, where people and things can be larger than life and reality takes place in that rarefied air at the top, it's easy to get the wrong idea about what a person should be. We live in a time that puts a tremendous emphasis on material things and instant gratification. But you must never lose sight of what it means to carry real values with you in life.”

I was indeed in rarefied air, but my father ensured that I at least subconsciously had some idea of the values I wanted to pursue in my own life. Yes, I griped and doubted and cursed myself while I was chopping firewood for hours on end at Midland, but it wasn't all in vain.

Midland's mission rests on cornerstones of self-reliance, simplicity, and a responsibility to one's community and environment. It teaches its students to approach the world with an openness, resilience, and willingness to work for everything, because the work you put in is where the true value of anything resides. Reading the Times article, all these memories came flooding back and I was reminded of the strength of Midland's creed and its effect on my own world view. It made me a participant. But, and you probably saw this coming, it also occurred to me that the lessons I learned at Midland can apply perfectly to the aspiring actors, writers, and filmmakers I meet every day.

As I often do when I've been inspired, I thought I'd share some of what I took with me from school in the hopes it may resonate with you.

1. WHAT YOU WANT VS WHAT YOU NEED

Mick Jagger may have talked to you about this before, but I'm here to drive

home the point!

At Midland, the students grow produce, care for livestock, and power the Academy through solar installations that are revamped and upgraded every year. Taking this agency and responsibility not just in your education, but in your home, you learn at a young age what it is that you need in life, and the work that goes into getting it. If you feel tired in the morning and hit that snooze button one too many times, tough shit, you're not eating. Put off your studying so now you're late to gather firewood, well, all of your peers don't have hot water and they're mighty pissed at you. You learn quickly what you need when you're mutually invested in a community.

Every day, I meet people looking for a way into the entertainment industry. They say they need a career in acting—so long as they can eat out for every lunch. So long as they can work three days a week. So long as they can have an in-unit washer and dryer and get invited to all the parties.

Sure, it sounds glamorous, and with hard work and a little luck, the day will come when those things may all be possible. Maybe not the three days a week—despite reputation, this industry doesn't really take a lot of days off. But in the beginning of your career, you'll have to make choices. First of all: Is success in entertainment something you really need? And does that need trump the need for some of the basic luxuries you may already have?

Think about it, because a lot of people take for granted the lavishness of their present life. We always stereotype the struggling actor as a barista at a Silver Lake coffee shop. We say this critically, judgmentally. But those struggling actors get to work face to face with people all day, they can wear what they want to work, they're involved in a community, they have close friends... sure, you'll get all of those things when you're at the top of the industry, but you might have to sacrifice all of them to get there. Too often I see actors get a little bit of success, start down the road towards fame, and then realize, "this sucks, why am I doing this?" Passion must be paramount, and if it's just something you want, you'll probably never get there.

It's a tough choice, and there's no shame in choosing between want and need. We do it literally all the time. However, we don't always think of it in terms of our careers, so I urge you to take a step back and think: What is it that you want, and what is it that you need?

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSISTENCE

When you need something, and you achieve it, the sense of reward of having earned it yourself is greater than had it just been handed to you. You've almost definitely experienced this in your life, and if you haven't then maybe you need to get out more. At Midland, I was so determined to live by this virtue that I was extremely careful to not let anyone know who my father was. I thought if they knew I was the son of one of Hollywood's biggest producers, they'd assume I had never had to work for anything, that my work ethic was innately less than theirs and my tutelage at Midland was just a gimmick. I wanted to be on the same playing field, so I went great lengths to ensure nobody knew that I came from money and fame.

One year, after a holiday break, Greyhound was on strike so I didn't have a way back to school. My father was out of town and I didn't have anybody else who could drive me. So he called me a limo. Reluctantly, I got in the dang thing and drove up to school, but once we arrived at the long, remote dirt road that ultimately led to Midland, I asked the limo driver to stop. Figueroa Mountain Road is one of those paths that grandparents are referring to when they say they used to walk ten miles uphill in both directions to get to school. Okay, it's not ten miles, but it is unpaved, rocky, and about 300 yards of sharp incline that you most certainly don't want to walk when you've got a trunk full of your semester's clothes, books, and minutiae. But I was determined that nobody see the limo, so I scratched and I clawed and I sweated and I made that walk. Of course, when I finally got to the mess hall, there was a New York Sunday Times with my father's face on it sitting on the head table. You may have deduced that there aren't a whole lot of Medavoy's in the world—and that's exactly what my peers did, too.

However, therein lies the lesson. After my peers found out about my upbringing, it didn't matter as long as I was still busting my ass in the grunt work. I still showed up on time, put in the effort, and contributed everywhere I could. Because it's the work that matters, not the background. That applies doubly in the world of acting. You have to do the grunt work yourself to get your career started. Networking, making your own opportunities, being proud of your contemporaries' achievements, honing your craft to a near obsessive degree... that's how you do it. And then, ultimately, you get the greatest

satisfaction in knowing you did it.

3. HELP OTHERS, OTHERS HELP YOU

Midland always attempted to make the curriculum a microcosm of real life, and that principle may have been most magnified in the emphasis on communal responsibility. One student collecting firewood determines if everyone gets to have a hot shower at night. If not just your own hot shower, but everyone's is dependent on you, you better damn well do your job. That may seem like an extreme example, but it is an exact reflection of life. If you don't pull your weight in your job—regardless of what your job is—others will suffer. At Midland, the group could give offending students demerits. In life, coworkers give negative performance reviews, or an offending employee is simply let go. There are consequences when you coast, and when you dismiss the value of others.

In Hollywood, for actors, the importance of networking and building relationships really can't be overstated. It has almost become cliched, honestly, but you really need to be constantly on your game, looking for opportunities not just to help yourself, but to help others. If you go out of your way to help people, they remember, and they will want to actively help you in the future. It's human nature to want to return favors. On the flip side, if you screw over people on the way up, they might just be the ones waving goodbye to you on your way down.

That is to say, don't be the person pushing your headshot or your script at every networking event. Don't tell someone to check you out, offer to check them out. Take an interest in other people's work, because that simple gesture will be enough for them to think you're somebody worth paying attention to, as well. That last point leads me into this heading...

4. THE ADVANTAGE OF GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN

Yes, believe it or not, simply being a decent human being who takes an interest in others is actually going against the grain. But I've made that point, and I believe you're a good enough person to know the benefit of reciprocity.

The biggest takeaway for me from the Times article was the simple reminder that I went to Midland. It's such an unorthodox school that most

teenagers would scoff at the idea of going. Teens today would have to give up their cell phones, stray from their families and friends, and start pulling their weight to meet even their most basic needs. Midland has an outstanding track record of college acceptances and alumni, but try telling that to a 13-year old who is still best friends with everyone in his kindergarten class. But for me, and I think for many people, it was extremely valuable to just do something different.

The standard path isn't always the best one. People come to Hollywood with lofty dreams, a ton of confidence, and a completely preconceived notion of how their career will go. They almost always underestimate the number of checkpoints they'll need to pass to get there, and they almost always are so rigid in their dreams that they forget to try new things. Today more than ever, there is no standard success story or a single way to make a career in film or TV. If presented with the opportunity to do a movie for YouTube Red, do it. If you can voice a video game character, do it. Every path is valid, even if one's less traveled. Especially if one's less traveled!

The ultimate point I can leave you with is this: Take an interest in the rewards of hard work, and don't be like everybody else.

WHAT THE FUTURE OF MEDIA MEANS FOR THE FUTURE OF ACTING CAREERS

The entertainment industry doesn't operate in a vacuum.

The way careers are built and survive in Hollywood is influenced daily by broader shifts in culture, technology, and IN THE WAY people consume stories.

As a manager, a big part of my job is to keep up to date with this evolving landscape in order to help my clients navigate the shifting sands.

With that in mind, I recently spent some time pouring over this fascinating Henry Blodgett presentation on 14 Things You'll Want To Know About The Future of Media. It outlines extensive research and trends in digital and traditional media, many of which are going to have a substantial impact on the entertainment industry and the people whose careers exist within it.

Here are three trends I believe are going to significantly impact acting careers:

1. The Internet is blowing up barriers that once protected legacy media companies

Once upon a time, you could count the number of media companies on two hands. Only a few major movie studios and TV networks had the resources to

produce and market content, setting up significant barriers for anyone with a Hollywood dream.

Today, however, digital streaming outfits like Apple and Netflix completely dwarf cable networks like AMC, while YouTube generated more than double CBS' ad revenue in 2016. Not only are the Apple, Netflix, and the YouTubes of the world investing heavily in creating new content, they're also making money off that content.

That's creating more opportunities for new talent to reach audiences in more creative ways than ever, and establish a name for themselves in the process. The streaming services are knocking down barriers, providing access to more actors, and making it easier than ever for aspirants to break in.

But there's a flipside to this seemingly positive development.

Legacy companies like CBS, ABC, FOX, etc. can't afford to whiff on content any more.

They're cutting production budgets, ordering fewer new shows, and softening commitments. Nobody is willing to go all in on a failure, and they simply don't have the air time to keep churning out new shows until one becomes a hit.

And the thing is, those legacy companies are still the ones that pay the big bucks (for now). If you want to become a megastar, you still more than likely need to be employed by a network or major studio.

This has created an interesting dichotomy: It's easier now than ever to have a career as an actor, but tougher than ever to break out from the pack and have a huge career.

More actors than ever are working regularly, yet it's still an enormous challenge to become a household name in a world supersaturated by media.

The floor has been raised and the ceiling has been lowered.

2. Younger TV viewership is collapsing

Kids just don't watch TV anymore.

Traditional TV viewership in the US is down 15% overall since 2012, and by a whopping 40% in the coveted 18–24 and 25–34 age brackets. These young people grew up in a world revolutionized by Facebook, Twitter, and Netflix and believe traditional cable just isn't worth the money.

A WiFi connection and a couple of \$10/month subscriptions give them immediate access to more content (some of it exclusive!) than they could ever consume in a lifetime.

Why spend \$30/month for cable to watch the new episode of one show every week when you can pay one third of that and see that same episode 24 hours later on Hulu?

Actors, agents and managers still glamorize and prioritize landing a pilot on a major network over landing a limited series on YouTube, and for good reason. The pay is considerably better, the industry exposure more valuable, and an actor will still be seen by more consumers overall on CBS than YouTube.

But for how long?

Those 20- and 30-somethings will soon age into new brackets and bring their viewing habits with them. Today's children are tomorrow's 18–24 year olds and they'll bring with them their dedication to YouTube. Many of them will have grown up in a household that didn't even have cable to begin with (cable subscriptions have declined each of the past 5 years).

Soon, we'll reach the point where the chief content consumers learned to consume content online. For actors, this means no gig should be dismissed or undersold.

Your YouTube Red movie may not pay huge dividends today, but that relationship could pay off in spades down the line.

Representatives will likewise look more to modern content producers to launch their clients' careers. Within a few years, it may be better for an actor to make one viral video—to put eyes on their brand—than to score a 7/13 Series Regular on an ABC pilot.

That's pretty wild to think about.

3. There is huge growth in “social stories”

Social media has grown exponentially for a number of reasons, but the biggest may be the most fundamentally human: We are all storytellers.

The world's biggest YouTube stars, Instagram models, and infectious Twitter feeds all tell stories in unique, creative, empathetic ways. There are virtually no boundaries to human interaction today (we can argue this

philosophically another time).

You, as an actor and/or creator, can connect with and influence people in a matter of seconds, without ever making eye contact.

It's not just a coincidence that Snapchat and Instagram have invested so heavily in their "Story" platforms.

People like to check in on one another, see what's happening in the world, and nurture their own human experience by comparing it to 'others.'

The most successful social media stars learned how to tap into these new storytelling mediums to make meaningful connections with people in mere seconds. They do this basically by being themselves, but also by engaging with followers to stay relevant and active in their lives.

They make viewers feel like they're a part of the story—not just a passive bystander.

For actors, building a social media presence and learning how to convey stories through these platforms are invaluable skills. Not just to hone your craft, but to appreciate the challenges and pitfalls of telling compelling stories.

That's why I put together my Social Media Guide for Actors in the first place.

What's truly mind-blowing when I think about how the future of media is changing the entertainment industry is the realization that all of this is likely just the tip of the iceberg.

We're at a watershed moment for actors, creators, producers, executives, agents... all of us in the entertainment business. It's crucial that we all—and actors especially—take a step back to see where the digital world is taking us, and how we can capitalize upon the change and appreciate the ride.

Ferris Bueller said it best:

***“Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around
once in awhile, you could miss it.”***

LESSONS FROM A 20 YEAR PARTNERSHIP



The other day I came across a 1998 LA Times Magazine article which featured a profile of myself and my future partner Erwin More as part of their “Hollywood Now” issue.

Los Angeles Times

MARCH 27, 1998

Magazine

THE MOVIE BUSINESS

IS REINVENTING ITSELF

IT'S YOURS, YOUTH

AND ACTRESS

ALSO SURPRISING POWER

AND MONEY, HERE ARE THE

PLAYERS MAKING IT HAPPEN.

HOLLYWOOD NOW

PLUS: OPENING NIGHT HELL • POWER DINING • CLASS OF '98

IT'S YOURS, YOUTH Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are the new faces of Hollywood. But their success is the result of the studio system's investment in their careers. Here, they're not just stars but also working as producers. Like a TV network, the studio system is still the best way to get a movie made. When the studio and actor are the best people for the job, Hollywood will keep being successful. It's not the studio's fault, it's just the way it works. They're not just a new thing in cinema. They're here to stay.

They star in their own films, and the studio system is still the best way to get a movie made. When the studio and actor are the best people for the job, Hollywood will keep being successful. It's not the studio's fault, it's just the way it works. They're not just a new thing in cinema. They're here to stay.

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The Players Club

WHAT MAKES HOLLYWOOD RUN? OUR HEAVYWEIGHTS REVEAL THE SHOCKING TRUTH: MONEY, RELATIONSHIPS AND SHEER DUMB LUCK.

by Patrick Goldstein

ERWIN MORE-BRIAN MEDAVOY Erwin More and Brian Medavoy aren't exactly the odd couple, but they attribute the success of the More-Medavoy management firm to their differences. Sure, More, who cut his show-biz teeth working for Norman Lear, has a TV background, while Medavoy, son of former TriStar chief Mike Medavoy, comes from the movie world. But they're good at playing up the yin/yang of their background. When the 39-year-old More says that the fast-paced Hollywood business whirl keeps him invigorated, 32-year-old Medavoy feigns exhaustion just thinking about it. They do have at least one thing in common: "We've been incredibly successful at identifying new talent," More says.

Their roster of clients bears him out: David Schwimmer, Jenna Elfman, Laura San Giacomo, Maria Bello, Marlee Matlin and Jonathan Silverman, among others. The pair were turned on to Elfman by her agent when she was doing the failed series



"Townies," had the foresight to sign Schwimmer before "Friends" and Bello before she became Dr. Anna Del Amico on "ER." Another client on the verge of fame just earned the right to drink legally—Ryan Reynolds, who stars in the midseason-replacement Fox sitcom "Two Guys, a Girl and a Pizza Place."

The partners went into business for themselves six years ago. They borrowed \$75,000 from Mercantile National Bank using More's condominium as collateral and set up shop with a typewriter, an assistant and two clients. Today they have 12 employees and 40 clients, 15 of whom are on prime-time TV shows.

In addition to providing management services, More-Medavoy has expanded into the producing business. The company has an overall film and TV production deal with 20th Century Fox, and the partners are currently executive producers on ABC's "Dharma and Greg," starring Elfman, and NBC's "Just Shoot Me," starring San Giacomo. "We're making our clients' careers viable enough to be able to produce for them," says Medavoy, "but getting them to that point is still our main focus."

Of course, there are other ways of measuring success. "We have complete autonomy, the ability to hand-pick the people we represent, and we enjoy our partnership," says More. "I think those are the things we celebrate." "Not me," Medavoy counters. "I celebrate being able to fly first class now." —*Renée Vogel*

The Kids Are All Right

A NEW GENERATION IS FINALLY SWEEPING INTO HOLLYWOOD. HERE ARE SOME NAMES TO WATCH ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CAM

I couldn't believe my eyes and, instantly, two thoughts came to mind: Hollywood seems like such a different place now.

And then, ironically: *Actually, it's not that different at all.*

Back then, management wasn't much of a thing, but we saw a major opportunity. Agents were focused more on the money, keeping clients employed and pushing that quote up higher, while the management side offered so much more room for creativity and, literally, creation.

Erwin has a great quote in that article: "It's not brain surgery. It's coming

up with creative ways to help someone's career.”

That summed up our attitude on the industry — and perhaps our slight naivete.

When we started there were only five management companies — you had to convince the artists what a manager did since everyone thought they were only for rock stars.

Guys like Bernie Brillstein, Benny Medina and Shep Gordon were leading the charge of creative managers who found the means to spearhead ideas from conception all the way through post-production, and we considered ourselves in that jack-of-all-trades mold. (We still do, of course.) We've got eyes for talent and ideas, which was crucial to building our business in those early days, but after much success, we went our separate ways for a few years. It wasn't until 2014 that we came back together to form More/Medavoy and embarked on this current chapter of our partnership.

But we've had to do so in a completely different Hollywood landscape, competing with 500,000 management companies.

When we relaunched, we were (and are!) swimming in an ocean of content producers, mediums, channels, and talent as opposed to a small lake. Today, with the existence of YouTube, there are virtually no barriers to entry. Today, you don't make a terrible movie and watch your career bomb. Every great actor seems to make at least one bad movie a year, honestly.

It's a new world. Or is it?

After the merger, we quickly discovered the keys to success in this town actually haven't changed at all. The game is the same.

Great content, like great talent, rises to the top, and when you work with the right people and get excited about the product you put out, people tend to invest in you.

We've actually found there is even more opportunity to experiment and get creative for our clients, and with the amount of money being tossed around, there's an incentive to take greater risks and pursue the projects we're most passionate about.

We, like all the fish in this sea, must aspire to the highest standard we can.

Television has never been better or a more attractive medium for A-list talent, and it's never represented a more exciting gateway for emerging talent.

That's an awesome thing for audiences, actors, and reps alike.

The reason we've managed to succeed once again is because things haven't changed all that much over the past two decades — not even our logo.....



MOREMEDAVOY
M A N A G E M E N T

We've combined our enthusiasm for the new, with the value of our experience.

Two things are definitely constant and remain the same: It's still a relationship business built on trust and at the end of the day you still have to do the work. We call everybody, we lunch with everybody, we keep a nice office space, we follow up constantly. This has always been standard stuff. But

simultaneously we've taken advantage of the industry's lowered barrier to entry to create more opportunities than ever before for the people who have chosen us to represent them.

I love Kevin Huvane's quote in WWD: *"If you do great work, the money flows but if your eye is always on the bottom line, you miss the artist."*

At the end of the day, that's what this industry is about. Building relationships and paying attention to the art.

Always has been, and always will be. And the endurance of our partnership is the proof

HOW TO HANDLE THE UPS AND DOWNS OF AN ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY CAREER

Whether you've spent a day or a decade in Hollywood, you know life in La La Land is a series of ups and downs. The peaks and valleys of the entertainment industry are as inevitable as the geography upon which this city was raised. My life and career have been no exception; I've experienced unbelievable highs and devastating lows.

But those experiences have taught me an important lesson:

THE LOWS ARE AS IMPORTANT TO YOUR CAREER AS THE HIGHS.

That's because while they're certainly not as fun, it's the lows that motivate you to work harder.

The lows force you to rededicate yourself to your craft.

The lows make you hungry.

In my own career, it's the lows I've experienced that drive me to work harder, achieve more, and learn as much from others as I possibly can.

THE LOWS ENABLE THE HIGHS.

Success in the entertainment industry is a direct result of your ability to turn

pitfalls into peaks. The danger comes from getting too comfortable at the top and forgetting to live your ups like you're down.

HOW TO TURN YOUR DOWNS INTO UPS.

Even when nothing feels like it's going your way, there are things you can do to feel the little victories and appreciate them.

It can be as easy as just taking a deep breath.

Remember, everybody has struggles, be they your next-door neighbor, or some of history's most successful people. Bill Gates lived paycheck to paycheck. Spielberg made bad movies. Hell, go see *Dunkirk* and you'll see the entire United Kingdom had a pretty bad time in 1940. The trick is turning those valleys into mountains.

Gates was driven by his failures; Spielberg learned from his mistakes; the UK's very existence was on the line. Okay, that last one is a bit extreme, but even on a personal level, turning the dark times in your favor is crucial.

In the same way, celebrating your little successes can go a long way.

Go to a yoga class, start reading a good book, work on developing a new skill – every investment in yourself is worth a pat on the back. Don't get stuck in your routine. Balancing your work and personal life is of vital importance.

If your boss calls you at all hours of the weekend asking for things, you probably don't want to work there much longer. There's more to life than what you do in the office. I love what I do, but I know there's only so much I can do on the work front before it starts to feel stale.

Ambition is valued, but so are well-rounded personalities and people with interests. In a world filled with highs and lows, there are so many different aspects of your life where you can find highs and be motivated by lows.

Life is more than work and money.

In that vein, let's talk about success. How do you define it? Take a minute to think about that. It can be a multi-faceted definition, but money probably shouldn't be your primary measure. Money comes and goes, and if you're too bound to it, you may just lose control of yourself.

Find what brings you happiness and chase it. Whether that is, like me, working hard to identify new skills and empowerment, or leading a life full of friends, don't let a one-track mind bear you down.

After all, peaks and valleys come and go; it's how you navigate them that matters.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR LUCK IN HOLLYWOOD

When I hear people talk about actors, I often hear “luck” referenced as a reason for their success.

“Sure,” I say. But then, I define luck as being prepared when opportunity arrives. You may not create it exactly, but you sure as hell execute it.

There are always going to be things outside of your control but, as an actor, it’s imperative to see “luck” not just as a random whim of the universe, but as a foundation that can be built upon. That’s one lesson I’ve learned over the years, and one I’ve been thinking about recently.

As such, I was inspired to put together a collection of thoughts that I feel may be valuable to actors searching for success — or at least in need of a pick me up. These 11 guiding principles will give you the best odds to achieve success, at least professionally, by helping you improve your outlook on life.

1. FIGURE OUT YOUR PURPOSE

Many people spend the majority of their life trying to “find” their purpose. Unfortunately for them, they don’t realize that all they had to do to understand their purpose was to look within and ask themselves:

- Who am I?
- What do I care about?

As an actor swimming in the Hollywood ocean, you've probably already discovered your life's greatest passion. If acting isn't it, then this may be a bumpy road.

Knowing this passion puts you one crucial step ahead of many people out there. The secret for you, however, is to remind yourself of this passion. Everybody needs a refresher on who they are and what they stand for — but it's not always going to come from outside. You have to be your own best advocate.

Reflect on what you enjoy doing, working on, and keep a list of all that inspires you. Read that list. Believe in that list.

The most direct and fulfilling route to success is to define the specific characteristics of your purpose, and then work on executing strategies to achieve it.

2. FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

I ask this question to clients and potential clients all the time. I learn so much from the answer. You have to know what motivates so you can see it – If you can't see it, you most likely won't achieve it.

There are times when we all need to reach down deep and pull something out of ourselves that we didn't know was there. There are early mornings, late nights, and stressful situations when we ask ourselves the question – what are we doing and is it really worth it?

Whether it's getting out of bed to go for a run in the morning or going in to read for a casting director who has never hired you, getting motivated is tough, but finding this motivating factor is crucial to any kind of success.

Think about what motivates you to achieve your life goals, and it can't be money. *Being driven by money will only leave you dissatisfied, because you will never have enough, and it comes at a severe personal cost.*

Challenge yourself to find your personal source of inspiration – a child, a lover, or whatever makes you go that extra step. Think of these things when you feel ready to give up.

3. NEVER STOP LEARNING AND HELPING OTHERS

What did I learn today? I ask this question to myself every night on the way

home from work.

You may have completed your formal education, but it's incredibly important for everyone to ALWAYS seek education and continue to learn. This is because consistent learning brings out more fun in life.

It doesn't matter what you are learning about, as long as you are challenging your brain – questioning why and rebuking negative preconceived notions. So learn about dog breeds, how to make paper, the history of toast, renaissance art. Just learn!

Knowledge should be stockpiled, loved, and then shared with those around you.

Information is not only power, it is the currency to self-fulfillment. The more you know about the world, the more you can use that knowledge to better yourself and seek additional opportunities.

You never know when that knowledge may come in handy for a role, or a shared interest may score a role in a film.

4. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE PROBLEMS

Twenty-five years in the entertainment business and X amount of years in life (I know I look 29, but I am a little older than that) have taught me that life is a never-ending circle of problems. Aspiring actors new to Los Angeles will know this intimately. They are as consistent as death and taxes. You can always find stress and anxiety, even in happy moments and joyous occasions.

Yet, once you actually appreciate the beauty of the problem, life becomes a hell of a lot easier. When you're just starting out, yes, finding the time to nurture your craft is difficult when the bills are piling up and rent shoots up every year. But you're not alone. And it's not all for naught. There are lessons to be learned in the struggle.

Accepting that disorder and unpredictability are elements of life can help you finally attain some Zen. Knowing that problems are going to come (and there is nothing you can do about it) is empowering. It gives you a sense of control so problems don't seem so scary after all. It teaches you lessons, and it gives you life experience that influences everything you do and every role you play.

You are always going to stumble into roadblocks throughout your career in

this industry, it's how you deal with them and move forward that makes you who you are.

5. OWN YOUR MISTAKES

This one is short and sweet. You made them, and now you get to learn from them. If the lesson is more valuable than the pride and shame of making the mistake itself, then it wasn't truly a mistake after all.

6. HONESTY COUNTS

Superficiality may rule in Hollywood, but the lessons you learned about telling the truth in grade school still reign supreme. Always go for the cold hard truth.

Work to build your reputation as someone who is known for being consistently honest. That's a brand you can carry into any business, no matter where your passions take you.

A fudge here, a bent truth there, all add up to a string of lies that can quickly spread out of control. In a business where people share information like Buca di Beppo entrees, there's a good chance you will get caught in your lie.

Professionally or personally, your word is your reputation. Your reputation is your livelihood. Being honest will endear you to the people in power, sure. At the same time, it will also endear you to yourself because you're not selling out or stressing to remember what you said to whom.

7. GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Challenge yourself to do something that is uncomfortable every day. That goes double for pursuing roles.

If you're an overachiever and really want to push yourself, complete three things each day that are uncomfortable to you. Why you ask? Because getting out of your comfort zone is a verifiable psychological concept that can assist you in making changes in your life. These positive changes can lead to tangible personal growth and success.

In acting, getting outside of your range and trying a method or genre that is completely baffling to you obviously strengthens your craft. Work a muscle you don't use very often and it starts to get stronger.

Even though stress is generally avoided, a little bit of stress is actually healthy for us. Stress actually motivates and pushes us to finish things that we have been procrastinating on. Research has even shown that those who are willing to take risks (i.e. step out of their comfort zone) will reap the biggest rewards. It's the same as working out to get in shape.

You can't do the same thing day in and out and expect to see change – challenging yourself is the only way to see results!

8. CONFIDENCE IS KEY

When you're confident in what you're doing and your abilities, it will sting a lot less when things don't go your way. Sure, it will still hurt when you're passed over for a role, and may even doubt your abilities. But if you maintain confidence in yourself, your passion, and purpose, you will have the courage to continue and the assurance to know you will reach success.

Without that confidence, it's much easier to get caught up in what others tell you to do and waver from your principles. When you start doubting yourself, it shows, and nobody is going to cast someone who doesn't know who they are. How would they possibly know who this character is?

9. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Surround yourself with people who have strength in areas that you know nothing about.

Listening and learning about other people's backgrounds fuels your creative stimulation and gives you perspective. If you need inspiration for a new role or project, you may not need to look any further than your friends. Knowing a diverse group of people is a gift; use it to your advantage. Don't just hang out with actors.

Your success later on depends on the friends you chose as ultimately you are betting on each other. I am not sure WME (William Morris Endeavor) would be around today if it were not for the close relationship Patrick Whitesell had with Scott Stuber and vice versa. Maybe someday you'll be one half of a great comedy duo, but I'd bet anything on you both being empowered by people with different skill sets.



From left to right: Scott Stuber, Richard Lovett, Jason Sloane and Brian Medavoy

I get asked all the time what kind of company are you going to build. My answer is always, if I surround myself with people I like, trust, laugh, learn from and could teach, the rest will take care of itself.

10. DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Dreams without goals are just dreams.

Look at yourself honestly: who do you want to be, and what are you willing to do to become that person? Not just as an actor, but personally as well.

Once you have clarified your goals, you need to write them down, so that you can look at them to see if you are on the right track to accomplishing them. Taking the time to define what you want to accomplish is paramount to actually accomplishing it.

There's a lot of research and helpful tips available online to help you write your goals in such a way that they are SMART (specific, measurable, realistic, attainable, and trackable). Do a little research to set yourself up for success by concentrating on developing your goals.

11. PROVE THINGS TO YOURSELF

There's a great moment in *Rudy* when Charles Dutton's character tells Sean Astin, "In this life, you don't have to prove nothing to nobody but yourself." If you take this into your rooms and auditions, I promise you will see amazing results.

Easier said than done, sure. At some point, all of your ideas, goals and time spent need to add up to results. First for yourself – then your results should create value – value for others.

It's in this notion that I always ask others what your drive and motivation are.

How do you watch award shows? Are you rooting for your peers or pissed that you're not up there? Give love and you will get it back in spades.

The second best use of your time, other than with your family, will be pursuing the dreams that have been planted in your heart – doing the work and creating whatever it was you were put here to design. Finding yourself is the beginning of the journey. Through faith, hope and perseverance, you'll continue on your journey toward your purpose, which is your unique why that only you have been given.

CONCLUSION

When we are brave enough to act, put things in motion and keep moving, we begin to realize the pursuit of the life and career that we've imagined is intoxicating. Assuming we give maximum effort with a positive attitude, and plan things out intelligently and thoughtfully, the best bet in life is always the one we place on ourselves. It's experience that backs up our bet or words – you now have that. It's living in the moment that gives meaning to everything.

You have the opportunity to blend your unique talent with enthusiasm, spirit and moxie, creating things and helping others, like nobody else ever has in history. There's a tremendous amount of power in that. There's pride in that. It's a lot of responsibility, and equal parts exciting and exhilarating. I can assure you—you need to desire and want this more than anyone else to achieve success, respect and accolades.

Success, however you define it, will always require that you care and that you work harder, smarter and more efficiently than anyone else. This is

especially the case when the value that you create is for others. That's how you create beautiful work, thrive in your craft, and deliver exceptional value to everyone you encounter.

5 THINGS EVERY ACTOR CAN LEARN FROM THE BEATLES



“What you think, you become.
What you feel, you attract.
What you imagine, you create.”

– Buddha

THE BEATLES KNEW WHAT IT TOOK TO BE AN ACTOR

There's no shortage of takes on The Beatles and what they meant to music, culture, and even history at large. So forgive me if I sound repetitive like a BuzzFeed listicle here, but I rather have you read my blogs because they're written in moments when I'm reminded of lessons I know I've learned, but often struggle to live by. I think that's something we can all relate to. When I saw Ron Howard's Beatles documentary, *Eight Days a Week*, I had to sit down and share a few lessons of which The Beatles reminded me. This is both for myself and for any wayward reader, especially of the Hollywood variety.

The Beatles, like the technicolor footage from ABC Cinema with which the documentary begins, were wholly original, authentic, and not nearly as polished as we tend to imagine them. From their secret rallying cry when the going got tough, to the original American fan Marsha Albert, *Eight Days a Week* paints an honest, discerning picture of The Beatles' truthfully less-than-meteoric rise of the variety that only Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, and the good people of Imagine Entertainment can.

After seeing this fascinating, paradigm-shifting epic, I couldn't help but sit down and convey some of what I learned here:

1. SUCCESS IS A F*CKING BRUTAL ROAD



The Beatles may seem like they were an overnight sensation, but they each had to sacrifice a great deal to reach their success. Obviously each practiced their art for hours upon hours, but they all also played hundreds of anonymous gigs, picking up petty cash, failing to find their sound and figuratively banging their heads against the wall. They struck out a lot.

In his bestselling book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell talks about the 10,000 hour rule that applies to acting, the music business, the film industry and frankly, many other talents, skills, and industries. He references the Beatles directly as his main case study and talks about all the hours and hours they put in.

“The Beatles performed live in Hamburg, Germany over 1,200 times from 1960 to 1964, amassing more than 10,000 hours of playing time, therefore meeting the 10,000-Hour Rule. Gladwell asserts that all of the time The Beatles spent performing shaped their talent, and quotes Beatles’ biographer Philip Norman as saying, “So by the time they returned to England from Hamburg, Germany, ‘they sounded like no one else. It was the making of them.’”

There’s an obvious corollary here. *No matter how talented you are, no matter what industry you’re in – be it Hollywood or healthcare – you have to*

fail in order to succeed. As an actor, you have to practice, you have to take risks, you have to ignore the hecklers and study the critics. You won't become a success overnight, and you won't master anything if you can't find progress in criticism.

The Beatles got their big break, which is why we widely consider them such a remarkable off-the-radar smash, but they took their licks too.

2. LIFE SHOULD BE FUN

Obvious, right? Yet it's still so easy to forget. If you don't love the journey, you won't love the destination. (All plane flights excluded.)

The Beatles fed off of one another and used each other's energy to make the hard times tolerable and the exciting times memorable. If you can't have fun, then what's the point?

In *Eight Days a Week*, you see The Beatles jumping on their hotel beds, playing jokes on one another, and genuinely enjoying the remarkable ride. While touring, they led scripted, routine, extremely scrutinized lives, yet they always found a way to make it all fun. Especially when you're working in an industry as competitive and cutthroat as entertainment, you've got to appreciate little wins, and *you've got to go out of your way to make time to be happy.* You can't motivate yourself if you're depressed. It's on nobody else but you to prioritize your happiness.

3. CONVICTION GOES A LONG WAY

The Beatles were no strangers to controversy. They were some of the first major celebrities to use their influence to enter the political sphere and affect the conversation. For their efforts, they were widely vilified, and yet they stuck to their guns.

While touring the US, they refused to play venues with segregated seating, and took the furious backlash that came with it. Today, we admire them and recognize them by writing blogs about how ahead of their time they were and the life lessons their experience offers. When you stand firm for what you believe, you command respect. Even if that respect is vitriol, you mustn't compromise what makes you you. Stand up for what you believe, and others will follow.

4. BE HUMBLE

While you should remain confident in what you believe and what you do, nobody likes a braggart. Each Beatle remained humble, modest, and made sure the people who elevated them received their due. Whether that meant congratulating their opening acts on a great show or thanking the sound guys, The Beatles recognized that the littlest gestures from the biggest people went an extremely long way. Little gestures from regular people still go a long way. *No matter how big you get, your head must stay the same size.* People respond to those who extend a hand. People are inspired to sacrifice when others sacrifice first.

5. THE MOST OBVIOUS ONE: GIVE EVERYTHING 100%

Can you look in the mirror right now and say you've given everything you done today absolutely everything you could give? If the answer is yes, then you better go give a little more tomorrow.

This is the most essential value I strive to live by, and it is so, so difficult. *Mostly because none of us really has any idea what the hell 100% really is.* Watching *Eight Days a Week* and seeing the sincere passion, power, and pride The Beatles put into every single show, every single recording session and rehearsal, I started to gather an idea of what 100% meant to them. And it's an absurd amount of effort. But not just effort; it's talent, it's pride, it's enthusiasm, it's an accountability to their fellow man. Everything we've talked about here. Playing an instrument for them was (is) life. Bringing music into the world was a purpose – one so incredibly profound that when their relationships frayed and they couldn't give it 100% anymore, they ended the band entirely.

You want to know how hard it is to give 100% to everything? The Beatles toured together for four years. That's it. They gave absolutely everything until they just couldn't anymore, and yet we still remember them as the greatest band of all time. The Rolling Stones are still somehow touring and, while it's impressive, nobody is going to put them over The Beatles in the all-time rankings.

YOU HAVE TO SIGN THE TOWN BEFORE YOU SIGN THE TALENT

Over the years in this business, I've seen many talented people drift away because success didn't come within their expected time-frame. They've spent years at an agency, booked a few commercials, and they get worn out because they just can't quite clear that hump. As brutal as it sounds, Hollywood is a Sisyphean town, and it takes not just many little successes, but a few epic failures to really learn that "expected timeframe" just isn't a luxury any of us have.

As a representative, I get to work at the center of this town. I have the privilege of introducing my clients to people and opportunities that they have not (or don't have the time to) find on their own. That in itself is rewarding work, especially since I have been on the bottom looking up more than once. Beyond that, it has given me perspective that I feel may be valuable for other aspiring representatives, actors, crew – or really anybody.

Before I could make those introductions, first I had to get to know the town. I had to earn my way into the community. It required building relationships, trust, and understanding not just with the big-time players, but with everybody, because everybody has something to contribute here.

An interest in showing everyone you meet who you really are says

something very important about who you are.

What that boils down to:

You have to sign the town before you sign the talent.

You need the town to believe in you, respect you, and know that you can be a force in moving forward common interests. You need to demonstrate that you get things done. More than that, you have to be somebody who people want to spend time with. Sure, it sounds like something parents tell their kindergarteners on the first day of school, but it's valid anywhere. I'm not saying you need to be liked. There are just too many people, perspectives, and personalities for everyone to always like each other. But it is vital to at least be a compelling presence, and somebody who is reliable and engaged.

The town must want to spend time with you. A project often takes years of interaction among countless people to see it through. Like in Law School or Medical School you have to extend your education. It's specialized knowledge and in-depth understanding. It's smart work and hard work combined. And if you're really paying attention, you'll notice that the people at the top approach the town with a well-honed strategy.

That's what I want to share with you today — some fundamental approaches that have helped me sign the town:

DON'T BE AN ASSHOLE.

Woah! That's a shocker! When you think Hollywood, you might think Ari Gold or legendary mistreatment of entry-level employees, assistants, and unknown talent. While, yes, the town lags decades behind the rest of the country's industry in employment practices, it is not an inhuman place. It's competitive, it's cutthroat, but it's also an undeniably close community. You can't build business relationships on just business goals; you have to be real. You have to be kind.

There's a famous quote that says, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about."

In this town, we don't know everyone's battles, but we've got an idea because we're each fighting our own, as well. If nothing else, sharing in the lunacy of this town should create a culture of respect — and respect is manifested in kindness.

I've had the luxury of knowing many of my business contacts in this industry since childhood, and I consider them some of my closest friends. Their selflessness at times has been the greatest asset of my career, and I take it very seriously when I have the opportunity to help anybody I consider a friend, because empathy matters. Kindness isn't a weakness, we're not living in Westeros, it's a natural ability that connects us. You can always be taken advantage of in anything you do, but leading with your values instead of your insecurities rubs off on people.

Show up.

"80% of success is showing up" – Woody Allen

Sounds easy, right?

When I talk about "showing up," I mean more than putting on clean underpants and driving to the office. Showing up is channeling all of your focus and passion into the present moment.

And now this one, and this one, and so on and so forth.

Showing up is how you walk, talk, listen, stay energized, stay humble, stay accountable. Especially when it's the last thing you want to be doing in that moment. Getting out of bed in the morning can be a Herculean task, leading with your best self every single day is positively masochistic. Believe me, I know. And you're never going to do it perfectly, but if you're being your best self 75% of the time, it becomes a habit. Whatever you need to do personally to get to that state of mental and emotional presence – be it working out, meditation, reading, giving a friend a call once a week – it's important to make that personal time in private so you can show up in public.

FOLLOW-UP.

Did you know relationships take work? Yes, you've probably seen a sitcom.

Everyone knows that follow-up is important, so why do so many people suck at it? Why put in the time to build a rapport with someone if you are going to let the relationship fizzle out?

Following up is more than a pleasantry or a gentle reminder of something that should get done. It shows the kind of organization and tenacity that you will bring to any project, and to any client's career. It shows you pay attention

to relationships, and that you put in the work to get them right. People remember this stuff!

Remember people's interests, go out of your way to show a mutual interest, to foster common ground. A client of mine fell in love with Valiant Comics a couple of years ago and I set up a meeting with two of their creative directors so he could express his appreciation and get on the ground floor of their eventual movie universe.

We all forget, we all get lazy. And sometimes you feel like a follow-up will be too late to matter. You're wrong. Pick up the phone and check in. The most likely response?

"Oh, I've been meaning to call you."

Pay attention to the little things.

"Enjoy the little things in life, because one day you'll look back and realize they were the big things." — Kurt Vonnegut

If you're only living in anticipation of the next big thing, you'll miss details that can completely change your perspective. Or completely blow your mind. If you miss the small things on the way to the big things, the big things won't feel nearly as big. Value gets lost in the blur. Ferris Bueller said something about this...

Sure, it's challenging to slow down and savor something small in a town that moves at warp speed. However, if you shift your mindset — if you're showing up — you'll be rewarded by amazing people and actions that fix in your memory.

For me, this means noticing when someone helps out, and then thanking them — no matter if the deed was big or small. It means recognizing a subtle choice one of my clients made in a role that adds nuance to the performance or shows growth as an artist. It means hearing that a former assistant has been promoted and sending a note of congratulations. It means having a conversation with a valet or the guy who delivers our mail.

These are such simple daily tasks, yet they are always teaching me new things about others, about myself, and how the world works.

I was thinking just the other day about some of the little things I've focused on that have made a big difference in my career:

- I got to know and work with small agencies. They might not have the bargaining power or precedent of the big dogs, but in giving them time and attention — by knowing what they are doing and how they are doing it — I have developed (lucrative) relationships.

- Before I had clients, I spent my days around photographers. You know why? Think about it ... what do photographers do all day? Who are they taking pictures of? The talent. Photographers spend all day with actors and actresses, and no one else is contacting photographers.

- I spoke at all the acting schools I could. This is where the future talent lives. I would always tell them to combine the craft with knowledge of how to navigate the town; that's how a career takes off.

- Back when I couldn't meet with clients, when I was first getting started, I would meet with all the casting directors I could. Even though I couldn't contribute talent, I added value because of my story and my experience. I had strong relationships with them when my time did come around. In fact, when I first met Bella Heathcote, one of my clients, it was when I was out to lunch with Matt Skrobalak — a friend and a casting director.

Paying attention to the little things means more than taking notice. It means you celebrate them, cherish them, and seek them out. Others will value that you've noticed. It strengthens not only your business relationships but your human relationships.

And if you don't think the little things matter, you've probably never had a pebble stuck in your shoe.

Master the art of ass-kissing without kissing ass.

You will find plenty of brown nosers in town. They are painful to be around. On one level, they annoy you to death. On another, your heart breaks for their obliviousness.

Side note because I thought this was funny. Webster's actually has a definition for "brown noser": from the implication that servility is tantamount to having one's nose in the anus of the person from whom advancement is sought.

Definitions are truly amazing things, huh?

Now let's be serious: A little flattery never hurts. While there is kindness in this town, there are also hungry egos. Feeding them the right way can make all the difference.

So here's a crash course on ass-kissing without kissing ass:

- Ask for advice. Curiosity is a sign of intelligence – a sign of a growth mindset. It lets someone know that you value his or her point-of-view.
- Argue a valid counterpoint, but end in agreement. It shows that you're not a yes-man, and it makes the other person feel like they've led you to see the light.
- Research – know more about the person than a stranger would know. People appreciate when you have taken a genuine interest in learning about them.
- Make small talk active. Small talk is where 93% of ass-kissing occurs. So instead of asking someone how their day is going, ask “what are you working on?” Instead of saying, “I hope you survived the traffic,” say, “let's get to work so you can beat the traffic home.” Just move the conversation quickly to something that is actually important to them. They get the focus, you keep your nose clean.

Like all things in life, calibration is key. But when you find the right balance, this strategy can be a true work of art.

BE YOU.

Don't underestimate the value of your unique narrative on your work and to the lives of those around you. Where you've been, what you've experienced, and what moves you adds something to the dynamic of this town.

Everybody wants to be somebody else. The next Angelina. The next Charlie Kaufman. The next Steven Spielberg.

I guarantee the past, present, and future you is much, much better.

Build your reputation in an authentic way. If someone in town wants to be in the business of YOU, there should be no alternative. Believe in your own narrative, your own personality, and you'll corner a market that believes in it as well.

There are many remarkably talented managers in this town who can take

talent to the next level. My value is that I'm me, and there's a market that values that.

Just a few parting thoughts for the TL;DR crowd:

If you're at point A and you want to get to point C, it is B that matters. B is where you jump out of the plane. B is where your hands get dirty. B is falling on your ass and climbing back up again.

Nobody gets what they want by dreaming about it, talking about it, or insisting that Mexico is going to pay for it.

Success is never an accident. Success does not arrive at your door like a cheese grater from Amazon. You have to go out and get it.

Never hope for more than you are willing to work for.

B is the point in the movie where our hero is trying to achieve her goal, in spite of relentless opposition that stands in her way. If she's not working like crazy towards that goal, it's hard to really care about what happens. If you can compel this town through your actions, there's a good chance of turning your story into a blockbuster.

GIVE THEORY: SUCCESS IS MEASURED BY WHAT YOU DO FOR

OTHERS

“We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.” — Winston Churchill

I love this quote because it so adeptly pinpoints why I am so passionate about giving.

Wealth, notoriety, status, and power are only external, socially constructed measures of success. To me, success is better measured by the health of your relationships and is heightened by what you do for others.

When building success in this way, I believe you are on the path to truly make a difference. After all, you don't control the outcomes of your life; your principles do.

Today, I want to share with you the 4 principles of my personal GIVE theory.

GENEROSITY

“That’s what I consider true generosity: You give your all and

*yet you always feel as if it costs you nothing.” — Simone de
Beauvoir*

I get 5 to 10 emails a week from actors asking me to represent them. Believe it or not, I write them all back. I do it because I believe in the power of human connection. I do it because I empathize with the uphill that actors typically face. I do it because no one else bothers to do it.

And over time, I've realized that I also do it for a more selfish reason ...

It feels good to give generously.

And it's not just me — that's backed by science.

A study at Stony Brook University found that generosity triggers a response in your brain's mesolimbic pathway, which recognizes rewarding stimuli. Generosity releases dopamine, endorphins that give people a sense of euphoria; and oxytocin, which is associated with tranquility and inner peace.

Let me simplify: it's the same response you get from sex or having a pizza delivered ... or — ideally — both (it's one a hell of a rush!)

If you want to be more successful as an actor, I suggest you think about what you can give. It could be as simple as paying compliments to fellow actors. Maybe you want to help teach others or run lines with them (UGH!).

If something moves you, do something about it. Don't be a bystander when it comes to generosity.

I'm certainly not content to sit around and merely appreciate a passing moment of brilliance or a fantastic performance; I need to share that moment with others and let that talent know how I feel. It's not even a conscious process. I just know I need to find out how I might involve myself in that person continued success — I need to find ways to embolden them to deepen their mastery of craft.

Through an act of generosity, I'm tying my horse to him or her for at least some period of time. I'm invested, which means we sink or swim together. So it only makes me want to try even harder. Do even more. You don't burn out as a giver when you start to see the impact you are creating.

No matter what you decide to do, generosity is never wasted. It will eventually pay off.

Trust me.

INSPIRATION

“Live like every week it’s Shark Week!” – Tracy Jordan (30 Rock)

People want to work with others who are truly inspired by what they are doing.

Just think about a time when you were filled with passion, drive, and creativity — it’s impossible for others to not take notice. In fact, inspiration is strangely contagious.

But inspiration is often thought of as a notion that strikes in moments. Conversely, I believe it can be part of one’s approach to life in the long term. And it is largely connected to the meaning we derive from life.

Look, I could not work for more than five minutes in a job that I wasn’t passionately compelled to do. If I wasn’t inspired at a broader level, I simply couldn’t do it.

Don’t get me wrong — this is different from only doing things that you enjoy. It means that the only way to succeed is to follow a path where you understand why you are on that road. I know who I am, and I believe in my work. This allows me to make authentic connections with others.

I decided to do what I do because I have the ability to help others in their career. God has given us all a gift, and if we use this gift to help others we get paid back spiritually and sometimes even financially. I have been known to build stars from obscurity. Why do I do it?

I’m not inspired by making phone calls all day or reading a stack of scripts over the weekend. I’m inspired by my ability to help actors achieve their goals. It’s the most enjoyable part of my job.

... It’s when people start to make a lot of money that they can become a real pain in the ass.

Here is the real take away for actors; do you understand why you are an actor? What inspires you to pursue such a difficult trajectory? To get rich? To sleep in late?

Or do you feel that by expressing your creativity, you can help others understand the world and themselves? Do you want to move them to take action?

Don't answer that question without thinking it through. Because it is critically important to understand what matters to you and why.

VALUE

One thing that had always stayed me was a letter my father wrote me many years ago:

“Because of the community we live in, where people and things can be larger than life and reality takes place in that rarefied air at the top, it's easy to get the wrong idea about what a person should be... If I teach you nothing else, you are a success in my eyes and in your grandparent's eyes if you aspire to be an honorable man, a good person, good for your word, good to others, helpful to those less fortunate than yourself, carving your way through life that is open and above board, honest and respectful, gentlemanly and courteous, taking responsibility for your actions- not trying to blame the next employee or your background and upbringing or anyone other than yourself when you step out of line.”

What is the one word that links all of these different actions together?

Value.

Valuing others, valuing yourself. Believing in your own worth. Just as important as being generous and inspired in my opinion, value allows you to understand that the things you do actually matter.

One of the most important lessons to learn in Hollywood is that value can be defined in a number of ways — from money and fame to influencing and helping those around you. I have made millions and I have lost millions; why do I have the ability to keep doing it? I am really good at what I do. I understand where my greatest potential lies.

In a way, it's probably why I appreciate football coaches. At the end of the day, the winning coaches are not simply the best strategists; they are motivators and empathizers for the team.

That's where I believe my value lies as well. My favorite clients are those who are pure, raw, unfiltered talent who go on to great success through

motivation. These are the people who allow me to capitalize on my own value and help me to unlock their own.

What is your value as an actor?

EXEMPLIFICATION (Lead By Example)

“It’s easier to exemplify values than teach them.” —
Theodore Hesburgh

If you truly believe in what you do, think, and value — prove it by example.

My clients, friends and colleagues inspire me on a daily basis. By inviting them to lead and vice versa I have made a career. Example is everything; that’s how I got into managing. Leading by example doesn’t necessarily mean doing anything particularly grand. For instance, I might send out letters to people if they do something that particularly moves me. It’s a concrete action that shows I care.

Sometimes leading by example means you need to take risks. In many cases, this is when it is more important than ever to be what’s in the pudding. If you’re feeling uncomfortable, you’re doing it right. There comes a time when the biggest risk is not taking one, and it will be your job to get out there and go for it. No one is perfect the first time out, but they learn from their experiences.

All of my assistants have gone on to develop wonderful careers of their own, and I believe part of that is due to how I have exemplified my ethos on a day-to-day basis. I have worked to instill these values in my clients as well.

Exemplification is not an action in one specific moment — it is a journey, a consistency. It is the manifestation of your character in the world. Even amidst failures.

In fact, failures are nothing more than exploring and developing your strengths — and one day, reaching your potential. No matter how long you live, you will always have the opportunity to grow.

And with that in mind, it becomes much easier to help others; no singular end goal should take control of you. Your success is measured by what you are doing now. Live in the present and start this very second. The world is your oyster.

The GIVE Theory is the greatest piece of advice I can give to anyone who desires to find success, be they a performer or something else. And I would

start with asking yourself, “what does success mean to me?”

In my next post, I will be discussing 11 steps you can use to build success and manifest your desired destiny.

“Don’t Just Take, Give”

Don’t just learn, experience.

Don’t just read, absorb.

Don’t just change, transform.

Don’t just relate, advocate.

Don’t just promise, prove.

Don’t just criticize, encourage.

Don’t just think, ponder.

Don’t just take, give.

Don’t just see, feel.

Don’t just dream, do.

Don’t just hear, listen.

Don’t just talk, act.

Don’t just tell, show.

Don’t just exist, live.”

— Roy T. Bennett, *The Light in the Heart*

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MANAGER

If you do not have a clear objective, you have no definition of winning.

If you do not have a clear strategy, you have no chance of winning.

If all you have are tactics, you have no right to win.

Sharing. Selling. Servicing.

- By sharing, you are giving someone information that could completely change the way they see things.
- By sharing, you have the power to help people understand themselves and the issues we face in our complicated world today.
- By sharing, you also quickly learn things about yourself. Discovering the truth about ourselves is a lifetime of work. But, it's worth the effort.

It's crucial to surround yourself with like-minded people.

On this day, the objective was to promote the premiere of the television series, *Prison Break* for our client Sarah Wayne Callies (*The Walking Dead*, *Prison Break*)



CARING.

People don't care what you know until they know what you care. No one more cares more than my partner Erwin More who is brainstorming with producer Craig Flores (Indie Producer formerly of Voltage Pictures) about the television business.



THE POWER OF COLLABORATION.

Any partnership will benefit from an enthusiastic commitment to build trust, communication, community and excitement (even though neither one of them appear to be excited!) You're only as good as those you associate with. Surround yourself with people that reflect who you want to be and how you want to feel, energies are contagious.



Erwin Moore and Alan Nevins.



Berta Treitl and Michael Davis.



Brian Medavoy and Michael Davis hanging out at Facebook Live.



Sarah signing the Facebook board.



Erwin Moore, Sarah Wayne Callies, Mark Feuerstein & Brian Medavoy.

The days that you put in will add up to something meaningful.

You don't need to have big wins every day for your work to be valuable. All you need is one small victory each day. And if you continue to build small wins on top of other wins, you will eventually achieve a moment of clarity, like the one below. Seeing Sarah overcome with emotion during an interview while talking about her abundance of success is what I work for. It gave me the chills, and in that moment I truly understood what my hard work is building towards. *You won't see these moments every day, or even every week, but you should always keep them in mind as the goal that you're working towards – whether helping make these moments happen for a client, or for yourself.*

Sarah Wayne Callies on Good Day LA

After a long and fulfilling day of work, I've come to realize that the heart of collective learning is the sharing of information. We share information because it helps us survive. We learn faster. We make better decisions. We accomplish more with less.

Your purpose in life is to find and do things that make you smile, laugh and forget time.

"And, in the end...the love you make is equal to the love you take."

– John Lennon

HOLLYWOOD VS. HOLLYWOULDN'T: 12 TIPS TO HELP ACTORS NAVIGATE THE HOLLYWOOD LANDSCAPE

“If you always do what you’ve always done, you will always get what you have always got.” – Henry Ford

I love actors. Compared to most people, actors are often more personable – they feel more free to access their feelings and emotions. They tend to be more in touch with their inner child. They have courage. Most are sensitive and more vulnerable than the average person, and yet they are in a profession where they must subject themselves to repeated rejection. That takes a person who is tough and brave, yet also sensitive and exposed. It’s a difficult, unusual and admirable combination.

In my opinion, Los Angeles is one of the toughest cities in the country to succeed in. Everyone moves here to pursue their dreams. Most come ill prepared and don’t make it. Don’t come here to look for the easy way out.

In any other city, you’d go to find yourself, fall in love, and then discover your life’s work. Here, people do the opposite. They come to achieve everything – a career first, then maybe come to terms with themselves, then

maybe fall in love.

99.9% of the people in Los Angeles carry headshots. I have even met lawyers and doctors that have busted out headshots.

It's not easy, and it's a mindset that simply doesn't work for everyone. That's why I've put together this little primer to help aspiring creatives, or anyone who is deep in the morass of figuring out just what the hell they're doing here.

Most importantly, be brutally honest with yourself and where you can see yourself succeeding based on the media zeitgeist around you. You might not be Brad Pitt or Brie Larson, and that's really okay.

That said, let me break it down even further for you into some easy to understand do's and don'ts that will help you navigate the Hollywood landscape:

1. DO know your personal story inside and out and how it differentiates you. DON'T derive it from or compare it to someone else.

2. DO keep a list of ten folks you know (and be sure to nurture those relationships!), and ten folks you'd like to get to know. DON'T just wait for people to fall into your life.

3. DO things that make you uncomfortable – writing to casting directors, talking to strangers, readings the trades, cold-calling, waking up earlier, and keeping a journal. DON'T coast.

4. DO create marketing materials like a website, blog, and social media. DON'T expect that you'll just be discovered at that 99-seat theater community show you're doing.

5. DO keep short, medium, and long term goals and keep them attainable. DON'T just swing for the fences.

6. DO dedicate at least 3-4 hours each day to your own business – research, class, looking for auditions, making self tapes, creating your own content, etc. DON'T allow yourself to get locked down in a gig that exhausts you and kills your passion.

7. DO track and celebrate your little wins. A good baseball team still loses 70 games a year. DON'T belittle your victories as being somehow not as impressive, or compare them to anyone else.

8. DO train with coaches and professionals. DON'T assume you know everything.

9. DO have a clear understanding of how you feel after each audition. Pleasure is always derived from something outside of you, whereas joy arises from something within. Try to please yourself, and... DON'T try and please everyone else. (In other words: stay out of the results.)

10. DO eat well, exercise, and make eye contact – present yourself well. DON'T take this for granted – it's an image conscious industry, town, and world. Taking care of yourself physically is the easiest way to feel confident emotionally.

11. DO let rejection motivate you and fuel your fire. Learn from it. DON'T dwell on it for long and let it stand in your way.

12. DO find balance in your life by exploring other passions, interests and hobbies. DON'T make your life 100% about acting. Go jump in the ocean, go dancing, tell your loved ones how much they mean to you, volunteer and be of service.

This may all seem self-explanatory, but I've always liked to think of that word as a reminder that there are some things that sound obvious but that you still have to explain to yourself. 'Self-explanatory' is another word for 'repetitive' and the most important things worth knowing are the ones you repeat to yourself, either consciously or subconsciously, constantly.

Having a regular, healthy routine is critical to constantly improve yourself. Being prepared for every opportunity is what every successful actor should strive for. Sticking to the routine is harder than it sounds, but it is necessary. Now the question you must ask yourself is HOW to get yourself to START maintaining a healthy routine to become a successful actor. Too often, we make plans, but fail to follow through on them. In my next blog, I show you how to stop dreaming, and how to start doing.

I will leave you with my favorite quote from Lao Tzu:

*"Always we hope
someone else has the answer,*

*some other place will be better,
some other time,
it will turn out.*

This is it.

*No one else has the answer,
no other place will be better,
and it has already turned out.*

*At the center of your being,
you have the answer:
you know who you are and
you know what you want.*

*There is no need to run outside
for better seeing,
nor to peer from a window.*

*Rather abide at the center of your being:
for the more you leave it,
the less you learn.*

*Search your heart and see
the way to do is to be."*

PILOT SEASON 2017: TELEVISION IS CHANGING (TALENT MANAGER AND CLIENTS PERSPECTIVE)

Outside of American democracy, there may be no less efficient or cost-effective process on Earth than pilot season. In which lies the beauty.

After two blissful weeks of shut down, when assistants capitalize on their only vacation for the year by watching the screeners they stole, writing the scripts they'll push on other assistants for the next year of networking events, and just generally forgetting to separate their professional lives from their personal, and their bosses spend every waking hour trying to get a look at that pilot everybody's been talking about, we all come back into work completely unrefreshed, gleefully eager to get back to the real work, and then the networks, and the cable, and the streaming services immediately present us with a despicable mountain of cash to fight over. By the first week in February, there are about 30 new shows being cast and staffed with thousands lined up to knock down each show's door and earn a shot at an extended job.

Once upon a time, there were only four networks who were really shelling out this kind of cash. Now a movie delivery service, the former motel soft-core

porn channel, a TV recycling service, an online bookstore, and all the plucky subsidiaries of the originals are pushing the envelope, so flush with budgets they'll pay a single actor upwards of \$100,000 for a week's work. Which is precisely why actors, writers, directors, and other talented dreamers from all over the world flock to Hollywood. *The average cost for 30-minute pilot these days is \$2 million. An hour-long drama? \$5.5 million.*

But it's not all roses. For actors, it's a sea of rejection – going in for a dozen or so pilots, being called back to three, testing at the network for one, only to not get the part is a brutal thing. It's speed dating if every person is a wealthy supermodel and they're all at least mildly interested in you. Except only a few actually have the charm to bring home to mom.

The process tries reps, as well. You're trying to juggle all this opportunity with an ironic, simultaneous lack of opportunity. At the beginning of pilot season, it seems assured that at least a few clients on your roster will book pilots. But while you start loading eggs in baskets here and there as the process goes further along, more and more roles fill behind you and before you know it, it's red alert time to get even a single client on a pilot. After all, one pilot could potentially mean an entire season's worth of paychecks. And then again, the ones you do win might not actually go anywhere at all.

The streaming services seem to have the knack, investing at a much higher percentage in shows they actually intend to go to series. If you have two dozen lemons and you make one cup of lemonade and then throw the remaining lemons into a river, you obviously have not used your lemons wisely. The major networks are coming around to this approach now, too, making stronger plays on straight-to-series orders and investing less in pilots that may become one-offs.

Amazon has even started to allow viewers to vote for their favorite pilots. They made them right? If they're not going to air all of them, at least let the public see them first? Even if they don't ultimately decide to run with the most popular titles, there is at least the air of something democratic and data-driven, and not just gut.

Every year has a theme, and this year it's podcasts. The hipsters thought they could have their radio, but no. Hollywood has come for you, too, as Hollywood always does. If there is something creative being done, television

always knows, cashing in at exactly the right time and capitalizing on the right people.

Despite the massive, inefficient cash flows, at the end of the day, every year pilot season gives its breaks. Pays some rents. Saves some hope. Not everybody is going to make it through pilot season with their sense intact, but the ones who stick it out until their due are, as Steve Jobs described, the crazy ones. *And, ultimately, the crazy ones always land on their feet.*

How has pilot season changed for performers in recent years? A few of my clients shared their thoughts on the recent changes.

RENO WILSON



Mike and Molly was my 17th pilot and my 12th series. I am one of the crazy ones that Brian was talking about. I remember when, shooting our 6th episode of a show called *Heist* on NBC, the word came down that our show had been cancelled and I felt an immediate shift inside of me. After shedding some tears with my temporary family, I started the walk back to my trailer and I felt the transformation begin. I can only describe it as a shell of armor sprouting along the outside of my back and as I walked into my trailer to start throwing all of my belongings into a black trash bag. I simultaneously grab my phone to call my manager and my agents. I inform them that I'm on the market again and ready to go.

I'm built for this. When it comes to pilot season, I'm a fucking beast.

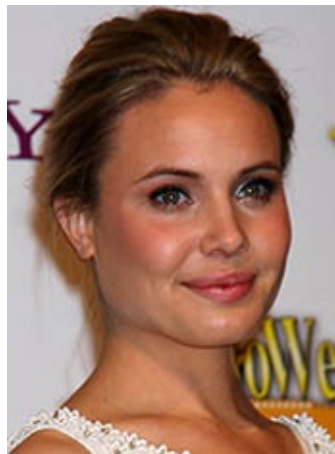
At least that is what I tell myself, which is probably the most important thing. What is the story you tell yourself?

I've crushed network auditions, I've choked on a couple and others were just so-so. I've got stories for days, I'm one of the lucky ones who don't quit. For some reason I can't describe, I remain hungry as if I just started doing this shit. I'm trained, I prepare my ass off, I love to tell stories and I love to entertain folks as well.

The more things change, which oddly enough was the name of a pilot I did, the more things stay the same. People still come to Los Angeles for pilot season only now as there are way more networks to play with. Netflix has changed the game plus Youtube, Hulu, Amazon, etc. and they're creating so many outlets to act. They don't double your pilot fee like they used to, matter of fact, it's harder to get your quote met. For me, coming off of a six year run of a top 20 well received sit-com is a good thing. As I embark on my 18th pilot, I'm still filled with the excitement of the unknown but I feel I've added to my armor all of the lessons learned from so many great actors, directors, writers and show runners.

But I've still got my black trash bag handy.

LEAH PIPES



Last season, I felt like a recently divorced, desperate, middle aged woman and I treated every audition like a date with George Clooney. Spoiler alert: Clooney is not interested in middle aged women. If I walk into a room asking for approval, I've immediately shot myself in the foot. I've given away my power by putting my self-worth into someone else's hands. And I'm completely disconnected from my creativity.

When I'm in the habit of demanding honesty within myself, I'm reminded that the only person who is responsible for who I am, is me. This removes the delusional reliance on others validation and empowers self-improvement. I gain strength in expanding my capacity and become less swayed by other peoples' perceptions of me. Whether positive or negative, their opinions are theirs, not mine. And vice versa.

I'm not always able to maintain this head space, but when I do, I feel brave enough to be open and exposed in the room. My goal becomes learning and growing, not gaining approval or validation. Afterwards, I feel enriched instead of drained. Yes, there are still many auditions I lose out on, but even when the result isn't a job, I don't feel that I've wasted my time.

Douglas Smith



Let's see... do me and pilot season like each other? I am not really sure. I have been doing it for 15 years. Pilot season that is. And my heart still pounds in my chest when the casting director says: "you're on deck."

I actually just got home from a particularly demoralizing pilot audition this evening. It was one of those swell times where you wait in the waiting room for 2 hours and you walk out of the studio and into your car feeling like you just spent the last 2 hours at the DMV except you didn't actually accomplish anything. It's like the DMV mixed with a beauty pageant. I don't really have any words of hope to offer.

I have been a working actor for 15 years and have supported myself solely on acting, yet I have a really bad track record with pilots. I have tested for over

30 pilots and have only booked 2. One went and one didn't. I pretty much test at least once a year but usually I end up working in the "shoulder seasons" of the acting world. Still, year after year I try my luck. Heading to another one tomorrow morning. I am one of the lucky ones, I know. I have plenty of contemporaries that would kill for the chance to wait in a waiting room for two hours like I did today.

***Update:** Shortly after posting this, I learned that both Reno and Douglas booked the pilots they referenced in their blurbs.*

MUSICALS MOVE AGAIN

There comes a time when art transcends mere intellect and takes aim at another part of ourselves: The heart. They bypass the brain and hit us in the gut.

At its core, Damien Chazelle's *La La Land* is about feeling things, and given the film's 14 Academy Award nominations, it seems like audiences are keen on feeling things — particularly that euphoric sensation of falling in love for the first time.

With *La La Land*, (see my letter to him on the release of *Whiplash* below) the brilliant Chazelle brings back the golden age of movie musicals, reminding us of the Technicolor spectacles filled with song and dance, exuberant feelings, and sensory overload. But there's a decidedly modern edge to the film too. Although the two characters inhabit a world that's at times reminiscent of a magical painting, they also feel the gravitational pull of the real world where chasing your dreams also means sacrificing others.

MOREMEDAVOY
M A N A G E M E N T

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10/11/2014

Dear Damien -

I had the pleasure last night of seeing WHIPLASH and I wanted to commend you on a remarkable job well done. Not only have you written two iconic, career-defining roles for two excellent actors, but you directed their story with such precision and poise as to somehow make them both likable. Every shot felt as intricately crafted as a note from Fletcher's band. The drama and stakes were made palpable by a sensory barrage, and it was truly fascinating to have so much conveyed through the music as well as the action. Ultimately, I felt the film, like Fletcher, was a maniacal, obsessive educator at heart as I left with an incredible new respect and understanding of the correlation between music and film.

As a musician who did not attend music school, you've made me very grateful for my chosen path. I'll gladly live vicariously through your excellent film instead.

Thank you for making such a wonderful film, and good luck with your Oscar run.

Warm regards,

Brian Medavoy

In the 40s, we had the nimble-footed Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Now, we have Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone, who, although not nearly as elegant in their choreography bring their unique spark and chemistry to the picture.

But back in that bygone era, stars were expected to be a triple threat. They sang, danced, and acted. After all, musicals were a mainstay of the cinematic

canon. It's enough to just say *Singin' in the Rain* and you're immediately transported to that legendary scene with Gene Kelly and his umbrella. Then there's the likes of *A Star is Born*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, all the way to Travolta and Newton-John finding their way to each other in *Grease*. There was no shortage of musicals and they performed at the box-office.

In recent years, however, musicals fell off — only making the occasional guest appearance in movie theatres across the country. But when they do, they resonate with audiences.

The unabashed visual and theatrical exuberance of Baz Lurhman's *Moulin Rouge*, set to modern music, was a hit. Then there's the chemistry and brilliance of two unknowns, Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova, falling in love in *Once*. It's difficult to get the scene where the two young struggling musicians meet in the music store and begin to fall in love out of my mind — it's chill inducing.

Musicals, in many ways, are about celebration of strong feelings. And art shouldn't be afraid to be bold. *After all, art doesn't just imitate life, it creates life, it changes life, and it reminds us to look inside ourselves and find the courage to help construct the world we want to see.*



Brian Medavoy shared Ballet Vintage's video.

December 31, 2016 at 3:58pm · 🌐 ▼

My we all feel this way going into the new year ! HAPPY NEW YEAR !!



6,037,786 Views

Ballet Vintage added a new video.

June 22, 2016 · 🌐

👍 Like Page

Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers

When we think back on our favorite films, more often than not, we remember what we FELT, not what we thought. Just think of Fred Astaire and Ginger Roger's infamous dance number — does it not immediately light up your face?

It's been often said that characters break out into song and dance when the feeling is so overpowering that it cannot be contained any longer with just words. I think that's true. And when done well, it can transfer that feeling unto audiences.

In *La La Land*, Gosling's character, Sebastian, is a jazz purist. He is nostalgic about a time that he did not live in. But in all art, there's room to both celebrate and borrow from the past, as well as find ways to reinvent so that the art form can continue to reflect our present.

The movie musical genre is more than nostalgia — and I, for one, hope that we get to see much more of it in years to come, in whichever form it finds itself expressed.

*“Here’s to the fools who dream... crazy as they may seem.” –
Mia (Emma Stone) in ‘La La Land’*

4 HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA

MANAGER

Having seriously considered bringing in a social media manager to help my clients reach their full potential. Not only must they maintain engagement, they're required to stay on top of trends, manage multiple networks, be strategic, and connect business goals. Social media marketing budgets in the entertainment sector are projected to increase 25% over the next five years.

Here's what I've learned about the necessary skill sets to achieve success as a social media manager.

1. LEARN THE LATEST TOOLS

There is a big difference between understanding the market place and knowing when to leap into the latest platform. To manage expectations and time I believe it's important to create a checklist to evaluate all the new platforms:

- Is the new network a fad or does it have potential longevity?
- Does the purpose of the network align with the actor's brand or social identity?
- Is our current or potential audience on this network?
- What content and tools do we need to successfully manage this client on

a daily basis?

- Will we see a return on investment/energy if we join that particular network?

2. SET A STRATEGY

Social media is no longer a micro segment of marketing. What are your objectives? Then align your strategy to that agenda. If there are no metrics be proactive. Establish benchmarks, create metrics, and track your progress.

- Questions to think about:
- Are the social strategies for the client reachable?
- What is our brand voice and how do we adapt that for social?
- What resources, human and technological, do we need to flourish?
- What processes are in place to learn and adjust as necessary?
- Remember to track, analyze, and report on results to prove ongoing value for the company. Your opportunity is to meet and surpass the needs for the client and strengthen his or her own voice.

3. BRAND EVANGELISM RUNS 24/7, 365 "MONEY NEVER SLEEPS"

Many social manager run themselves into the ground in an attempt to keep up with the various emerging social media platforms. This will result in sloppy posts and an uneven experience for followers.

Consistency and quality are more important. Managers must get behind the business 110%. However, setting realistic expectations about bandwidth and optimal engagement levels.

Here are questions to considered:

- What are the best days and times to engage our brand's audience?
- How should our content vary dependent on day, time, and season?
- Should we use technology that uses automated and optimal send times?
- Who are your reliable teammates who can help manage all of this?
- Do we use tools to collaboratively monitor, engage, and respond?
- Successful social media manager requires you to be focused and present.

Know when to ask for help and train fellow associates to pitch in when necessary. Your team, or the whole collaborative effort, will keep the content fresh, your clients happy, and yourself sane.

4. KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO PULL THE PLUG

Know when to jump ship if you don't see results.

Like a bad boyfriend/girlfriend facts, experience, time, and data does not lie. I believe the most successful social media managers would have to analyze metrics and know when to double up their efforts or cut the cord.

These are some questions you may want to consider before you do so:

- Did we devote enough resources, human and technological, to make it work?
- Is the audience on this network still appropriate for our client and our brand?
- What factors cause the decrease in performance or engagement?
- Or, did verifying platforms increase followers?
- Do we or did we utilize proper content and voice for this particular client, brand, or network?
- Are there going to be some residual benefits to a lower profile presence versus total elimination?
- Some platforms like Facebook and Twitter, I believe are here to stay, so it's unlikely those ties should ever be cut, but there are a ton of new sites popping up everyday that really need to be analyzed. Just because Pinterest is 75% women does that mean your male clients shouldn't be promoting on that site?

CONCLUSION

I believe social media management can be professionally satisfying, addicting, and sexy. At the same time, it can also be frustrating and extremely brutal. Hopefully these four habits will help you reach new levels of success. If it fails, there's always another vocation that may be better suited for your strengths.

12 NEW WAYS TO THINK ABOUT LIFE

2016 has been a year of big strides for me.

I have needed to do a lot of soul searching, planning, thinking and answering very difficult questions. I've dealt with adversity as well – but it has only made me stronger.

Through all this, I realized that life is full of really great moments, but there's also plenty you probably wish you could change. The plain fact is there's a lot about life you can't change.

One thing that is in your complete control, however, is your mindset – your self-worth needs to come from within and this shouldn't be compared or depend on others. Knowing what makes people happy and how to maintain an optimistic outlook is a science (literally), and rightfully so, because existing in a positive state:

- Helps you accomplish dreams and goals
- Makes completing tasks easier
- Builds self-esteem
- Improves your relationships
- Makes it easier to maintain physical health

Understand your current mindset, and then change your negative thoughts into more positive ones, ask yourself the questions below. Consider writing your responses in a journal so you can reflect on your answers later on in the year. See if your priorities have shifted and check that you are still following the path to positivity.

These 14 guiding principles will give you the best odds to achieve success, at least professionally, by helping you improve your outlook on life.

1. WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?

Many people spend the majority of their life trying to “find” their purpose.

Unfortunately for them, they don't realize that all they had to do to understand their purpose was look within and ask themselves:

- Who am I?
- What do I care about?

The most direct and fulfilling route to success is to define the specific characteristics of your purpose, and then work on executing strategies to fulfill it. If you still aren't sure what your purpose is, think of it this way:

Your purpose will be the thing you are most passionate about.

Reflecting on what you enjoy doing, working on, and your hobbies will help you come up with a list of all that inspires you. Narrow it down further by ranking your interests/passions, and you will be left with a short list of your most ardent passions. With your main passion defined, you can pursue your purpose relentlessly.

2. WHAT'S YOUR MOTIVATION?

I ask this question to clients and potential clients this question all the time. I learn so much from the answer. You have to know what motivates so you can see it – If you can't see it, you most likely won't achieve it.

There are times when we all need to reach down deep and pull something out of ourselves that we didn't know was there. There are early mornings, late nights, and stressful situations when we ask the question, what we are doing and wonder if it's really worth it. When this occurs, we need to call on

something or someone to give us much needed motivation so that we can continue on our journey and complete our goals.

Think of what motivates you to achieve your life goals, and it can't be money. *Being driven by money will only leave you dissatisfied, because you will never have enough, and it comes at severe personal cost.* Challenge yourself to find your personal source for inspiration – a child, dog, lover, or whatever makes you go that extra step. Think of these things when you feel ready to give up.

3. WHAT DID I LEARN, AND WHO DID I HELP TODAY?

I ask this question to myself every night on the way home from work.

You may have completed your formal education, but it's incredibly important for everyone to ALWAYS seek education and continue learning. This is because consistent learning brings out more fun in life. Knowledge should be stockpiled, loved, and then shared with those around you.

Information is not only power, it is the currency to self-fulfillment. *The more you know about the world, the more you can use that knowledge to better yourself and seek additional opportunities.*

It doesn't matter what you are learning about, as long as you are challenging your brain, questioning why, and rebuking negative preconceived notions. So learn about dog breeds, how to make paper, the history of toast, art... just learn!

4. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE PROBLEMS.

Twenty-five years in the entertainment business and X amount of years in life (I know I look 29, but I am a little older than that) have taught me that life is a never-ending circle of problems. They are as consistent as death and taxes. You can always find stress and anxiety, even in happy moments and joyous occasions.

But once you actually appreciate the beauty of the problem, life becomes a hell of a lot easier. It's like playing the piano. There is no possible way to entirely master that instrument; you could play 12 hours a day for the rest of

your life, but someday there will still be someone who invents a new style of playing.

Accepting that disorder and unpredictability is an element of life can help you finally attain some Zen. Knowing that problems are going to come (and there is nothing you can do about it) is empowering. It gives you a sense of control, and problems don't seem so scary after all.

5. OWN YOUR MISTAKES.

This one is short and sweet. You made them, and now you get to learn from them. *If the lesson is more valuable than the pride and shame of making the mistake itself, then it wasn't truly a mistake after all.*

6. HONESTY COUNTS.

Superficiality may rule in Hollywood, but the lessons you learned about telling the truth in grade school still reign supreme. Always go for the cold hard truth.

Work to build your reputation as someone who is known for your constant honesty. That's a brand you can carry into any business, no matter where your passions take you.

A fudge here, a bent truth there all add up to a string of lies that can quickly spread out of control. There's a good chance you will get caught in your lie. When that happens it is extremely hard to rebuild trust with the injured party. Being honest will make you happy, because you're not selling out or stressing to remember what you said.

7. GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE.

Challenge yourself to do something that is uncomfortable every day.

If you're an overachiever and really want to push yourself, complete three things each day that are uncomfortable to you. Why you ask? Because getting out of your comfort zone is a verifiable psychological concept that can assist you in making changes in your life. These positive changes can lead to tangible

personal growth and success.

Even though stress is generally avoided, a little bit of stress is actually healthy for us. Stress actually motivates and pushes us to finish things they we have been procrastinating. *Research has even shown that those who are willing to take risks (i.e. step out of their comfort zone) will reap the biggest rewards.* It's the same as working out to get in shape.

You can't do the same thing day in and out and expect to see change – challenging yourself is the only way to see results!

8. CONFIDENCE IS KEY.

When you're confident in what you're doing and your abilities to complete it, it will sting a lot less when things don't go your way. Sure, it will still hurt when you fail, and you may even doubt your abilities. *But if you maintain confidence in yourself, your passion, and purpose, that will give you the courage to continue and the assurance to know you will reach success.*

Without that confidence, it's much easier to get caught up in what others tell you to do and waver from your principles.

9. WHO ARE YOUR PEOPLE?

Surround yourself with people who have strength in areas that you know nothing about.

Listening and learning about other peoples' backgrounds fuels your creative stimulation and gives you perspective. If you need inspiration for a new role or project, you may not need to look any further than your friends. Knowing a diverse group of people is a gift; use it to your advantage.

Your success later on depends on the friends you chose as ultimately you are betting on each other. I am not sure WME (William Morris Endeavor) would be around today if it were not for the close relationship Patrick Whitesell had with Scott Stuber and vice – versa. I am real proud of my horses and friends I went up the ranks with. They are all running studios, law firms and agencies.

I get asked all the time what kind of company are you going to build. My

answer is always, if I surround myself with people I like, trust, laugh, learn from and could teach, the rest will take care of itself.

10. WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

Look at yourself honestly: who do you want to be, and what are you willing to do to become that person?

Once you have clarified your goals, you need to write them down, so that you can look at them to see if you are on the right track to accomplishing them. *Taking the time to define what you want to accomplish is paramount to actually accomplishing it.*

There's a lot of research and helpful tips available online to help you write your goals in such a way that they are SMART (specific, measurable, realistic, attainable, and trackable). Do a little research to set yourself up for success by concentrating on developing your goals.

11. FIND THE MOMENTS.

Work on existing for the memorable moments. *He or she who ends up with the most moments wins!* Document your moments, because they are magic. When you aren't living in the "now", you miss the moments. That's when you wake up and realize that the years have passed you by.

I need to have three moments a day. These moments can vary from signing a client to just noticing and appreciating the weather in the morning.

12. PROVE THINGS TO YOURSELF.

A great moment in *Rudy* when Charles Dutton's character told Sean Astin, "In this life, you don't have to prove nothing to nobody but yourself." If you take this into your rooms and auditions, I promise you will see amazing results.

Easier to said then done. At some point, all of your ideas, goals and time spent need to add up to results. *First for yourself – then your results should create value – value for others.*

It's in this notion that I always ask others what your drive and motivation

are.

How do you watch the award shows? Are you rooting for your peers or pissed that you are not up there? Give love and you will get it back in spades.

The second best use of your time, other than with your family, will be pursuing the dreams that have been planted in your heart – doing the work and creating whatever it was you were put here to design. Finding yourself is the beginning of the journey. Through faith, hope and perseverance, you'll continue on your journey toward your purpose, which is your unique why that only you have been given.

CONCLUSION

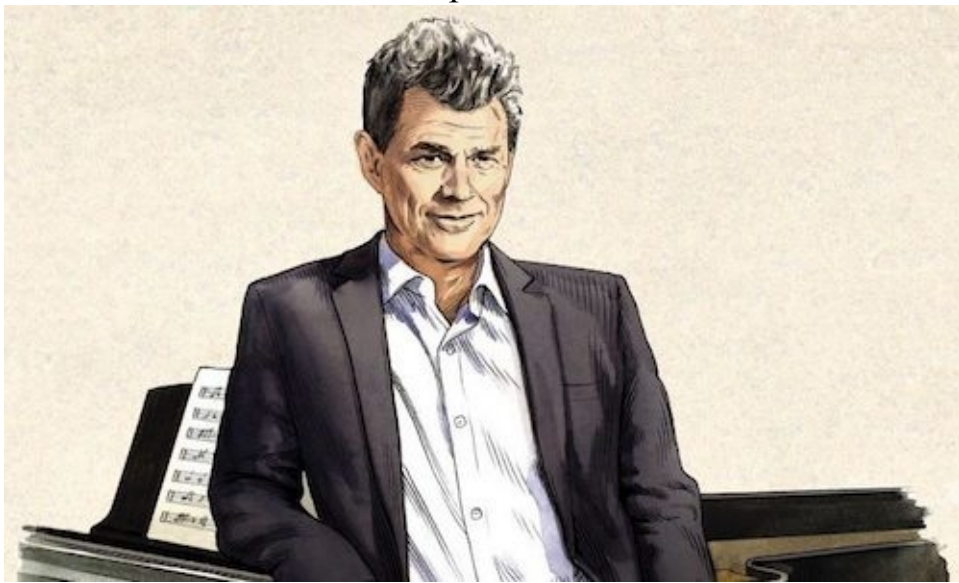
When we are brave enough to act, put things in motion and keep moving, we begin to realize the pursuit of life that we've imagined is worth living. Assuming we give maximum attitude and plan things out intelligently and thoughtfully, the best bet in life is always the one we place on ourselves. It's experience that backs up our bet or words – you now have that. It's living in the moment that gives meaning to everything.

You have the opportunity to blend your unique talent with enthusiasm, spirit and moxie, creating things and helping others, like no one else ever has in history. There's a tremendous amount of power in that. There's pride in that. It's a lot of responsibility, and equal parts exciting and exhilarating. I can assure you—you need to desire and want this more than anyone else to achieve success, respect and accolades.

Success, however you define it, will always require that you care and that you work harder, smarter and more efficiently than anyone else. Even when the value that you create is for others. This mentality of desire is absolutely imperative for continuing on the path of creating beautiful work and delivering value of exceptional quality to whomever you wish to give.

ON DAVID FOSTER, MUSIC, AND PASSION

Recently, I wrote a post about my relationship with my father, Mike Medavoy. While searching through my files for a copy of the speech I wrote for him, I stumbled upon a trove of the other letters and speeches I've written over the years. I was particularly struck by one of them, a letter I wrote over a decade ago to acclaimed musician and producer David Foster.



David has been a huge inspiration to me, both professionally and personally. He's unparalleled in his production skills and ear for new music. His

philanthropic efforts, such as the David Foster Foundation, are an inspirational demonstration of the good that success can bring. He's had a staying power that's far outlasted almost anyone else from his era. Barrett Wisman summed it up perfectly in a recent Forbes article:

"In today's world...it seems like almost anyone with the will and the cosmetic attributes to back it up can make a mark and be "famous". Given all the distractions we live amongst and the emphasis on the banal from reality shows to the mundanity of much of the electronic music being produced today, we somehow have to reflect upon what enduring talent really is. Learning about and understanding the lifelong achievements of David Foster and artists like him is important not only for us as a society, but also for our children and future generations."

At the time I wrote my letter, I was coming off of a long hiatus from the entertainment industry, and I was at a crossroads. I knew that I wanted to get back into the business, but I was full of doubt: was I really sure that I wanted to go back to management? A year earlier, I took up the piano on a whim. As it turned out, I had a real knack for it, and I discovered a love for music inside of me that I never knew existed.

Ultimately, I returned to the world of theatrical talent, but I thought I'd share the letter I wrote to David. It's a summary of my life, my thoughts at the time, and the respect I had for someone who excelled at something they loved.



David,

I'd like to share what a real pleasure it's been getting to know you. Over the years, I have enjoyed the many opportunities we've had to continue our friendship and, if I may be so bold, to see the rare, sincere way you treat others—no matter who they are, work here or live here. Shortly put, David, I'm writing because your ability to recognize people's gifts inspires my own.

As you may know, I have lived and breathed the entertainment business for forty years. I have gone up, and down, found humility, lost ninety pounds, and for my next chapter I want to surround myself with people I like, trust, learn from, and could have fun with. Like you said—performing at our best is our responsibility to the artist.

I've been out of land development for a year and have really thought about what to do next, and it goes back to what I did for twenty years—managing and building brands. Having represented some of the best, it's really exciting for me to get back into what I love and was born to do, and do it even better than I did before.

And of course I've been playing music and it has become a real passion of mine. It's been just over a year and already I've learned many of the standards

(some set by you) and I've even written a few tunes along the way.

I have followed your work closely over the last couple of years and I feel my endless passion and energy could be your asset. Manpower is all-important. I offer my assistance in helping you build your brand. My unique understanding of how this town works, and how the entertainment business works, coupled with my love of music, and especially your brand of music, and the fact that I'm now playing several hours of piano a day, all lead me to this. Whether it's talking to high-end talent, finding new media or feature work for your talent/singers, or your charity work, I can help. I've never burned any bridges and this is about being around someone I admire and will work really hard for. My friends run networks and studios—and do it very well. I can get in there and help you, if you need it.

You're the only one I feel completely comfortable extending this to. You may not need my help, but I'd like an opportunity to exceed your expectations in the various other arenas outside the studio, or in, whatever they may be, and to potentially bring in new, unique clients. I know how to speak their language, and, as I've discovered, it's hard to find people in this town that have been humbled but still have the kind of fire that I have. I won't try to impress you with my past, but rather surprise you with the future.



I haven't necessarily defined my capacity; that to me will evolve. If I were to

work for you, I would work 24/7. I can't think of another job where I would do it with such a huge smile. And I would do whatever you needed me to do. I don't want to be too bold, or make you uncomfortable, but I felt it was the best way to let you know how passionate I am about working with you and having that evolve in the near future.

I am scheduled for a third meeting with Brillstein-Grey next week—I'll probably get that job—but this is the opportunity that interests me more.

And yes, as ever, I would love to play for you or to have lunch to discuss this further.

David— 'Look what you've done to me,'

Brian

THE ACADEMY AWARDS IS OUR STATE OF THE UNION

The Academy Awards is our State of the Union. They're fun, they're festive, but they're also the single most important long hard look in the mirror that Hollywood makes each year. This year we heard plenty of tent pole and superhero jokes and the customary teasing of the studio system, but more importantly, we heard and saw the overwhelming triumph of change.

Selma may have been widely snubbed, but it achieved an emotional victory some centuries in the making. John Legend and Common reminded us why we're in this weird little business. We have a responsibility to recognize and elevate marginalized voices past and present; to understand that an award is a step, not a watershed moment, and no gain is invulnerable. Heroes are everywhere, but whether it's fair or not, their sacrifices and achievements frequently go unappreciated. Moments in the public eye are precious and that performance of "Glory" and its subsequent Oscar win was a profound proclamation that films do have power—that we can effect change and improve our world. Art doesn't just imitate life, it creates life, it changes life, and it reminds us to look inside ourselves and find the courage to help construct the world we want to see.

I was deeply moved by that moment tonight and it motivated me to reach

out and reaffirm my commitment to the people closest to me, who are also some of the most talented artists and creators on Earth. Cultural capital is a unique asset not afforded to many, and those few of us fortunate enough to wield it have a civic responsibility. That performance of “Glory” tonight was a prescient reminder that as far as we’ve come, we still have a ways to go.

ON KHIZR KHAN, MIKE MEDAVOY, AND

FATHERS



I've written a post over at Medium that reflects on Khizr Khan's speech, his relationship with his fallen son, and my own bond with my father Mike Medavoy.

Khizr Khan's speech at the 2016 Democratic National Convention was an eye-opening moment. In seven minutes, Mr. Khan delivered a moving tribute to his son Humayun, a slain US Army Captain who was also a Muslim. Much

of the discussion among news pundits has been in light of his war of words with Donald Trump. What I think is being overlooked, however, is another theme that ran like an undercurrent through his speech: the relationship between a father and his son. Mr. Khan expressed a loss that cannot be truly understood by anyone but him and Humayun's mother, Ghazala Khan. It moved me, and inspired me to reflect on the relationship I have with my own father.

I've always had a complicated bond with my father Mike. As a legendary Hollywood agent, executive, and producer, our relationship often had to be put on hold. Our home life was rarely stable—I changed high schools over half a dozen times. When I started working in the entertainment industry, my father took the Bill Gates approach to parenting—in other words, I had to make my own way, without assistance or favors from one of the most powerful people in the business.

However, I have to give credit where it's due. As much as I might have resented his decision, I became stronger for it—a better manager, a better producer. I succeeded because he forced me to. In April of 1999, I was asked to speak at a dinner being held in his honor. I'd like to share the speech that I gave that night, as an example of what my father meant to me then, and what he still means to me:

I've been told that I resemble my Dad in lots of ways. I've got his eyes, his laugh and—unfortunately—his hairline.

But seriously, like so many sons, I always thought my father was larger than life. In fact, I remember once when I was in junior high I asked Dad to read a book report I wrote. I gave it to him in his study, and when I came back a few minutes later, he looked at me and asked, "*Brian, is this the best you can do?*"

I took it back, worked really hard to rewrite it, and gave it to him a couple of hours later. A few minutes later, he called to me, asking, "*Brian, is this the best you can do?*"

Now I'm scared. I pulled my very first all-nighter, working on the report until dawn. I gave it to him over breakfast, totally exhausted, and went up to my room to wash up. When I came back in, he looked up at me and asked: "Is this the best you could do?"

I was at my wit's end. Completely fried, I said, "*Yes, Dad. That's the best I*

can do.”

He looked at me for a moment, and said, *“Good. Now I’ll read it.”*

(Pause)

A drive to always be at my best is just one of the many legacies my father left to me. What’s more, I know that my father’s common sense and uncommon values have deeply touched hundreds—if not thousands—of people over the course of his career.

There’s no question my father is an ambitious man, who built his reputation by creating beautiful—and profitable—movies in the face of many challenges. He also enjoys the perks that come with his hard-earned success. But throughout the years, my father has talked to me far more about living a good life, instead of the good life.



In the mid-to-late 1980s, Dad began writing me a series of letters. As always, his timing was excellent. They came at a time when I was struggling with my own ideas of who I was and the mark I wanted to leave on the world. I’d like to read a passage from one of those letters, and let his words speak instead of mine:

“Because of the community we live in, where people and things can be larger than life and reality takes place in that rarefied air at the top, it’s easy to get the wrong idea about what a person should be. We live in a time that puts a

tremendous emphasis on material things and instant gratification. But you must never lose sight of what it means to carry real values with you in life.”

"Real Values." It's a phrase that has been used so much lately that it's easy for it to lose all meaning. But for my father, "real values" isn't an abstraction that's talked about over after-dinner drinks—it's a detailed road map to leading a good life. If you've worked with him, you know that no detail escapes his eye, and that he doesn't let others interpret his own vision. So he goes on in that same letter to describe—very precisely—what his values are.

“If I teach you nothing else, you are a success in my eyes and in your grandparent's eyes, if you aspire to be an honorable man, a good person, good for your word, good to others, helpful to those less fortunate than yourself, carving your way through life that is open and above board, honest and respectful, gentlemanly and courteous, taking responsibility for your actions—not trying to blame the next employee or your background and upbringing or anyone other than yourself when you step out of line. Far better that you should learn from your mistakes so you can move on and progress.”

It doesn't get any simpler—or more right—than that. In a few short phrases, I think he captures the essence of what has made him such a great businessman, a great father and a great person.

What's more, he's lived by these principles throughout his life. When he was 17 years old, he wrote a letter to his Uncle Don. I've held on to that letter for many years, and I'd like to read you one particular passage:

“I had the chance to be a counselor at one of the YMCA camps. They were counting on me, but I had to turn them down. Why? Well, Dad says since I'm going to college next year, I'll need to earn some money. I think he needs the money I'm getting, and it's about time I helped my family out a bit.”

Those are real values, as lived in real life.

(Pause)

I know how proud Dad is to be honored tonight by the Dashew International Center at UCLA. He's had a love affair with the school that stretches back over 40 years. In fact, in that letter from 1958 he writes:

“Well, I'm sure glad that you are coming to Los Angeles and UCLA. Boy, are we cool cats? We're going to one of the biggest colleges in the world.”

His experience at UCLA never left him—although fortunately his 50's

‘hipster’ lingo did! Almost 30 years later, he wrote to me:

“For me, learning something new is perhaps the most important and satisfying aspect of my life. There’s nothing like the old light bulb going off in your head.”

I think it’s safe to say that my father has seen that light more often than most. When Dad moved to this country in 1956, he knew almost nothing of its people, its culture and its language. For him, it wasn’t an obstacle—it was a challenge to be met. In retrospect, he not only learned the American culture—he influenced it through his movies and his work.

All of you are here tonight because in one way or another you’ve been touched by Mike Medavoy. I’m here because I’ve been shaped by him. I’m here because the simple principles that have guided his life’s work have become my own, and have enabled me to—in his words—“carve my own way through life.”

Dad once wrote to me, “success can be measured in many ways, but the most important way is in being human—kind, warm and caring.” That all of you are here is a testament to just how successful his life has been—that he’s lived up to values and expectations he set for himself. What’s more, if all of us in one way or another try to aim for that standard, I think we become better people—and a better community.

I’m proud to carry my father’s legacy, and to have the opportunity to join all of you in honoring him here tonight. But I do have one question for you Dad—is this the best you can do?

Thank you.

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE A HUNCH AND YOU SHOULD WRITE ABOUT IT #PREACHER

Dominic Cooper asked me a simple question prior to the show being shot:
Should he pursue *The Preacher*?

Here's my response:

Dear Dominic –

Let me start off by saying that that was one of the most enjoyable meetings I've ever had with anybody in almost 25 years in this business. You're a class act and a genuinely good person to be around. That kind of energy can be very rare and it was refreshing to have such an earnest, relaxing conversation in a business meeting. I truly appreciate you coming by and was thrilled to find you actually exceed your sterling reputation.

*I'm looking forward to seeing *MISS YOU ALREADY*, and of course I think *WARCRAFT* will take your already excellent career to new heights. The plays I am less familiar with, but I'll be investigating them so I can get a better feel of what kind of material inspires you.*

*In regards to *PREACHER*: I have since had the chance to read it and it*

really feels like something special. AMC has arguably the best track record of putting out shows that are both highly rated and awards considered and this one is certainly no slouch. THE WALKING DEAD has proven time and again that AMC knows how to adapt comics into quality mainstream television, and PREACHER is such an episodic, cinematic comic to begin with that there's every reason to believe they can do it again.

It can be dicey to compare television shows and their source material, but the one thing you can guarantee is that the network that brought you Walter White, Don Draper, and Rick Grimes is going to put one hell of an effort into making Jesse Custer one of the most interesting characters on television.

There's obvious mystery in his past and the preacher gig is about so much more than serving God and his congregation—it's about getting spiritually and morally right in his own eyes. That battle resonates with people. In the comics, at least, Jesse's journey yields a large amount of violent poetic justice and deeply probes at what it means to have ownership over your own soul. While in many ways PREACHER is about the supernatural or celestial, there's a chilling realism in how it portrays our relationships to faith and personal identity. I'd expect the show to follow suit.

I really believe this has a good shot at becoming one of the most complex, challenging, and truly investigative roles you've ever played. That's the magic of television: the stories are so long that you don't just get to know a character, you start to become them and they you. There are legendary performances throughout the history of film, but in the past ten years alone we've seen some iconic, completely unprecedented ones on television. Two of which aired on AMC. This strikes me as a role which can make you evolve as an artist. Yes, it's a time commitment, but it also allows you to be even more selective with the films you pursue and may push you from tent poles to Oscar contenders.

Ultimately, as with any role, you should love anything that you commit yourself to. That holds even more true for television where the time investment is larger. I think you'd be phenomenal for this project and could do some

remarkable things with Jesse Custer, but that's just one humble opinion from a manager you impressed today. Regardless of your decision, there will be many great roles in your future, and whether or not I am there to help you field them I am genuinely excited to see the remarkable things you accomplish.

*Warm regards,
Brian*

BEING A TALENT MANAGER IS LIKE BEING A...



A manager acts as a catalyst to a client's, or player's, success, seeking to positively shape and influence the career trajectory of their talent in the same way a coach would their player's athletic performance. They're the X's and O's, focusing on how to get the most out of the "team" of clients they're managing.

Not only that, but a manager is a front-line support system, ready to provide their "player" with valuable input or counsel whether their career is

skyrocketing, falling off, or losing momentum — reaching a “plateau,” for lack of a better word.

Managers want their clients to harness and develop their untapped potential, not only by providing positive motivation, but by analyzing their strengths and weaknesses and telling their “player” how and why they can improve. Just as a sports coach works with an athlete in their “chosen sport,” a manager works with talent in the field of their “sport,” whether it be acting, music, or something else! Similar to a sports coach, a manager is absolutely concerned with a client’s upcoming performance, but is more concerned with their talent’s long-term career trajectory — for instance, where an actor or actress would like to be in five years.

They try not to overvalue winning, and invest lots of time and energy into the well being of their clients, keeping them “playing” to the best of their ability. The various aspects of coaching parallel that of being a manager. Training, goal setting, “game day” execution, networking and building “team” relationships etc.

Working in entertainment is very similar to playing a sport, with a manager’s clients literally competing for employment opportunities and success — ex. auditions.

To work effectively they need to not only provide encouragement, but valuable learning opportunities, with their overall effectiveness being measured by the “record” their clients or athletes have.

Aside from being concerned with long-term career trajectory, they’re also overseeing their client or athlete’s day- to-day affairs and even advising them on personal decisions that could prove detrimental to their career.

1. WHAT FOOTBALL MANAGERS CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT LEADERSHIP

"What Football Managers Can Teach You About Leadership."

HIGHLIGHTS:

– “The main element of coaching is not setting up a perfect team, it’s evaluating – how do I lead myself? How do I lead my team? And how do I

lead others?”

– “Coaches strive to introduce long term structures and values to foster a culture of success.”

– “Football management is not unlike being a senior executive where you have to balance the needs of multiple parties: investors, shareholders, committees, customers, clients, consumers and stakeholders in general.”

– “[One of the main] things those in business can learn from leaders in sport is passion,” Clarke explained. “Many top sports coaches have this, but so few business leaders display it openly in their organizations or externally.”

2. KNOW WHEN TO MANAGE AND WHEN TO COACH

"Know When to Manage and When to Coach"

HIGHLIGHTS:

– “In business, we have to be both coaches and managers. To lead effectively, we need to know when to wear which hat.”

– Direct – Be sure to define excellence (what, how and when), and provide specifics so the person can achieve the desired outcome. ‘

– Delegate – let the employee determine the approach they will take and keep you informed as to their progress.

– Develop – Define excellence and get out of the way!

GOLDEN GLOBES

Last night's awards show, like most awards shows, gave me a moment of reflection on the state of our industry and on the direction in which we are heading. With underdog victories for the bold, off-the-cuff *Transparent* and the CW's Hispanic star, Gina Rodriguez, along with the continued success of comedienne Tina Fey and Amy Poehler and Hollywood's expression of creative solidarity with Charlie Hebdo, this year's Golden Globes were a symbol of progress, resiliency, and a commitment to fearless storytelling.

As we head in to a new year, it's inspiring to know that we will not shy away from difficult subjects or fail to stand for our creative freedoms. As difficult as life may be today, everything happens for a reason and amidst the craziness there are always possibilities for all of us. Here's to another year, full steam ahead.

HOW TO USE THE ACTORS' BUSINESS PLAN TO GROW YOUR CAREER

“We don’t need to sit around and wait for Fate to come knocking at the door. We simply need to believe in the power that’s within us and use it. When we do that, and stop imitating others and competing against them, things begin to work for us.”

— Benjamin Hoff, *The Tao of Pooh*

“What should I do?”

For more than three decades I’ve sat in meetings with actors who ask me that crucial question about their career.

No matter their experience, previous amount of success, or whether they’re a client of mine or not, they’re all trying to figure out how to solve the puzzle and navigate Hollywood to get where they want to go.

You’ve probably asked it of yourself and others as well.

While it’s a simple question, it’s not a simple one to answer because your goals, challenges, and resources are unique to you. But as a talent manager, a big part of my job — and a key to my success — is to figure out how to answer that question so I’ve spent countless hours trying to figure it out.

I've had conversations with experts in every nook and cranny of this industry to get their thoughts, worked with countless actors and seen first hand what it takes to build a successful career, and studied tons of research about how careers are built both within and outside the entertainment industry. All of that led me to create a framework designed to help you answer that crucial question.

It's called *The Actors' Business Plan* and I'm excited to share it with you in this post.

WHY ACTORS NEED A BUSINESS PLAN

Most people wouldn't think to attach a business plan to an actor's life, but the truth is a great acting career starts before you get a role. While acting is a craft, it's also a business, just like any other. Talent doesn't matter if you don't have a way to present and market it and no two talents can be marketed the same way.

That's the beauty of the Actors' Business Plan — it allows you to work through what makes you a viable actor. And believe me, that is one of the most important things to know nowadays. You need to know what makes you special and what makes your personal brand unique so casting directors will know to immediately call you for the right role.

Otherwise, you'll just be another headshot on a pile, and there you'll stay. Just as no two actors will have the same strategy, no one actor will have the same strategy year to year.

The Actors' Business Plan is meant to be a living, breathing document that evolves as your career does.

It's designed to help you take stock of where you're at and guide you to the next step — whether that's landing your first supporting role or your 50th starring one.

As your goals change, your strengths, abilities, and accomplishments will as well. The Actors' Business Plan gives you a way to track your progress, identify what's working and what's not so that you can adapt your career

strategy as you go.

This is a lifelong tool — one that's hopefully as valuable two months into your career as it will be two decades later. What's crucial, no matter where you're at in your journey, is to be honest.

The Actors' Business Plan is a chance for you to look in the proverbial mirror and understand your strengths and weaknesses to better yourself. There's always room for improvement, and that the desire to improve is one of our greatest strengths. But to do that, you need to understand where you've come from, where you want to go, and why you want to get there.

There are no right or wrong answers in the Actors' Business Plan. But the onus is on you to find the answers that enable you to take charge of your own career.



THE THREE CORE VALUES OF THE ACTORS' BUSINESS PLAN

The exercise of answering the questions and creating your plan will provide value to you in three distinct ways:

1. It helps you think through and clarify exactly what you want, where you want to go and develop a concrete plan to get there.
2. It helps you figure out how to talk about and market yourself. How to explain your goals, strengths, and unique story to other people you meet in the industry, from reps and execs to casting directors and other actors. Going

through the process helps you learn how to present yourself.

3. It gives you a document you can continually refer to in order to measure your progress toward your goals. Are you meeting the people you want to meet? Are you giving back to the community? Are you adding new strengths? Removing weaknesses? The Actors' Business Plan helps you stay accountable to yourself.

AND NOW, HERE ARE THE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF...

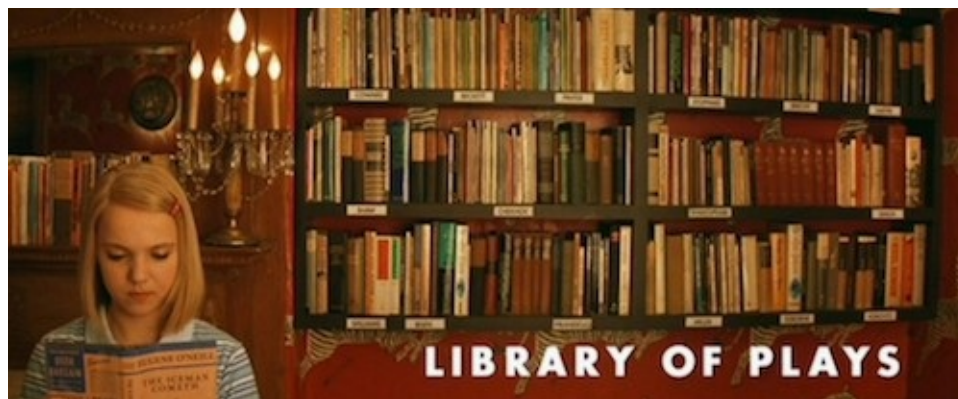
Because the Actors' Business Plan is designed to be flexible and applicable to whatever your situation may be, it consists of a series of questions and prompts for you to consider and act on.

The following 15 questions are the core of the plan — spend some time thinking about each one and analyzing your answers to guide your actions.

When I do with this with clients, I help break down their answers and implement their plan. While I can't, unfortunately, do that for you at the moment, your answers should give you enough insight to help you take steps in the right direction. For additional feedback, you can always discuss your answer with a mentor or somebody close to you who may help you see things in your answers that you may have missed.

Again, use this tool as a jumping-off point — what's important isn't that you have all the right answers, but rather that you're considering the right questions.

Here they are...



1. WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

All branding and positioning is storytelling.

That means your ability to stand out from a crowd, get noticed, and be remembered is directly related to your ability to tell your own story.

Consider what the story of your life, your work, and your dreams is and how best to tell it. Pay special attention to the elements of your story that are unique — the things that make you different are the things that make you special so elevate those instead of hiding them in an attempt to fit in.

A helpful hack to learn how to do this is to look at musicians who tend to be very good at sharing their stories. For example, Jewel's backstory about living in her car when she was younger went a long way toward shaping the industry's connection to who she was and what she was about.

2. WHO DO YOU KNOW?

They say who you know in Hollywood is as important as what you know and while that's not entirely true, there's definitely a lot of truth in it.

The strength of your network will go a long way to determining the trajectory of your career, but don't get discouraged because there's good news on this front.

You're more connected than you realize.

You'll discover there are connections everywhere when you actively look for them. Your friend in yoga class may work as a script supervisor for a major filmmaker. The Uber driver who drove you to the airport might be producing a YouTube series you could star in. And today's low-level agent's assistant is tomorrow's head of the casting department at a studio.

Make a concentrated effort to connect with as many people and start by taking stock of EVERYBODY you already know and deciphering who they may know that they could introduce you to.

3. WHO DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

Better yet, understanding who you admire and who the people are who you would most like to work with can give you a clear direction and goals.

Life is all about research and learning, and that goes double in entertainment. Reading the trades every day and making connections about who is working with who, who is doing what, and just generally understanding the Hollywood scuttlebutt will help you figure out who the best people are for you to connect with.

Knowing which agents and managers work for which clients will help you figure out different niches in the industry and recognize who can help you most. Knowing who's working on a particular project you're excited about may help you get a foot in the door.

It really is all about who you know so it's exceedingly valuable to think about who you'd love to meet in a perfect world so you can get out there and make it happen.

4. WHY?

Everybody should ask themselves "Why?" from time to time. If you can't definitively, passionately answer why you want to become an actor, then it may not be for you.

Acting is an arduous, constant, often cruel career and there is absolutely no point in pursuing it if you aren't truly in love with the pursuit. If you can't confidently tell yourself you're doing it because you want to and have to, then it's probably not worth the pain.

Passion's a powerful motivator but even passion needs a check-in from time to time to make sure it's still going strong.



5. ARE YOU WILLING TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE?

Being an actor is all about being able to put yourself in uncomfortable situations and thrive. Are you ready to push yourself into discomfort?

On the road to success, you may be asked to do some discomfoting things. Being vulnerable on set or in casting rooms and overcoming nerves are real things you may have to do for a role.

Can you get yourself into completely foreign mindsets? Can you access the darkest, saddest parts of yourself when a role calls for it?

You can't hide any part of yourself from yourself when you're an actor. There's no burying trauma for an actor, you have to know how to use it. Harnessing the pain in your life can be extremely uncomfortable yet it's extremely necessary.

6. ARE YOU READING ENOUGH?

You should have 3–5 entertainment news sources you're consistently checking. Knowledge is power and that goes double in Hollywood.

Reading and staying informed connects to virtually every aspect of your acting career. Knowledge is power. Knowing who the power players and rising stars are will help you figure out who you want to meet. Knowing what the studios are looking for will help you understand what to work on as an actor.

Knowing what people are working on will put you on more impressive footing when you do meet them.

Whether it's the trades, scripts, books, magazines, The New York Times, or anything else, it's crucial that you keep your brain fed and current. You never know when something you read in passing may come up in conversation.

7. WHAT ARE YOU 6-MONTH GOALS?

Start small and keep building. It's crucial to establish reasonable benchmarks so you can keep up with your progress.

You're not going to become George Clooney or Scarlett Johansson in a day. The greats spent years working for their big break and decades honing their craft to become the best in the business. If you set your goals too high at the start, you're going to get burned out.

When you can set short, attainable goals you can clearly see the progress you've made and celebrate what you've accomplished rather than dwell on what you haven't.

A buzzy tech industry term is SMART goals and they apply well to the Actors' Business Plan as well. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. Consider this method when setting your goals.

8. WHO IS SLIGHTLY ABOVE WHERE YOU ARE?

Again, it's not sustainable or healthy to expect to be George Clooney or Scarlett Johansson overnight. It can be valuable to measure yourself against other actors but only if they're around the same level as you are so you can learn from their progress.

People in your classes can be great benchmarks. Not that everything should be a competition — there's enough cutthroat action in entertainment — but it's valuable to know how your contemporaries are doing so you can evaluate yourself and adjust your goals as you need.

Did your partner in an improv class just get a guest star spot on a network

show? Well, you're performing with her and holding your own so "guest star on a TV show" may be a good SMART goal for you to set for the next six months.

We constantly tell children not to compare themselves to other people but I'm telling you the opposite. Because you need to be able to evaluate yourself against your peers to get a proper gauge of your own personal and professional development.



9. WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?

Everyone in any field should be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses so this one speaks for itself.

Don't cop out by twisting your weaknesses into strengths. "I care too much" or "I work too hard" are nice tricks in a job interview but when the interviewer is yourself, you have to cut the bullshit. Working too hard is a weakness if it's burning you out and sacrificing your strengths.

When thinking about strengths and weaknesses, also think about how they can be changed. Are you good at memorizing? Nice, try to memorize the entire script rather than just your part. Do you have a tough time with an RP English accent? Okay, what steps are you going to take to improve it?

All self-evaluation should be action-oriented because the industry is constantly evolving, and you have to be able to evolve with it.

10. HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

We all have to take good, hard, discerning looks at ourselves from time to time. Understanding if you're an ingenue, character actor, charming, intimidating, etc. will help you know the best way to market yourself.

Different agents work better with different types of actors. Different directors and writers specialize in different kinds of movies with different kinds of actors. Knowing who you are and where you fit in will help you make more beneficial connections and relationships.

Don't try to make yourself into something you're not. We can't all look like Chris Hemsworth. Focus on leaning into the things you can control.

Identifying who you are will help you understand what makes you different. Chris Hemsworth has leading man good looks, sure. But what makes him different is his charm and sense of humor. There are not a lot of leading men who are as willing to be self-deprecating or play the fool as Hemsworth is and that keeps him in high demand. It makes him different. And you, by virtue of being you, are different. Just figure out how.

11. WHAT ARE YOU GIVING BACK DAILY?

Nobody makes it on their own. You're going to need help from time to time and if you're going to be worth helping, you have to earn that good karma and pay kindnesses forward.

You don't have to be particularly spiritual to understand the value of being kind. It may sound cynical but helping others and giving back is just a practical way to make a good impression. Who knows, maybe that guy who just dropped a stack of papers is an agent. Help him out.

In a less cynical sense, it just feels good to give back! Doing nice things puts you in a good mood and you do your best work when you're feeling good.

12. WHO ARE YOUR TOP 5 AGENTS AND MANAGERS AND WHY?

You have to do your research on who is in the best position to help you reach your goals and who can excel in the areas in which you want to excel. Remember, your agent and manager are your employees — they work for you. Do you want to be the lowest on the totem pole of a superagent or the top priority for a hungry hustler?

There are benefits to both. Simply being on that superagent's roster will at least get you in on most projects you're interested in. But while the hustler may not be able to get you in on everything, you can always rest assured they're following up on your behalf and doing everything they can to make sure you get a callback.

Really, this is a personal preference. If you want a very active relationship with your agent/manager and a hands-on role in shaping your career path, you probably want that hungry hustler. If you just want to get your feet wet and are willing to do any project that comes your way when you're starting out, that superagent will do you just fine.



13. SHOULD YOU GET A MANAGER OR AN AGENT FIRST?

As mentioned above, if you're interested in racking up credits and figuring

out a career path later, an agent is probably the right way to go. If you want a partner to help make a game plan, it's probably best to find a manager first. This just depends on you as an artist.

Some people want to create, some people want to perform, some want to do a little of both. Only you can say where you are in your journey and only you can really determine where you want to devote your attention.

I have clients that I speak to every day, who want to know exactly what I'm working on for them, who are constantly creating and looking to produce their own projects. I also have clients who I won't touch base with for a few weeks at a time, who just trust me to do my thing and don't want to stress themselves out thinking about all the details.

Either way, you want to get somebody who is going to work hard for you and that you genuinely enjoy collaborating with. The decision may just be made for you based on your meetings.

14. WHAT CAN YOU DO TODAY?

Every question in the Actors' Business Plan should be action-oriented but this one is even more literally framed as such. Acting is an extremely active career that you have to constantly work at and push for.

You're not going to score a defining role every day but you can put in valuable work every day towards achieving your goals.

So, what can you do today? Make a couple SMART goals? Take a class? Read a script? Make a few phone calls? Hone an accent?

You're not going to be in a position to put in a ton of work every day but you can take baby steps. Each day is different so each day try to accomplish what that day allows.

15. HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

Success means a lot of things to a lot of people. Do you want to make a ton of money? Do you want to achieve a certain level of fame? Do you want to

make art that you genuinely believe is important? Maybe all of these things!

When you can define what success means to you, you can better inform your decisions on the road to get there. In fact, the road itself becomes clearer.

Equally as important, if you can't determine what success looks like, you won't know what failure looks like either. Failure is a powerful motivator.

Think about what it would mean to be successful in this business. What, specifically, will you have accomplished once you're feeling fulfilled and truly successful? Now, go out and accomplish those things.



One Final Note...

There's one last thing I need to say about the Actors' Business Plan. Like all plans, it only works if it's implemented.

Action drives success — not intent, not desire, and not passive consumption.

The Actors' Business Plan can only help you if you take the time to work through it and implement it. I sincerely hope you will.

It's been valuable to myself, my clients, and to many colleagues along the way so I know it work. I want it to work for you too.

And now I have a favor to ask of you.

As I mentioned, the Actors' Business Plan is a living document and I

regularly adjust the questions and add to it.

With that in mind, I'd love to hear from you — what do you think would be a helpful question for me to add to it?

Now that you have a business plan, the next step is to learn how to get an agent or manager's attention.

HOW TO GET A TALENT MANAGER'S ATTENTION



Every actor wants to know how to get a talent agent or manager's attention. I know, because it's one of the questions I'm most often asked.

As you can imagine I get a LOT of cold emails from actors, but one recently stood out from the crowd so I thought I'd share it with you to give you a sense of how best to get noticed when you reach out to a representative.

When you're just starting out on your acting career, there's a lot of cold calling involved. Sending hundreds of emails to talent managers, agents, casting execs, directors, writers, other actors—it's just part of the process. Making connections is how you start climbing the ladder.

You might worry that all of those emails you send will never amount to anything, and if you're copying and pasting the same pitch to every industry email address you can find, you're right.

I can't tell you how often an actor reaches out to me with an email that is so obviously a generic template sent to every manager in town, I can't click delete fast enough. It's like the sender didn't take the time to do even the slightest bit of research about me and doesn't really care about anything except for my job title. Even worse, it looks like they had so little confidence in themselves, they didn't even bother to try to stand out. Generic templates are a bad look and no talent manager is going to take them seriously.

However, once in a while I get a great cold call from an actor. As a matter of fact, I got one just the other day.

Ryan Popowcer blew my socks off with his note and made me take notice. It was a dang-near-perfect email from an actor who knows I don't know him from Adam, yet took the time to find common ground and try to make a connection. It worked.

Check it out below and beneath his letter, I'll explain why his approach was so smart.

Subject Line: Gary David Goldberg (Family Ties)

Mr. Medavoy—

My name is Ryan Popowcer and I'm 23 years old. I began acting in 2011 and, through lack of opportunity, I decided to grab the bull by the horns and make my own breaks. So about five years ago, I started writing.

Normally, I copy and paste the same query letter that I've sent out to hundreds of managers at this point, in hopes of getting someone to take a

chance on reading one of my scripts, in hopes (again) of attaining representation. With you, it's different. I always put in a ton of research to anybody I reach out to, and you have separated yourself so far from the pack, that I knew I had to separate myself from the pack as well from all the other generic emails you get daily. What drew me to writing this email is your website/blog. Not only is it rare for a manager like yourself to take the time to create content like you do, but the why behind it is the most inspiring. It's not to promote anything, it's not to attain something, it's not for financial gain. It's simply to connect & inspire. That alone tells me exactly the type of human being you are.

So why did I subject this email 'Gary David Goldberg', who is famously the creator of the hit 1980s sitcom 'Family Ties'. Gary is actually my biggest inspiration to get started in this business. The more I read articles or watched videos about him, the more inspired I was about who he was as a person, not just as a writer. Gary was never concerned with saving the budget for his project, or doing what was fiscally beneficial for his company. His main concern was doing what was best artistically. If a song, or actor he wanted cost a lot of money, but would benefit the show, he was quick to go for it. If I had one word to describe Gary, it'd be passion. I titled his name in this email because reading and studying you, I see a very similar correlation. Most managers I research are all about the money. It's all about their time and how their investment will be made. With you, it's about passion. The fact that you never used your dad's name to get ahead, the fact that you walked away from the business after so much success, and the fact that you only returned because you saw the impact you made on others' lives. These decisions are about something bigger than money; they're based on passion. So I can't emphasize enough how much I admire and respect you and your story.

Gary David Goldberg unfortunately passed away in 2013; I'll never get the chance to sit down and talk to one of my biggest inspirations. You embody so much of what he stands for, and that's who I want to surround myself with in this business. I want someone who will match my enthusiasm and share that passion; someone who's main goal is to pull the best out of me. Personally, I

believe the greatest thing one can do in life is make an impact on someone else's life. I think you and I have the opportunity to make an impact on a lot of people that can be unmatched.

Ever since I started trying to make it in this industry, I've been searching for a mentor; someone who will believe in me and push me. I'd love the opportunity to show why I think you can be that guy for me. I think I have a lot to offer; things you've never heard before from a prospective client. I believe in myself and am confident I will do whatever it takes to be successful, but I know I can't do it alone.

I hope to hear from you.

– Ryan Popowcer



Ryan follows a quick introduction and then makes it clear from the outset that he knows what a crapshoot the email cold call can be. There's a classic belief in advertising that you only have 3–5 seconds to catch a reader's attention and Ryan enacts that mantra well here.

First with the unusual subject line, then with his second paragraph. He admits that he commits the template faux pas but follows it up by telling me why I stood out to him. There's always a weird dynamic with these things but by revealing that he reads my blog, he immediately puts to rest any doubts I may have that this is something he's been sending to everyone. I don't need

my butt kissed but nobody wants to feel like just another number.

Ryan isn't selling himself to me so much as trying to build a connection. He succeeds in that pursuit by invoking the story of Gary David Goldberg, assuming, correctly, that I'm a fan. I love Gary David Goldberg. It's extremely flattering to be compared to Gary David Goldberg but, again, I don't need the butt kissing.

What I like about this passage is that he is clearly demonstrating that he's read my blog, understands what I'm about, and shows that he's as passionate about art as I am. We've got similar tastes and values, which is something I always look for in a client because it's a partnership.

[By the final paragraph, Ryan's barely talked about himself.](#)
[He's prioritized the connection over his career.](#)

Rather than telling me why I'd be lucky to have him on my client roster, he's shared with me what makes him tick and simply established some common ground.

When I get to his action item, where he tells me he's looking for a mentor (NOT a manager), I'm already thinking I like him. I like it even more that he says he's just looking for someone to push him and learn from. Yes, I suspect his end game is to ask me to represent him but I respect the guts it takes to reach out and not once mention the prospect of working together. The message is all about building a connection and making me interested in getting to know him more.

It's a risk to put yourself out there. For actors, it can feel counterintuitive to not act for representation in these emails. However, it's a gutsy and, frankly, very classy thing to reach out simply to talk.

Of course, I know the goal is eventual representation, but I don't like going into meetings with any actors strictly with the end game in mind. I want to hear their story, I want to share mine, and I want to determine if we'd work well together.

Ryan has correctly intuited that I'm all about stories and getting on the same page with the people I work with and appealed to that sensibility in his note. That's exactly why we have spoken many times and he is forever on my radar.

Now that you know how to get a representative's attention, the next step is

to learn how to deal with Hollywood executives.

HOW TO DEAL WITH HOLLYWOOD EXECUTIVES



“There are x types of people in this world.”

You’ve probably heard everybody from your Grandpa Joe to Clint Eastwood in any movie say some variation of this mantra.

And for good reason; it keeps life simple.

You grew up hearing Grandpa Joe was a wolf and his nosy neighbor Pete

was a sheep. Even though you've never met Pete and you think Grandpa Joe's a little kooky, you still know what he means when he categorizes Pete and himself.

Breaking people down into types helps you find people you like, build professional relationships, and understand who to avoid. It helps you understand how to deal with the various people you'll meet in your life.

Nowhere is that more valuable than in the entertainment industry.

Many Hollywood executives can be categorized as one of three personality types and your ability to recognize these types and figure out how to deal with them can unlock a lot of opportunities for you.

Many Hollywood executives can be categorized as one of three personality types and your ability to recognize these types and figure out how to deal with them can unlock a lot of opportunities for you.

While others may write off every industry executive as a "shark," the truth is more nuanced than that. Every Debonair, Character, or Paraphraser you encounter requires a different social skill set to get where you want to go.

Here's a breakdown of how to identify who you're meeting with and how to get the most out of your relationship with them.

FLATTER THE DEBONAIRS

Debonairs may be the closest to that traditional idea of the Hollywood "Shark".

They dress flashy, drive the sexiest cars, walk right past the bouncer into the club, and already picked up the tab at Soho House before you've sat down.

They have wealth, power, and an urge to flaunt both. Impressions are made by making peoples' jaws drop.

Debonairs want to be seen with other power players and will use their acquaintances to elevate their own brands. They're the kind of people who can walk into any room with a big potential client and deliver a winning pitch off the cuff.

They know how good they are and they love that you know it, too. Alec

Baldwin at his slickest would play them in a movie. When you meet one of these types, it may pay to do the unthinkable... suck up a little. Appease their ego. Debonairs don't have time for people who aren't literally worth their time, so flattery just may your best bet to start a conversation. Show them you're aware of their accomplishments and professional success, but don't fawn. Nobody likes a sycophant.

Just play to their cockiness by letting them know you've done your research, you know who's who in this business, and you're not afraid to show some guts yourself and stick your neck out by talking to somebody you know can help you. The trick is to believe that you can help them.

CHARM THE CHARACTERS

Characters are, well, just that.

They're not going to win you over with flash—they don't really care all that much about flash. They may not have been the prettiest person in any room in their life so to get the attention they wanted, they needed to bring the energy.

That might be through talking fast, having the most interesting things to say, or even just talking with their hands—it's not just funny, which I know you were thinking.

Impressions are made through commonalities, making people laugh, and just being an out sized, unforgettable personality.

They know everybody and they know them well because, while they're out there, Characters also care about getting to know others because you're miles more interesting when you can talk as much about others as you can about yourself.

Before that big meeting, they're doing their research, learning about everybody in the room, and pitching as much with research as charm. Wallace Shawn plays them in the movie. To connect with a Character, you've got to be a Character. Put on the charm. Take some conversational risks. Tell a dirty joke. Express a controversial (this does not mean bad) opinion.

With a Character, you should be your most authentic self.

Even if you're not witty, you've probably read some interesting things and

had some interesting experiences in your life. Tap into them! It's probably to your benefit to always have a great story in your back pocket just in case you do get on the spot at some point.

SHOOT STRAIGHT WITH THE PARAPHRASERS

Paraphrasers are the researchers, the strait-laced, the due-diligencers.

They dress well but not flashy. They're shrewder and more subtle than Characters and Debonairs, taking the time to know who is going to be at every event to ensure they'll get some face time.

When they were coming up the assistant ranks, they were asking everyone out for drinks. I don't want to say they work harder, necessarily, since all of these types put in the work but the Paraphrasers haven't been blessed with out sized confidence or a bombastic personality so they take the time to do things right.

There are no shortcuts for the Paraphrasers, who are probably the brightest of the trio but just being smart doesn't always carry you in Hollywood.

Before that big meeting, The Paraphraser is up into the wee hours writing out talking points and memorizing them, envisioning different scenarios and avenues of discussion that might arise and preparing for them.

Mariska Hargitay is The Paraphraser.

Paraphrasers respect straight shooters and, as such, they probably require the most cunning to win over to your corner.

You have to maintain that authenticity you're bringing to the Character conversation but also respect the game as you would with the Debonair. It's a delicate balance and you can't get away with some of the bullshit you can with the other two archetypes.

If you land a meeting with a Paraphraser, you need to maintain confidence in your abilities but remain contrite.

Understand nobody owes you anything and there are literally thousands of other people grinding just like you in LA alone. Appreciate the opportunity you have, kiss the rings lightly, but come prepared with a couple selling points for yourself.

You're pretty much always selling yourself in this town but Paraphrasers

are the most cautious buyers. Rehearse some points about why you differ from the crowd, how you've earned what you have, and what matters to you.

THESE THREE TYPES ARE JUST THE BEGINNING

Despite what Grandpa Joe said, life isn't as simple as fitting everyone cleanly into just three categories. Hollywood is no different.

While you may have started applying these to people in your own life, they're certainly not perfect encapsulations. Leaning into one of these archetypes could help you in different situations when navigating the business but truthfully, the best of the best embody some aspects of all three.

What I'm getting at is that while it may be tempting to be what you see on TV or you hear through the talk of the town, if you want to make it in Hollywood you ultimately have to be yourself.

You can definitely take inspiration from others and study different types of people to learn how you can best utilize certain traits and strategies but if you're selling out to be just one thing, it's never going to work.

Now that you know how to deal with the characters you encounter in this industry, the next step is to learn how to get a meeting in Hollywood.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN YOU WANT TO GET BETTER AT SOMETHING

Every hero shares the same superpower: The ability to improve. Their commitment to getting better is one of the biggest reasons we root for them.

From Rick Blaine in *CASABLANCA* to King T'Challa in *BLACK PANTHER*, we cheer for characters as they go on journeys of growth, constantly working towards bettering themselves.

So is the case in real life: we always want to be a better version of ourselves. But the people who succeed in this quest, who improve the most, are those who do so deliberately. This holds true for actors or anyone in the entertainment industry. You must always be actively improving yourself, no matter where you are in your career.

The second you stop improving, that's when your growth as an actor and a person stops ... and it's when it gets harder to root for yourself to succeed. To that end, I recommend that you ask yourself these five questions that will help you hone in on what you want to improve, why, and how you're going to do it.

1. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO IMPROVE?

“Talent” is somewhat of an abstract idea, so I hope didn't just answer that. When you're thinking about what you want to improve in your life, you should

be thinking about clear, actionable things.

When you think about improvement in a purely abstract sense, you risk overlooking the gradual positive steps you need to take to get there.

Identifying action items like “I’ll read two scripts/week” or “I’ll go to one networking event/week” allow you to appreciate the progress you’re making and not get bogged down by feeling you’re not moving as fast as you’d like.

Maybe you want to be more aggressive about networking. Maybe you want to work on your auditioning skills. Maybe you want to cultivate a different skill that could help you in your acting career, like learning how to edit together a reel for yourself.

Whatever it is, it’s got to be something specific, concrete, and actionable. And most of all, it must be something that you truly want to work on.

The more motivated you are from the get-go, the more likely you are to succeed.

2. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT PROCESS FOR TRYING TO IMPROVE?

This ties in directly with the last question.

It’s more valuable to look at the contributing pieces to your end goal rather than the goal itself. You can improve in your field through practice and training, certainly, but how are you going to practice and train?

Get in the mindset of thinking holistically about the process it will take to reach your goal, and write that process out. Compare it to what you’re currently doing and be honest with yourself. What’s easy to do, what’s a little more difficult?

It's important to take stock of where you are so that you can chart the logical next step. You may, in your current process, already have a layer of foundation that you can build upon in your journey to self-improvement.

If, for instance, you want to network more, and you're already making a new contact every week, you have a base to work from.

On the flip side, it's OK if you're starting with nothing — as long as you know where you're coming from, you have nowhere to go but up.

3. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ROADBLOCKS TO YOUR PROCESS?

There are a lot of obstacles on the road to success.

When you're continuing to think about the building blocks of the process, you can more easily identify the roadblocks, too. Night shift keeping you from your prime thinking hours? Look into trading shifts. Identifying the practical roadblocks to your process is the first step in eliminating them entirely.

It's the easiest thing in the world to dream of something, but it's a whole lot harder to turn that dream into action. And what stops more people than anything is an unexpected obstacle.

Just think about how many New Year's resolutions fall through the second someone's schedule fills up so they can't go to the gym, or a break-up happens so it's too stressful to quit smoking.

But if you plan ahead and think through what the roadblocks will be, you'll be able to work against them before they even show up.

4. WHAT COULD YOU DO TO ELIMINATE OR IMPROVE THOSE ROADBLOCKS?

Some things will always be outside of your control so focus only on what is. The amount of time you can devote to reading, studying, learning new

skills, meeting new people. Maintaining a positive attitude.

You're not going to be able to rework an agent's schedule so she shows up at your one-man show but you can put in the hard work and treat the people you meet well.

When you can identify the roadblocks that are within your control and take steps to overcome them, the ones that aren't in your control may just work themselves out.

Let's say you want to work on your audition technique, but you have no way to talk to a casting director about how you perform in a room. It may seem like an impenetrable roadblock, but why not invite some actor friends over for a mock audition?

Everyone gets a turn auditioning, and then everyone else gives them feedback following.

You may not be getting that feedback directly from the source, but you will be getting plenty of notes from other people working in the business. And just like that, you're back on the road to improvement.

5. WHAT ONE AREA WILL YOU FOCUS ON EELIMINATING/IMPROVING NEXT YEAR AND HOW SPECIFICALLY WILL YOU IMPLEMENT IT?

This echoes the prevailing theme of keeping it simple and actionable. Nobody has the time or energy to completely overhaul their life at the drop of a hat.

Rather, zero in on one action item and devote yourself to it. Break down the process further. When you've committed to improving that one area of your overarching process, other good things will follow.

Be specific. Don't just say, "I'm going to have a better reel," or, "I'm going to go on more auditions."

Know how you're going to get there, and layout specific steps.

Create manageable goals for yourself that you can work towards over the course of the next year. And then, once the year's up, take stock of how much you've improved ... and find something new to work on for the coming year.

The greatest heroes of film and television always work towards improving themselves and achieving their goals. That's what makes them compelling, more than their looks or talents.

It's the unflinching need to do better. Model your own careers on that and you'll always be working towards success.

Now that you know how to improve, the next step is to learn how career-making moments happen.

3 PUBLICATIONS WORTH READING IF YOU WORK IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY THAT AREN'T THE TRADES

The more you know about how the entertainment industry works and where it's headed, the more likely you are to identify and capitalize on new opportunities.

That's why it's important to read industry trades like *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, and *Deadline*, but there's a whole world of other niche publications out there that can be every bit as valuable (and maybe more) than the trades.

Following are descriptions of three publications I've found to be useful and fascinating—I recommend you check them out.



The Pudding

1. THE PUDDING

Recently, I discovered the most fascinating website. I'm always looking to learn new information, but reading the same black and white typeface can get exhausting. Not so on "The Pudding."

A weekly journal of interactive/visual essays, The Pudding is like a database of interesting, digestible thesis projects... they're incredibly informative, but not in a way that makes your eyes glaze over. I truly believe this website is revolutionizing the way we read the news and absorb data.

The Pudding's mission describes what makes this site so cool: "[each project is] an interactive experience that seeks to advance public discourse in a way that a traditional 20,000-word essay never could." The whole website is inspiring, interesting, and just fun. As a visual learner and active reader, The Pudding has definitely changed the way I want to consume content.

Recommended Articles:

Hollywood's Gender Divide and its Effect on Films

The Geographic Divide of Oscar Films



2. STRATECHERY

What The Pudding does for politics and the news, Stratechery does for the business of technology and media. It goes beyond the digestible, bite-sized interactive projects of The Pudding to take deep analytical dives into subjects that are important to the business-minded. The New York Times has called it "one of the most interesting sources of analysis on any subject" for good reason. I'm not a numbers guy exactly and I still glean so many insights from this fascinating website. Most importantly: The Internet is changing how we do and understand everything.

Incredibly, Stratechery is written by one guy, Ben Thompson, who has worked in strategy and marketing for Apple, Microsoft, and Automatic.

Between his nuanced, experienced eye and engaging writing style, he makes Stratechery as close to a fount for learning everything about how this world works as there is on the web.

Recommended Articles:

The Great Unbundling

Netflix and the Conservation of Attractive Profits



Trapital

3. TRAPITAL

Where Stratechery is technology and media, Trapital takes on the business of hip-hop and culture. One of LinkedIn's Must Read Series, Trapital is absolutely loaded with keen analysis on the status of hip-hop around the world, commentary on the music business, fascinating history, and consideration of culture at large. It's something between a blog and a long-form journalism site, offering articles and ideas that can quickly pull in even the most casual of hip-hop listeners. Really, you don't even have to be all that into hip-hop. With coverage on things like the Vegas residency boom, the Super Bowl half-time fiasco, and music history, Trapital is chock full of insights and stories that captivate all audiences.

Recommended Articles:

How Rihanna Can Use Fenty Beauty to Sell Her Next Album

Why Rappers Started Running their Own Music Festivals

THE 3 BIGGEST LESSONS PEOPLE LEARNED LAST YEAR ABOUT HOW TO MAKE IT IN HOLLYWOOD

I started writing blogs as a way to help people navigate Hollywood and to share my experiences and lessons learned from decades spent as a talent manager.

But in the process of doing so, I discovered something else – an incredible opportunity to learn from all of you and your ongoing experiences in the entertainment industry.

Toward the end of 2018, I asked my social media followers what the biggest lesson was they had learned in the past year about how to succeed in the entertainment industry and was blown away at all the responses.

I also noticed many of them fell into a few specific buckets so I thought I'd share some of my favorites here.

1. BE HUMAN.

What a simple idea, right? And yet it can be incredibly difficult to do in an industry that glorifies sharks.

It's okay to be vulnerable. It's human to be vulnerable, and you should be good at it as an actor! Understand that everybody is taking part in one shared experience, and you are never truly alone in this world.

Don't be afraid to reach out to others and ask for advice. Conversely, help others whenever you can and try to be the type of person you would have liked to meet at a younger age.

A few comments that stood out to me:

“Always be authentic. And come from the “be of service” mindset. Laugh, cry and just be human.” – @kHUDSONliketheriver

“I have had an extremely rough year, I lost my Angel baby. I've learned that art has literally saved my life. Creating, writing, and acting gave me an outlet for my hurt. Art is magical. Also, losing my son was my biggest fear, now, what can I possibly be afraid of? I feel fearless, like I can do anything, because nothing scares me now.” – @arlenevictoria

“Reach out to people you want to meet and work with. Everyone starts somewhere. Ask for assistance.” – @susanspanostudio

2. PUT IN THE WORK

This is a recurring theme on this blog, a value that I continually preach but couldn't fully appreciate until I heard it echoed by so many readers in their personal stories. Again, it's basic but it's essential: When you have a dream, you have to be willing to work for it. I'm blessed to be surrounded by so many hardworking, talented individuals and they inspire me to do my best work, as well.

A few comments that stood out to me:

“Focus. Having an ultimate goal is so important, and focusing on it will help you make the right decisions for the smaller steps you take in your journey towards it.” – Ryan Ali

“You gotta go the extra mile and put in the 10,000 hours to gain mastery. You also have to learn the biz side of the acting biz and keep working daily on achieving your goals. A positive mindset is a must. Negativity will sink you in more ways than one.” – @PaulaJayFair

“During the silence, create your own work. Dream it, write it, record it, film it. As an artist, it’s very satisfying.” – @radiosammi

3. KEEP GOING AND ENJOY THE PROCESS

Above all, to thine own self be true. You can bet your butt Shakespeare loved the process. Being yourself, putting in the work, and finding value and joy in the work is absolutely crucial.

Don’t forget that it’s important to keep your head up through failure. Enjoy the growth that comes from the downs as much as the thrills that come from the ups.

A few comments that stood out to me:

“Don’t be afraid of hearing the word, ‘No.’ We don’t want to hear it but sometimes we have to because it’s necessary.” – Jest Jake

“I have learned to enjoy every audition no matter what the circumstances are. It is a glorious adventure and getting a part is secondary to my state of consciousness.” – Bruce King

“The best advice came from Dory — Just keep swimming! Honestly, when

things just don't seem to be going your way or things aren't happening fast enough, just keep moving forward and eventually, it'll all work out the way it's supposed to happen." – Viki Nazarian

“Just say F....it and go for everything you desire. Push harder!” –
@amber.lucy

4 THINGS ACTORS SHOULD DO WHEN THEY GET TO HOLLYWOOD

Just about everyone in Hollywood is from somewhere else.

The entertainment industry is filled with people who packed their bags and left Des Moines, or Seattle, or Baltimore to take a shot at their dreams.

It's a huge decision in a person's life, and one that sparks unparalleled feelings of excitement and latent terror. Those feelings culminate in that moment you touch down at LAX or drive into the city limits and an inevitable question hits you:

So...now what?

What was once a dot on a map to you is a massive city, with millions of people jockeying for the same thing you want. It's easy to feel lost, overwhelmed, and not know where to start.

There's no shortage of people willing to talk your ear off about the entertainment industry — some may be helpful for years to come and some, well, not so much.

But as daunting as your first day in Hollywood may seem, there are several things you can do in that moment to help get you pointed in the right direction.

1. ASK YOURSELF THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

This business is all about relationships and while not every relationship will be good, each one has something to teach you. One of my most positive long-time relationships has been with one of the best acting coaches in the business, Howard Fine. He has a piece of advice that's valuable for all actors: Ask yourself the tough questions.

From the day you start, you have to know not only the business but also yourself, and the best way to figure that out is to ask yourself some key questions.

Why do you want to be an actor more than anything else?

Have you been cast in roles in your hometown, college, or semi-professionally?

Are you emotionally open, able to capture attention with just your presence, comfortable and flexible in your own skin?

Perhaps most importantly, are you able to take criticism about yourself, your talent, and your body? Often delivered indelicately, to your face, and even more often behind your back? This is the harsh but true reality of an actor's life, and it's something you have to be ready for.

There's no better time to ask these questions than when you arrive in Hollywood because if they make you reconsider now, it may be best to stop before you start.

2. START TO BUILD YOUR NETWORK — IMMEDIATELY

Let's say you just landed at LAX. Your friend offered a couch for you to crash on, but is unable to pick you up from the airport so you take an Uber. Welcome to your first opportunity to network!

Most Uber drivers I've had in Los Angeles have been involved in the entertainment industry in some form. They're actors, writers, producers — you name it, I've seen them behind the wheel. And they're always eager to chat about their passion, find a like-minded spirit, and build a future connection.

Next to talent, networking is the most important factor in a

successful Hollywood career. And it's something you can start working on right away.

Not just with Uber drivers, but with waiters, bartenders, friends of friends, etc. Just about anyone you meet out here will probably have some ties to the entertainment industry.

It's a small town, and you'll be amazed how often your friend's cousin's former roommate is Dave Becky's nanny.

Don't assume one person is good for one connection. One trick I tell actors to use is "20 plus 20" — for every 20 people you meet, ask them if they know someone else who'd be good for you to talk to.

Just like that, you've got 20 more contacts to meet with. Not every connection will be a positive one, but they will all teach you something.

3. LEARN THE BUSINESS

Just about everyone will tell you to take an acting class to hone your skills and it's good advice.

But what often gets overlooked is the skills being taught in these classes go beyond your performance. You're not simply learning how to act, you're also learning how to act in Hollywood.

A great class will teach you as much about how to navigate the business of auditioning and market yourself in a shifting media landscape as it does how to bring a character to life.

It's like enrolling in business school, only the business is your individual pursuit of an acting career and it comes with a side opportunity to build your network with your fellow classmates.

But don't limit your learning to a classroom setting. Get to know the business by reading industry publications like *Deadline*, the *Hollywood Reporter*, and *Variety* to know what projects are getting made and who is making them.

Check out entertainment-focused blogs and subscribe to relevant newsletters (like mine!). Know what materials you'll need right off the bat, like a headshot, resume, and, ideally, a working car.

And above all, learn how to memorize fast. The more you learn, the greater

your advantage over those who don't.

4. PREPARE FOR THE LONG HAUL

There are many different things to consider when you embark on a Hollywood career, but the most crucial one is not to rush.

Take your time learning your chops. Set reasonable and attainable goals. And don't sweat it if you see others around you succeeding before you do.

Yes, this is a business that values youth. And yes, it's a business that can move very quickly. But if you go out for certain roles, auditions, or jobs you're not ready for, you can leave a negative impression that will last forever.

Navigating Hollywood can be hard on your mental health so you need to be kind to yourself. Write down several things you accomplished each day that will help move your career forward. They may be as small as, "I cooked a healthy meal" or "I signed up for a class" or "I talked to my Uber driver about a film she's working on."

They don't even need to be related to acting! Every little bit counts and it's all important. You may not realize it in the moment, but when you step back and look at all you've done, you'll be amazed by the amount of continual improvement.

Remember, you're starting a journey that will take years to develop and never really ends. So be patient, enjoy the journey, and learn to love the process as much as the success. If you do, it's all painless.

Relatively.

WHAT I LEARNED FROM MICHAEL OVITZ



It's fitting that Michael Ovitz is working in Silicon Valley now, in an industry that thrives on disruption since disruption is what he's doing now that he's released his autobiography, *Who Is Michael Ovitz?*, and is fully entrenched in the talk show circuit. Michael Ovitz's wretched reputation is no secret in the entertainment industry and it is largely earned. He created something incredible out of virtually nothing, got too big, and acted so

imperviously that he became everybody's favorite target.

The reviews of this book, generally, seem to concede that Ovitz has treated it as a soapbox to re-litigate old arguments, resettle old scores, and attempt to charmingly sweep his reputation for callousness and brutality under the rug. On the talk show circuit, he comes across as congenial and knowledgeable, almost grandfatherly, which I'm quite sure is tying many Hollywood executives' brains into knots. He's trying to cast his legacy in a new, more favorable light so he can feel better about himself. That's extremely transparent to me. But I'm halfway through his book now, and I've listened to some of his podcast appearances, and I'm discovering that I just don't really care how brazenly he's trying to reframe his own past.

Full disclosure: Michael Ovitz gave me my first job at CAA, an opportunity I'd run with and I'll be forever grateful for. But there isn't some misplaced sense of loyalty here, rather, I've been fascinated to read about and hear him talk about so many of the strategies he employed as an agent. Many of which I've sought to employ in my own business and career.

Say what you want about Mike Ovitz, and I know there are many, many justifiable gripes against him, but he took a \$100,000 loan and in ten years controlled 70% of the market share. Yes, the timing was a huge part of this. He was young, hungry, and emerged from a rapidly changing Hollywood landscape, loaded with fresh new talent that appealed to a new generation of outspoken consumers. Still, Ovitz took everything he could from the original super-agent, Lew Wasserman, and doubled down on packaging films and television that were driven more by talent than by studio execs. He both capitalized on and innovated the industry of his day.

As a business owner, the vision fascinates me. As a talent manager, his system inspires me. Ovitz was all about "double plays", a concept I always seek to engender. He'd get an actor featured somewhere, then follow it up immediately with something else. He was a master of compounding any bit of success into a propulsive wave. Steering the way people spoke about and viewed his clients and projects was one thing, but the way he maintained relationships with them himself was even more impressive.

Ovitz recognized that the minor things he could do in a meeting, like take an interest in somebody's hobby or remember a small detail of something they

said, were major factors in establishing a strong relationship. As he says, “There’s a reason we have two ears and one mouth.” Because good listeners are great negotiators. While most agents send champagne and flowers as congratulations to clients, Ovitz took that knowledge he gained about their hobbies and sent a gift that they genuinely wanted and found useful. It’s simple, but it’s brilliant.

I’m only halfway through the book, and I know he doesn’t always have the most faithful relationship with the truth, but you can’t help but listen to somebody with so much success and be at least a little captivated.

His discussions of vulnerability are a little mind-blowing. It’s hard to say just how calculated he’s being when he describes it as a conscious decision to not be vulnerable. On the talk circuit, he goes into how vulnerability was a “crime” to him in his heyday, a shortcoming not to be tolerated. This attitude colored many of his professional relationships and informed many of his more brutal and controversial decisions. He acknowledges this style just wouldn’t work today, and he’s experiencing that first hand in his Silicon Valley dealings.

When he talks on a podcast about the characteristics he looks for in an individual, I can’t help but read into it and nod right along with him. Being kindly aggressive. Curiosity, self-reliance, entrepreneurship — someone who wants to make something of themselves. These are all traits I aspire to espouse and ones that I’m looking for in everyone I do business with.

Ovitz was one of the first true power players, and his re-emergence on the Hollywood scene is stoking conversation around the current huge one, too. CNBC asked him straight out if Ted Sarandos is the most powerful man in Hollywood. Mike’s discussion of how Netflix has completely changed the content game was illuminating, in part due to his insistence that greatness always floats toward the top, regardless of how saturated the market is, and in part, because he’s reflecting on a present made possible by his own actions more than 40 years ago

Say what you want about Mike Ovitz, but despite his coarse style and the controversy that surrounds him, I can’t help but try to learn something during his last fifteen minutes of fame.

THE CREAM: 10 THINGS THAT MOVED ME THIS MONTH

When something moves me, I do something about it. Every month, I put together a list of everything that has inspired me to share with my friends and clients. This month, I wanted to share that list with you. I hope you can find some inspiration and joy from it.

The Art of Photoshop

“@KirbyJenner is a self-described “Amateur Model / Lover of all things / Fraternal Twin of Kendall Jenner”. He’s also really good at Photoshop, and has used that skill to insert himself into Kendall Jenner’s Instagram pics.”



I gave it a shot myself...what do you think?

The Deliberate Awfulness of Social Media

“Deleting your social-media accounts might be a means of making it more bearable, and even of maintaining your sanity. But one way or another, the world being what it is, we are going to have to learn to live in it.”

How to Buy Your Way Into Leonardo DiCaprio’s Inner Circle

“In 2009, the world’s biggest movie star developed an unlikely friendship with some obscenely wealthy Hollywood wannabes, whose millions in gifts to the Oscar winner became a focus of the largest corruption case in U.S. history.”

Good Girls Get High

This great film premiered at The LA Film Festival in September. Keep an eye out for it and its creators, not to mention our client Stefanie Scott who is one of the stars.



Quincy

A documentary profiling music and culture icon Quincy Jones — It's an amazing tribute to a living legend and exploration into the last half century of music.

New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future

“New Dark Age is among the most unsettling and illuminating books I’ve read about the Internet, which is to say that it is among the most unsettling and

illuminating books I've read about contemporary life.” — New Yorker

The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood

“From the bestselling author of the acclaimed *Chaos and Genius* comes a thoughtful and provocative exploration of the big ideas of the modern era: Information, communication, and information theory.”

The Death and Life of Great American Cities

“ In prose of outstanding immediacy, Jane Jacobs writes about what makes streets safe or unsafe; about what constitutes a neighborhood, and what function it serves within the larger organism of the city; about why some neighborhoods remain impoverished while others regenerate themselves.”

PodcastOne: Todd Garner interview with Jason Heyman

“United Talent Agency Partner — Jason Heyman — shares how he went from working as a kid in the UTA mailroom in the early 90s to representing the likes of Will Ferrell, Sofia Vergara, Chris Pratt, Ali Wong, and Zach Galifianakis.”

I love learning about people's humble beginnings and how they climbed the ladder. This interview provides for some great inspiration.

Variety: interview of John Landgraf (FX Networks CEO)

“FX Networks CEO John Landgraf sees the future of television shaping up as a global business led by a handful of media giants with the resources to operate global streaming giants.”

Competition breeds innovation, they say, and I enjoyed hearing how he's staying ahead of the curve. It was a helpful exercise for my own understanding and consideration of today's media.

ABOUT BRIAN MEDAVOY

Award-winning producer and manager Brian Medavoy has been in the entertainment business for nearly 25 years. In that time, he has emerged as one of Hollywood's top talent representatives, helping to craft the early careers of actors such as Ryan Reynolds, Tobey Maguire, Josh Brolin, David Schwimmer, Jason Bateman and Maria Bello, among others.

Medavoy began in the mailrooms of CAA and ICM, quickly moving up the ranks to become the assistant to famed talent agent Ed Limato. In 1991, at the age of 23, he partnered with Erwin More to form their own management company, More-Medavoy. The duo handled a roster that included actors, directors and writers from all segments of the entertainment field.

In 1994, Medavoy and More made the move to producing projects for their clients, beginning with the television series *Sweet Justice* starring Cicely Tyson and Melissa Gilbert. Over the next few years, Medavoy produced nine pilots including *The Single Guy*, starring Jonathan Silverman for NBC, and *Getting Personal* with Duane Martin for Fox. They also developed the hit ABC comedy *Dharma and Greg* starring Jenna Elfman. This led to the pair signing an exclusive producing deal with 20th Century Television where they later produced *Just Shoot Me*, which aired for seven seasons on NBC.

More-Medavoy merged with powerhouse managers Susan Bymel and Evelyn O'Neill in 1999 to form Talent Entertainment Group. Under their combined banner, TEG continued to represent A-list talent while developing film and television projects for their clients. One of those projects, the highly-acclaimed PBS series *American High*, garnered Medavoy an Emmy award for Outstanding Non-Fiction Program (Reality). The documentary series followed fourteen students from Highland Park High School in Illinois for one year.

Medavoy took a leave from the entertainment industry and moved to Whitefish, MT in 2005. He returned to Los Angeles in 2008 and formed Medavoy Management the following year. In 2014, he got the band back together and re-partnered with Erwin More to re-launch More/Medavoy Management.

A Los Angeles native, Medavoy has deep roots in the entertainment industry. His father, prolific film producer Mike Medavoy, is the co-founder of Orion Pictures, former chairman of TriStar Pictures and current chairman and CEO of Phoenix Pictures. Brian attended UCLA where he majored in history.

“What you see determines how you interpret the world, which in turn influences what you expect of the world and how you expect the story of your life to unfold.” – Sheena Iyengar



Brian Medavoy with his dog Tucker.

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