

Book That Job eZine

Moving Forward as an Actor Even When You (Temporarily!) Don't Feel Like It

Wouldn't it be wonderful if every day were a stellar day? Upon waking you fly out of bed with boundless energy and are filled with brilliant strategies to move forward with unstoppable passion toward your acting dreams and visions, your challenges easily handled with resourcefulness and the actions you take executed with joy.

Ah...to live in the land of honey and clover! It would indeed be wonderful to experience those kinds of days every day, and gratefully, most of us generally have days that are quite productive and present and even inspiring and fun. However, I want to zero in on those days that are nothing like anything that I have mentioned thus far. I'm speaking of those days when you wake up and are already out of inspiration and momentum and have no desire to find either.

As an acting coach, I've seen actors throw themselves completely off track over one off day. It's not worth it. Human beings inhabit a realm that is much more liquid than solid; our energy is not endless, and our feelings shape shift much more than we often care to deal with. It's just how we're made.

I'd love to say that I never have those days, but that would be completely untrue. But what is true is that I've actually come to appreciate them. Whenever one of those kinds of days crop up, rather than approach it as a "get out of jail free" day by doing everything in my power to avoid my work, they have become an even deeper practice of being consistently consistent.

While I know virtually nothing about engineering, I like to think about being consistently consistent in relationship to a flywheel. Wikipedia says, "Flywheels are often used to provide continuous energy in systems where the energy source is not continuous." Also, "Flywheels have a significant moment of inertia, and thus resist changes in rotational speed." Hence, once that flywheel gets moving, it likes to keep moving and thus the things that I have put in motion I like to keep in motion—regardless of the way I feel.

I know that if I stop moving forward based on my feelings, it's going to take a lot more energy to start moving again. When I'm experiencing an off day, I've devised some simple principles to follow in order to stay in action and foster the momentum that I've already created:

#1) Feelings Are Temporary

It's challenging to remember while deep in the midst of an off day, but like all feelings these particular feelings are *temporary*. Yesterday was a stellar day, today is an off day and tomorrow will be something else. The point is, this will absolutely not last forever.

#2) Accept & Allow

Don't fight the feelings. Pushing yourself to feel inspired, motivated and excited will likely leave you depressed and frustrated. Accept that you are where you are and allow your feelings to be 100% present—but like an app running in the background. This idea becomes the backbone of Principle #3.

#3) Do the Work

Make a deal with yourself that you are completely allowed to feel how you feel, but today's focus is on the work and taking forward moving actions regardless. This is key. It's not a day off. Save your day off for having fun and doing things that fill your well.

Without fail, when I follow these principles as needed, I come to the end of my day feeling reenergized and completely invigorated by the accomplishments of the day. I noticed the same, too, for my acting students. If they come to a coaching session having an off day, by deeply embracing the acting work at hand their outlook and perspective begin to shift. They leave the session inspired by their work rather than mired in unresourcefulness.

I want to be clear that I'm not suggesting that we ignore ourselves when rest is needed and when feelings require true attention. I highly advocate down time, days off and vacation. Creating times to get away from it all feeds us in ways in which continual work will never do—something I have discovered the hard way. And certainly, if ongoing depression is at all an issue, please disregard this advice in lieu of a visit to a helpful mental health professional.

I offer this practice as a mindful approach designed to help turn less-than-productive feelings into proactive ways of being, an approach that honors the truth of the moment while still allowing the space to focus on and nurture our most important goals and desires.

About This eZine

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