

Acting Like a Pro: Curriculum

Introductions

Topics for open discussion: Meeting new people can be difficult for some people. Have everyone in the room introduce themselves. Each student will be given a script to fill in with personal information. Ask whether they feel comfortable doing this every time. What situations make them more comfortable? Small groups? Large groups?

Taking on a New Persona

Topics for open discussion: How do you see yourself? How would you like people to see you? Powerful? Nice? Professional? Warm and friendly? Well-off/successful? How do you dress in order to make the best presentation for your industry? How do you make yourself and your customers comfortable through your chosen appearance?

The Handshake

Topics for open discussion: Do you grip firmly? Look into person's eyes; make eye contact. Personal space?

Activities: Practice hand-shaking and appropriate eye contact and personal space.

The Smile

Topics for open discussion: A nice smile is important. Being genuine wins trust. Do you know who you are? Do you like who you are? Would you change something about yourself if you could? Is there someone you admire that you wish you were more like? A person you know? An entertainer? A politician? How can you take cues from this person's character to use when pitching your products or services?

Activities: Smiling into a mirror and then to each fellow students.

Listening for Your Cue Lines

Topics for open discussion: All actors learn lines. Bad actors only wait for their cue line to be said so they can jump in and say their next line. Good actors become the character they are portraying and assume that identity. They wear that identity like a second skin. They *react* more than act. You will learn to listen for important cues, not just the line that gives you a chance to break in or a pause that lets you jump into say your "lines." Whatever you are selling or offering, you must become the person that believes in that product or service more than anyone else. Talking about it should come from a place of confidence and ease. This can be especially difficult in phone conversations, where you have no visual cues to guide your interaction.

Activities: Improv scenes, including improvisational phone conversations.

Acting Like a Pro: Curriculum

Humor

Topics for open discussion: Humor can be a great tool or an unintentional embarrassment. Do you think you are naturally funny? Do you have a good sense of humor? Do you know what is appropriate humor? Cracking a joke or making an off-handed remark can have disastrous results if you are not careful. Let the other person tell you more about themselves before you put your foot in your mouth. Look at their body language. Leave religion and politics alone! No exceptions.

Activities: Instructor will illustrate “good” vs. “bad” humor.

Curtain Call – Ending the Conversation

Topics for open discussion: All plays must end. Leaving a conversation can be more difficult than starting one. If you feel there is nothing more to say, begin with a compliment: “I have very much enjoyed meeting you and having time to converse.” “I hope we can meet again and continue our discussion.” “I would love to set up a time when we can meet to discuss our mutual business interests in more detail. Can I give you a call?” End as you began – with a firm handshake!

Activities: Practice “goodbyes.”

About the Instructor

Lil Barcaski is the Creative Director of the Showcase Arts Foundation, a non-profit theater and film group in the Tampa Bay area. She is a Renaissance woman with a diverse background in music, theater, and business. Lil has been directing stage productions and founding theater groups for over thirty years in both New Jersey and Florida.

She has been a business-owner and entrepreneur since the age of seventeen and is a logistics expert, specializing in corporate and private event planning. She has developed and executed grand openings, fundraisers, music festivals, and trade shows and expos.

Lil taught theater arts at Bergenfield High School in Bergenfield, New Jersey. She is mentored by Richard Weber, a student of Uta Hagen and of Milton Katselas, founder of the Beverly Hills Playhouse.

Lil has a Bachelor's of Arts in Communications, which entitles her to communicate.