

Theatre Virtual Learning

Acting 3 & 4

Sensory and Emotional Recall

May 11



Lesson: May 11

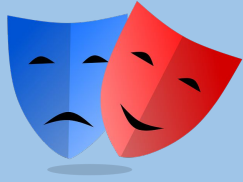
Objective/Learning Target: Understanding how to elicit emotional recall



Sensory & Emotional Recall

Let's Get Started / Warm Up Activities:

What do you do to get an extreme emotion like anger on stage? Do you just resort to raising your volume and yelling? Do you throw a physical tantrum? What have you tried in the past? Did it look realistic?



Sensory & Emotional Recall--What are they?



- Sense memory and emotional memory are quite different, even though they can be linked. (One can cause the other.)
- Sense memory involves the remembering of physiological functions of the body.
- Emotional memory involves remembering an emotional response to some event.
- Examples of how they can cause the other:
 - You smell bacon and it makes you think of waking up at your grandparents' house while they are making you breakfast.
 - You might hit the table in anger, which causes physical pain.





This lesson will focus on Emotional Recall



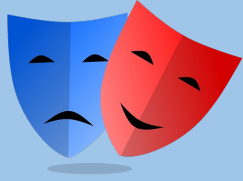
- Many scenes in theatre call for the actor to get very angry or to be very sad or highly elated.
- Acting these extreme emotions can look quite fake and damage an otherwise nice performance. Actors must learn to use their skills to elicit these emotions realistically.
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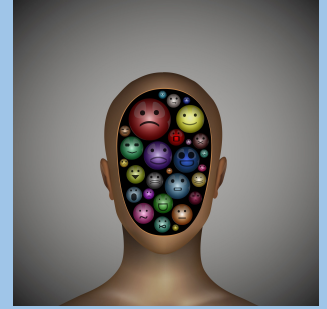
Emotional Recall



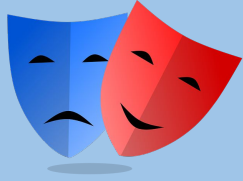
- In the use of emotional memory, you must substitute whatever is on stage for what is happening in your reality to bring about that emotion.
- Example: You may be on stage with your best friend, Chris, in real life, but their character, Charles, has just told you he invested all of your life savings in something that failed. You are broke.
- Looking at your friend saying those words is not enough to make your anger so real that you can rant at him. You need to use your emotional recall to do this.



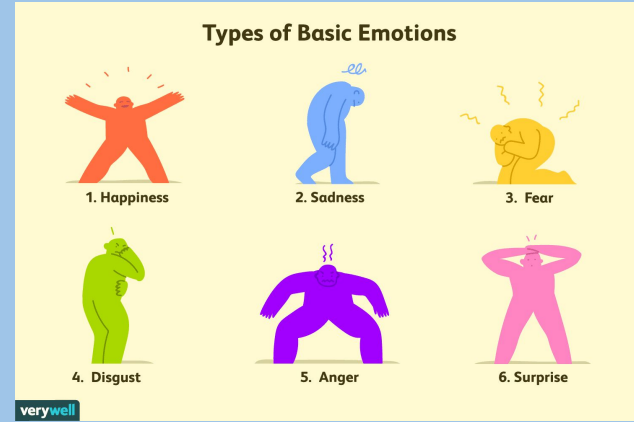
Emotional Recall



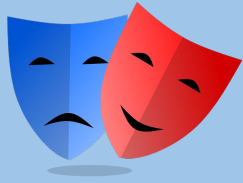
- Uta Hagen teaches in her book, Respect for Acting, how to access your emotional memory
 - The extreme emotions in life occur when we are not able to cope logically with what is happening.
 - It is awkward and unnatural to try to get these emotions, because in real life, we are trying to fight for control of them, not trying to feel them. (Think about when you cry--you are not trying to cry. You are usually trying NOT to cry.)
 - Because of this, it seems more logical to our bodies not try to not cry.



Emotional Recall: Uta Hagen teachings

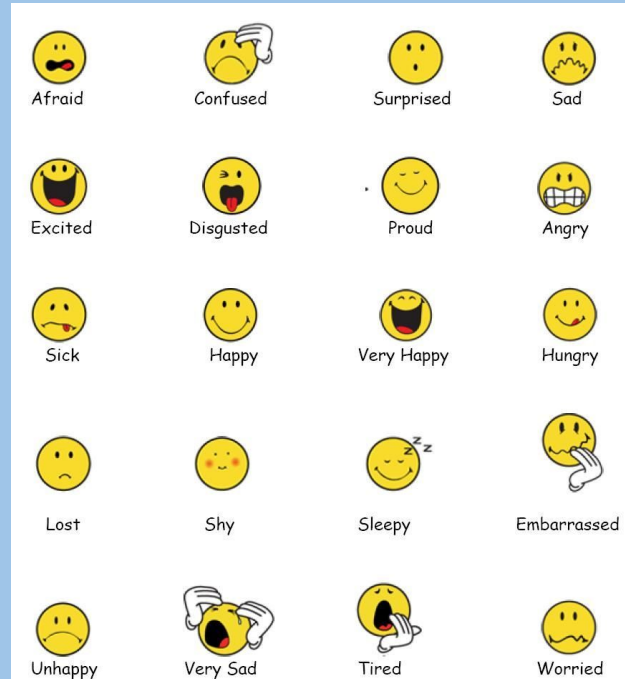


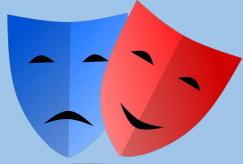
- If you think about some extremely emotional thing, you work yourself into a fog of emotion and it looks unnatural and fake. This is not what to do.
- What you should do is find a time you had that emotion in real life.
- CAUTION: DO NOT USE ANY EVENT YOU HAVE NOT FULLY DEALT WITH. A DEATH OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS NOT HELPFUL. This is not therapy.



Emotional Recall: Uta Hagen teachings

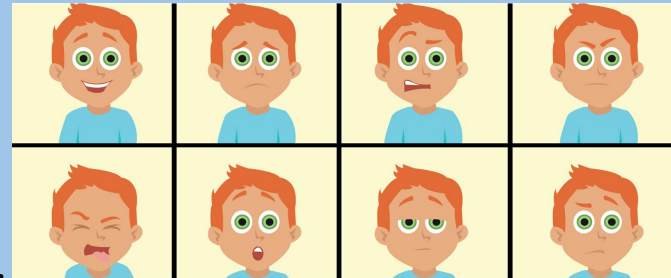
- Once you find the event, tell someone about it. As you tell the story, describe everything. The color of the carpet, the wall color, the curtains and their pattern, the lamp...At some point you will feel that emotion.
- Whatever it is you are describing is your “release object”. It is what you focused on during the event and it holds that emotion for you.
- You can use the thought of that object when performing on stage.



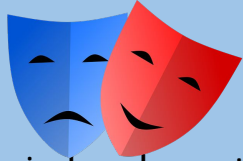


Emotional Recall: Uta Hagen teachings

- Using intense emotional memory can be difficult. It must be practiced.
- Sometimes people have trouble getting the right emotion.
- Hagen teaches that this can be due to several issues:
 - You must make the object synonymous with what is on stage
 - You cannot anticipate when the emotion will arise
 - You cannot judge the intensity of the emotion
 - You cannot worry about emotion in itself; you need to focus on what is happening on stage.
 - You must not worry about if the emotion will happen
- You must be present in the scene and allow the emotion to come as naturally as possible.



Practice: Applying a Concept



Think about situations you have experienced these emotions that you could use to obtain the following emotions:

1. Anger
2. Extreme sadness
3. Terrified
4. Elation/extreme happiness

Pick one and either tell someone about it or talk it out yourself and see if you can find the release object for that emotion.

