

Health Care Players

ACT UP

CREATE HAPPINESS—For the Health of IT

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TURN ON and TUNE UP the INNER CHEMISTRY

Lights ON! Curtain UP! Another day in the "life and death" drama of patient care— is about to begin in your health care facility. You have been chosen and designated as one of the STARS. You, are being scripted, costumed and directed to give an Oscar winning performance. As the HEALER!

But, today, as you enter center stage you don't feel the part. The chemistry "just isn't right." And you feel "turned OFF".

But, alas, as a health-care player, you, are a "professional" in this “theater” of health and realize that you need to get your act together. You must change your own physiological (emotional) reaction for the good of your patients, colleagues and YOURSELF.

BRAVO! Good News! The chemistry of emotions can be altered if you master some of the techniques used by METHOD actors to stage the “chemistry” of being “UP”! The chemistry of being turned “ON”! The chemistry of HAPPYness. JUST PRETEND!!

Yes, METHOD actors have developed successful techniques to “trigger” the desired chemistry (feeling) for a stage role. And when the “chemistry is right—the feeling is right”—and the performance is “right ON”!

What is this chemistry of being ON? How do we measure the chemistry of an ON performance? How can we take the “high” of stage acting into the “high” of everyday living? In other words, how can we use the technical METHODS of the theater to ACT Happy,—ACT Healthy and— ACT Well. How can all, healthcare professionals help themselves, their colleagues and their patients “get their act together” to INhance humor, happiness and HEALTH? And a feeling of success.

As healthcare providers we recognize that colleagues and patients who positively script, stage, costume, direct and ACT healthy, happy and humorous—change their chemistry. This resulting positive “head/body” chemistry is a treatment in itself or “IT” compliments and enhances conventionally prescribed medications.

Dr. Seuss in **Oh, The Places You’ll Go**, writes—

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.

So be sure when you step.
Step with care and great tact
and remember that Life’s
a Great Balancing ACT.

I am one of a group of Minnesota healthcare providers and performing artists that is endeavoring to catalyze the creation of a new health paradigm. We recognize that the dramatic arts and the medical arts communities can become healing colleagues by developing and introducing the techniques of stage METHOD ACTING into the theater of healthcare.

The familiar, prophetic lines of William Shakespeare from AS YOU LIKE IT.

“All the worlds a stage. We have our exits and our entrances and one person in their times plays many parts.”

We can add—creates many different character, chemistries—for ourselves, our supporting cast—of patients, colleagues, friends and FAMILIES,

PAVLOV’S DOGS and METHOD ACTING

In 1904, a Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov was awarded the Nobel Prize for his famous discoveries concerning the digestive process in dogs. Pavlov rang a bell while feeding some dogs and studied their normal digestive chemistries. Then—the important part—he “rang their bell”—but did not give the dogs any food to eat. AND he found the digestive chemistries were the same “as if” the dogs had eaten. The ringing of the bell had produced a seemingly unrelated physiological/chemical response—what if now called a “conditioned response”.

Constantine Stanislavski, also a Russian, The Director of the Moscow Arts Theater learned of Pavlov’s experiments and wondered, “If Pavlov can change the chemistry of dogs with bells—can I, by manipulating the theater environment, do the same with actors and audiences?”

If Ivan Stanislavski were in the Healthcare Business he would have asked, “can I change the chemistry of healthcare providers and patients in the same way?” The answer, of course is, YES! “With the proper CONDITIONING!”

Stanislavski began to study and develop the METHOD of acting which remains a major corner stone of stage technique. He developed and taught the use of costume, gestures, breath, posture, image, aroma, music, color, lighting and staging to steer the feelings of the actors and audiences.

Today, medical science can measure the chemistry of feelings. A whole new bio-medical area known as psycho-neuro-immunology (PNI) has grown rapidly in the past decades. Endorphins, just one class of the PNI neuropeptides have received significant press coverage. PNI has shown that good feelings are the chemistry of good health. And METHOD acting has shown that this good chemistry can be ACTED ON!

Harvard, Psychologist, William James an American contemporary of Stanislavski developed the “ACT AS IF” school of psychology which complements the teachings of METHOD acting. “The me I see, is the me I’ll be!”

When you develop “good chemistry” you become less stressed, healthier and happier.

So, analyze what you can do to get your ACT together. How can you “set the stage” to have more fun and humor in your life? What kind of fun, humor and pleasures do you enjoy? If it is not harmful to yourself or others—do more of it. What music, colors, aromas, textures make you “feel good”? What activities do you look forward to doing and what people do you enjoy being with? When the chemistry is —Right On—the feeling is right and is more healthful.” That’s IT! That’s RIGHT!

When we share a laugh or a good time, or a good "sense" of humor we are sharing a "feel good" healthy chemistry. We understand the value of this "fun" chemistry and realize we must perfect and rehearse and teach these techniques to "turn it ON"

To develop a new role or activity that is more comfortable, less stressful and healthier you will need to “fake it” until the new chemistry feels “real”. Fake it! Fake it! Till ya make it! This is habit formation. And your habits become the “real you”.

To develop acting habits, METHOD actors identify role-models and mentors, as their SHERos/HERos and will “mimic” their thoughts, actions, appearance and scripts.. They attempt to experience for themselves a similar chemistry as that of their idol.

If you don’t like the words “fake” or “mimic” substitute the word “act” or “perform” And then script, rehearse, costume, choreograph and stage the new act. Actors do! Why not healthcare providers? For the sake of health care—let us become infectious role-models who pass on and spread a HAPPYdemic.

ACT NOW! INNERTain and dispense DRAMATIC HEALTH BENEFITS.

Curtain UP! You’re ON! That’s IT! BRAVO!

IN SUMMARY

DRAWING FROM THE TRADITION OF THE THEATER, WE CAN CREATE A NEW PARADIGM FOR CREATING HUMOR, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS. THIS PARADIGM IS BASED ON THE IDEA THAT WE BECOME WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE ACT!. IN OTHER WORDS, WE CAN BECOME HEALTHIER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL BY CONSCIOUSLY MODELING (ACTING) THE HAPPY-HEALTHY TRAIT WE DESIRE. IN ADDITION, STAGING, SCRIPTING COSTUMING AND ACTING THIS PART CAN/WILL STIMULATE OUR BODIES TO PRODUCE NEUROPEPTIDES SUCH AS ENDORPHINS AND OTHER IN-HANCING CHEMICALS THAT BOLSTER THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING.

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