

Acting Is Everything: An Actor's Guidebook For A Successful Career in Los Angeles

By Judy Kerr

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She has delivered more than 300 lectures for the Motion Picture & Television Fund, and has trained the management staffs of DreamWorks, Warner Bros., Disney, and Fox Sports. Jackie has made a huge difference in my life. She works with people privately, usually for short periods of time; she doesn't believe in long-term work, and instead wants you well in a timely manner. She is the author of a book entitled *UN-Dieting*, which teaches people how to release their diet mentality, which then releases their excess weight.

SELF-ESTEEM BUILDERS

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1. Give up, forever, the notion of being a victim...of your circumstances, your relationships, your career, etc. Being a *victim* is a state of mind that needs to be replaced with being a *creator*.

2. Find a Way to Take Responsibility for all your Actions and Consequences: Understand that until you accept this, you will find yourself constantly feeling victimized, out of control and burdened. Responsibility gives us *control* over our lives. It is understanding that we always have *choice*.

3. Be Willing to Give up Being Right: Needing to be right is a full-time job, and a needless waste of an enormous amount of energy.

4. Start Investigating and Questioning Belief Systems: Those who know it all have nothing they can learn. Give up sentences like "I've always been this way", "I can't do... (i.e., auditions)", or "I wish I was someone who....". This simply *locks in* your belief system. "*You become what you believe...You attract what you believe is possible, and you always get what you expect!*"

5. Learn to have the Proper Conversations with Yourself: These are usually manifestations of your belief systems. Speak positively and visualize positively, rather than being worried about failing or the "what-ifs." Have conversations like "I love to audition", "I am at my best in business meetings", "I love exercise" (even if you don't believe it for a minute....you will *learn* to believe it with enough time).

Be grateful - This is diverting your mind from thinking about what's missing in your life to seeing the reality of what you *do* have. It's not Pollyanna thinking, but rather directing your mind to a place where good feelings reside. **Remember, you're having a conversation anyway.** Why should it be easier to always move toward the negative? Feeling grateful takes *practice*, especially if you're more inclined to, or in the habit of, noticing what's *missing* in your life.

6. Personal Integrity: Everyone's sense of what is right and wrong is personal, but your *body* will tell you as well. Start tuning into what is right for you, so that your actions are congruent with who you are (your values).

7. Stop Comparing Yourself to Others: This is a huge problem for people, especially in Hollywood. Comparing sets you up to feel like you're not enough. If you *must* compare yourself, compare yourself to yourself (as you were last year, ten years ago, etc.)

8. De-emphasize Material Possessions: They don't love you, comfort you or bring you great joy. They are just *things*. Detach from the "I'll be happy when..." mentality.

9. Press through Fear: Each time you *have* your fear and do it anyway, you build self-esteem. Fear is simply a signal that you're truly alive and challenging yourself. Every time you press through the fear, you've exhibited courage. Courage builds self-esteem.

10. Forgive Yourself and Others for all the Things You're Still Holding Onto: Forgiveness does NOT mean: it was okay, it was right, the person shouldn't be punished, you are condoning their actions, you are reconciling the relationship. It simply means that you are choosing to let go of your feelings of resentment forever, in favor of moving forward.

11. Become aware of, and take action on, your incompletions: *Action* can include (1) Education/Classes/ Growth Groups; (2) Therapy (individual or group); (3) Promises (i.e., "I'll return to school when the kids start high school").

12. Resolve to Accept Yourself Unconditionally: If you have some cleaning up to do, get to it. Unresolved stuff stays with you forever. Then, after an inventory and the appropriate amends or completion work, no matter what you've done, **forgive yourself** and move on. You are the only *you* in the world. Accept that you are the *best* you, you can be, and, as such, a work-in-progress. You've done the best you could do, given what you've known. And when you know better, you'll *do* better. Accept your weaknesses, as well as your strengths.

13. Get and Polish your Communication Skills: Otherwise you will stuff your emotions, gather up and store anger, and question what is and isn't real. Communication skills allow you to turn criticism into requests and to express yourself without alienating others. This must also include **SETTING BOUNDARIES ...we teach people how to treat us!** Communication skills are the number one way to increase self-esteem on a daily basis!

14. Challenge Yourself/Take Risks/Grow: Part of creating self-esteem is feeling adept. When you try something new, challenge yourself to something difficult, keep going after you miss the mark a few times, you build your self-esteem enormously. Each of these experiences builds on itself, so that you can *call it forth* to reinforce yourself at any time.

15. Find your Gift/Passion and Pursue it: Everyone has a gift or gifts. It can be acting, music, art, candy-making, teaching children, etc. Find out what it is that gives you passion, and pursue it, as a vocation or an avocation.

16. Set Goals: First get clear on your value system. From there should spring your goals. Goals give us direction, purpose and reason to celebrate ourselves. They also allow us to have our dreams come true. Give up the *failure mentality*. It doesn't really exist, except in our minds.

17. Celebrate your Accomplishments, the Attainment of your Goals & your Successes: Learning to acknowledge yourself is vital. We've certainly learned how to beat ourselves up!...only acknowledgment actually moves us forward.

18. Reset your Goals: Many people, once they've achieved a goal, sit back and decide to *rest*, relax, and say "okay, I did it". Unfortunately, you will soon feel hollow. Keep at least one goal in front of you at all times. The more goals the better...only work on a few at a time, however, to avoid overwhelm.

19. Create and Nurture Love and Support Systems: If you have toxic family members or don't have solid, loyal friends, it is important to create them. Everyone needs people to talk to and trust (in addition to their spouse). As we get older it seems harder to create friends, and it's not...it just takes effort and trial and error. It is also important to have good advisors, since nobody is an expert at everything.

20. Take Care of Yourself: This includes vigilant exercise (#1), proper nutrition, stress education and yearly physical exams. Make sure your body supports your mind.

21. Laugh at Yourself: Since we have already given up being right, the next step is to accept ourselves and our humanness. It is utterly silly to take life so seriously when we have such a limited amount of time to enjoy ourselves. Laugh as much as possible every day, especially at yourself. The less seriously you take yourself, the less seriously you'll take everyone and everything else.