

# BEGINNERS: HOW TO GET STARTED

This book offers advice for actors at all stages of their careers. Here, I am speaking to beginners and actors new to Los Angeles.

To prepare to come to Los Angeles, act where you live. Read about acting, writing, directing, producing, editing; read screenplays and plays. Listen to books at [audible.com](http://audible.com). Take classes at your local college—English, literature, writing, speech, communications. The reading and writing can lead to writing a short film. Invest in the industry software Final Draft, [finaldraft.com](http://finaldraft.com). This software contains many scripts from films and television shows. You can use them to learn how scripts are written, and use them for acting scenes. Gather a group together to read and discuss scripts, to write and shoot short scenes. Edit the scenes. In editing, you will learn about acting and the camera.

When you move to Los Angeles you must move into the center of things—the Valley, Hollywood, the West Side. Don't even consider Ventura, Riverside or Orange counties.

“It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.”  
– Anthony Robbins.

Fear is usually what stops us from trying something new. Learn how to “act as if” you are not afraid. Develop and value your beginner’s mind. You can’t be good right off the bat. Acting is a craft. If you tried to play a musical instrument or draw a picture you would not expect to be good, you would be willing to not know how to do it. You would jump in and try to play a couple of chords or to draw a tree trunk. Because acting is walking and talking it looks like it should be easy. But you have to learn things, you have to exercise muscles—so to speak—to get some experience to start to sound and look like your real self when you are saying words off a page others have written.

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

“If you want to be more successful, double your failure rate.” - Bill Gates

There is so much to do, it is overwhelming and demanding. It is action. It always takes more time to accomplish what needs to get done than you think it should. Take action, jump in.

Michelle Danner teaches a monthly Technique Breakdown weekend intensive where she instructs how to build a character from scratch. Scott Sedita teaches a one-day comedy intensive. Todd Rohrbacher teaches improv classes. Actorsite provides classes and seminars for their members. Sign up for the free showbiz email newsletters. These are steps to take to explore the idea of being an actor. This book will guide you on investigating many paths.

Some people try to become actors without making the dollar investment in themselves. One of your most important tasks is to find something you are good at and you enjoy doing to earn a living. It is grand when you have a craft that you can exchange for something like classes and headshots.

### ACTORS by David Ackert

Actors are some of the most driven, courageous people on the face of the earth. They deal with more day-to-day rejection in one year than most people do in a lifetime. Every day, actors face the financial challenge of living a freelance lifestyle, the disrespect of people who think they should get “real” jobs, and their own fear that they’ll never work again. Every day, they have to ignore the possibility that the vision they have dedicated their lives to is a pipe dream. With every role, they stretch themselves, emotionally and physically, risking criticism and judgment. With every passing year, many of them watch as the other people their age achieve the predictable milestones of normal life—the car, the family, the house, the nest egg.

But they stay true to their dream, in spite of the sacrifices. Why?

Because actors are willing to give their entire lives to a moment—to that line, that laugh, that gesture, or that interpretation that will stir the audience’s soul. Actors are beings who have tasted life’s nectar in that crystal moment when they poured out their creative spirit and touched another’s heart. In that instant, they were as close to magic, God, and perfection as anyone could ever be. And in their own hearts, they know that to dedicate oneself to that moment is worth a thousand lifetimes.