

Are You an Open or Closed Book? by: Sharon Moist



Are you open to learning something you already know? They say that “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” But what about people? Do you think it’s possible to teach someone something new, even if they feel like they already know it?

My father is a voracious reader, reading the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal every day, along with the stacks of books he has by his bedside. You see, my dad’s of the belief that just one good idea is the worth the price of the book. That philosophy has now stuck with me; thus the stacks of books alongside my own bed, as well! (In fact, I swear that between the two of us, we could open our own library!)

When I first started out in my career, I was always buying whatever acting book caught my eye. Yes, I probably had 2 or 3 others on the same subject already, but if I didn’t have this particular book, I would add it to my collection. Why? Because a new book often gave me a different point of view – especially if it was written from a different author.

For example: Right now I have about 4 or 5 books in my library, from different casting directors, on the casting process. Now some people may say, "Well, wouldn't one book do the trick?" And my response would have to be "No" because there are hundreds of casting directors out there, all with different thoughts, opinions and processes they use in casting a project. Therefore, if I just read one book, from one casting director, I could (potentially) miss out on information from another casting director that may actually help me land a job. Make sense?

The same situation applies to workshops. I recently attended a workshop on marketing, and as I introduced myself to the two people sitting next to me, I experienced two very different conversations. The gentleman on my right told me that this was the third workshop he had attended this year on marketing, and that he was really enjoying these workshops because even though he knew most of this information already, he had gotten a couple of new ideas that he was now using in his business and these ideas had already doubled his rate of return – in effect more than covering the cost of the workshop and all of his travel expenses.

Next, I spoke with the woman on my left, and she, too, told me that she already knew all of this information. She also told me that the only reason she was there was because it was another tax deduction for her business and it was a great way to play hooky for a few days without having to do any work.

Two very different people with two very different mindsets, and I would be willing to bet that you could guess which of these two people had a successful career and which one did not.

Remember: All it takes is one really great idea to change your life, and when it comes to your acting career, the one question you need to ask yourself is this:

Am I open to learning something I think I already know?

Only you can answer that question.

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