[Rehearsal Habits That Will Put You On A Director’s “Will Cast Again” List](https://www.onstageblog.com/editorals/2020/1/11/rehearsal-habits-that-will-put-you-on-a-directors-will-cast-again-list)

[January 11, 2020](https://www.onstageblog.com/editorals/2020/1/11/rehearsal-habits-that-will-put-you-on-a-directors-will-cast-again-list), *Michelle Jace*

Being talented is only a part of the equation when a director reflects on cast and crew of past shows when pulling a team together for future projects. You were cast in the first place, so your talent was noticed! A lot of actors have talent, but not everyone is a breeze to work with. Directors will always cast someone who takes direction and is a pleasure to work with over a highly talented pain. Congratulations on being cast, but now it is time to prove yourself during the rehearsal process. These are some simple things that go a long way.

**Thank You, Five!**

When given a direction or note, be sure to always respond with an audible and genuine “thank you”. If you’re told a time length with your direction, follow “thank you” with the amount of time mentioned. For example, if you’re told, “ten to places” respond with, “thank you, ten” or “thank you, ten to places”. This might make you feel a bit like a robot because the response feels unnatural.  Why are actors expected to respond this way? When an actor responds with “thank you” as well as repeating the direction, it demonstrates that they not only acknowledged their director or stage manager, but it also shows that the information was understood and will be followed.

**Stay in Your Blocking**

Have you heard the phrase, “too many cooks in the kitchen”? That is what happens when cast and crew members are all offering suggestions on how to make something work in the show and your director is pulling their hair out praying to Dionysus for five seconds of silence. Remember that you are there as an actor and be ready to listen.  Obviously if you have a safety concern tell you stage manager, but let your director, choreographer, or any other member of the production team take the lead and only chime in if you’re asked. If you really have something to say that you feel is extremely important, tell you stage manager or assistant director privately at a later time. Follow directions and do your best with the blocking, choreo, and music notes you’ve been given. I’m not saying you need to be a wallflower; I’m just advising not to step on other people’s toes.

**Don’t Forget Your Pencil**

Write down every single note you are given. This one is so easy. You just have to make the commitment to do it and I promise everyone cast and crew will love you for it. I require my actors to have their script, two pencils, and a separate notebook at every rehearsal and expect them to write down all of their blocking as well as every note given to them during or after rehearsal. An actor’s response to notes from their director should be “thank you” followed by writing it down. This is not the time for conversation or suggestions, and it certainly isn’t time to be defensive. Any concerns can be brought up at an appropriate time later in private. Don’t be the actor that asks a bunch of questions during notes that only apply to them and keeps the whole cast withering away dreaming of going home for some sleep. Think of it as taking notes for a test. You will not waste a second of time if you have your blocking, lines, and notes all at your fingertips and your director will not be frustrated with you because they won’t have to give you the same notes over and over. This is how to build good shows and good actors. The faster notes get fixed, the more detail oriented a performance becomes. Taking notes ensures you have the tools to move forward instead of tread water.

**Hands to Yourself**

Alright folks, put your self-control switch on. This is the part where I tell you not to touch anything that isn’t yours and to respect everything in your rehearsal space and theater as if it belonged to your great-great grandmother and she would be “not mad, but disappointed” if you broke something. To put it simply, if it isn’t something you use or wear, don’t touch it. If you see a prop on the ground, don’t move it. It might be preset for a quick entrance. If that goes back on the prop table even in an act of good intentions, you might cause an actor to miss a cue. Any concerns about props or costumes should be brought to your stage manager and/or costumer. If someone is moving your props you can kindly ask that they do not and/or tell your stage manager.

**Your Superhero Attire**

What you wear to rehearsal will impact your abilities. Dress comfortably with your hair out of your face. The best shoes to rehearse in are the ones you’re going to actually wear on stage, but sometimes that isn’t possible. Screws and other sharp objects may be on the ground from the set build. Show up in dance shoes, runners, or something with a good grip that will keep your feet safe. If your costume is a period piece or something extravagant, find a rehearsal version. For example, if I’m going to be in a long dress and corset, I will come to rehearsal with a long skirt of my own to practice my blocking and choreography in. If you’re lucky, your costumer will supply you with rehearsal garments! What you wear impacts your posture and movement so be conscious of what you choose to rehearse in.

**Don’t Be Regina**

Sometimes show-mances and gossip can get some cast and crew feeling victimized even if they don’t go there. Stay drama-free by keeping out of risky conversations and by being a member of the team. Leave your baggage at the door before rehearsal and performances. You have the joyful opportunity of being part of a play. Be nice, have fun, and treat your show as the special experience it is.

**Do Your Homework**

Remember how I asked you to write down all your notes and how I compared it to taking notes for a test? Yes? Can’t Say No? Maybe this time? Okay, sorry I’m done. Use those notes at home between rehearsals to study and practice. Don’t go into your rehearsal cold and waste time refreshing what was worked on last time. Refresh before you arrive so your precious rehearsal time is as productive as possible. Run through harmonies, dances, lines, make a character analysis, whatever you need to do to be your best for rehearsal. You owe it to yourself, your cast, and your audience to give the best performance possible. Practice is key.

Actors who exhibit these qualities are an absolute joy to work with. Being nice will go a long way. Break a leg!