

## 10 Tips to Master a Cold-Read

### 1. IF YOU CAN READ THE PLAY IN ADVANCE, DO SO:

No one should walk into an audition without knowing anything about the play or musical. Get to know the characters inside and out. Practice reading the lines. If you can do this, then you'll be a step above other actors who have no idea what the play is about.

### 2. ANSWER THE BIG QUESTIONS:

Who am I? What do I want? Who am I talking to and how do I feel about him or her? Where am I? (A crowded shop, a park, an interrogation room.) This is what drives the scene and creates the circumstances for the scene to come to life.

### 3. DON'T BLOCK YOUR FACE:

This is simple but incredibly important. Because the script will be in your hands during your audition, you might be tempted to hold the words right in front of your face.

Don't! The director wants to see your facial expressions. If you hide behind the script, you'll never get the part! Be confident and relaxed – hold the script in front of you with one hand (so you can look down quickly with your eyes when necessary, and not your whole head).

### 4. RELAX:

This is good advice for auditions in general. If your nerves get the better of you, the director might see that script shaking in your hand. If you look and sound uncomfortable or tense, then get ready to hear those dreaded words, "Thank you – next!"

Does that step just stress you out even more? Then you should take some time to learn how to relax!

### 5. PRACTICE READING ALOUD:

This is essential to mastering cold reading. Whenever you get the chance, read out loud. And don't just read the words in a monotone

voice, read the words with emotion. Read the words “in character.” Find opportunities to read to others:

- Read storybooks to children.
- Read magazine articles to friends.
- Read poetry to your loved ones.
- Read this article out loud to your computer!

The more you read the more natural your voice will sound. Remember, the challenge of cold reading is to sound as though you are saying those written words spontaneously. Practice makes perfect.

## **6. MOVE WHILE YOU READ:**

During a cold read audition, most actors stand still as they read from the script. However, if it seems appropriate for your character to move, I suggest you move.

Therefore, as you practice reading aloud, make certain you incorporate natural movements. Nothing extreme -- nothing too distracting. Go with what feels right, or what the stage directions indicate. Remember, body language is a major part of the audition, not just your voice.

## **7. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!:**

This is so important. Many “cold readers” mistakenly look down at their script while their fellow actors are delivering their lines. Instead, you should be in character, listening and reacting to their words. Much of your performance relies on how you respond to the other characters. It’s just as much about the other person’s lines as it is about yours. Even if there is a pause before you get your next line, at least you are listening in the scene and absorbing what is being said as in real life.

## **8. STAY IN CHARACTER:**

Allow for mistakes. Stay in character no matter what. Don’t apologize or pull an awkward facial expression if you mess up. Just keep going which will show that you are being a true professional.

## **9. FIND THE EMOTION:**

The emotion is more important than the lines. Yes, it's important to say the writer's words, but if everyone is reading the same lines, you have to find your unique spin on those lines, your opinion about the lines, and what emotion is brewing underneath. That is where the lines come from, and in a cold read, you have to come up with that choice quickly.

## **10. HIGHLIGHT THE LITTLE MOMENTS:**

A look, a smile, an uncomfortable silence, a kiss, etc. Sometimes the moments between the lines are just as important. Don't be afraid of pauses. You can say so much about a character's history with one look, one eye roll, one justified pause.

Your creativity, your cold reading skills, and your professionalism will all help you nail that audition. Break a leg!