

The “Three Steps of Acting” are what separate the greatest actors in the world from the rest of the pack.

In **Step 1**, great actors decipher and embrace what’s literally going on. They know they’re telling a story so they explore what the writer is actually saying. They’re not just memorizing their lines and practicing saying them in a particular way so they sound real, cool or edgy. Great actors connect with each line, each action and with the story as a whole so they can take the audience on a journey. They know what their character is doing at every moment and why. And, they know how it fits in with the other characters. Great actors know their job is to do what the writer intended, simply tell the story.

In **Step 2**, great actors learn how to enter each scene deeply and emotionally charged, even if those emotions are held at bay. They are ordinary people living fully in extraordinary circumstances. Great actors are completely plugged in. You see it in their eyes. When you watch Sean Penn in “Majestic River” or Meryl Streep in “Sophie’s Choice” you believe they actually lost a child because they’re authentically connected emotionally. It’s completely believable because their emotions are completely real. It’s true even in comedy. Great actors have tapped into something deep inside their soul so it’s not merely a representation of emotions but the real thing. And, it’s connected to their words. They don’t play the emotions, they authentically live through them.

Step 3 is what truly separates the greatest actors from the rest. Most actors never “let it all go” and allow the scene to be about the chemistry between themselves and the other actor(s). The majority of actors rely on their homework (Steps 1 and 2 above). They play the work itself, rather than letting it go and living in the moment. Great actors simply listen and respond to the other actor(s).