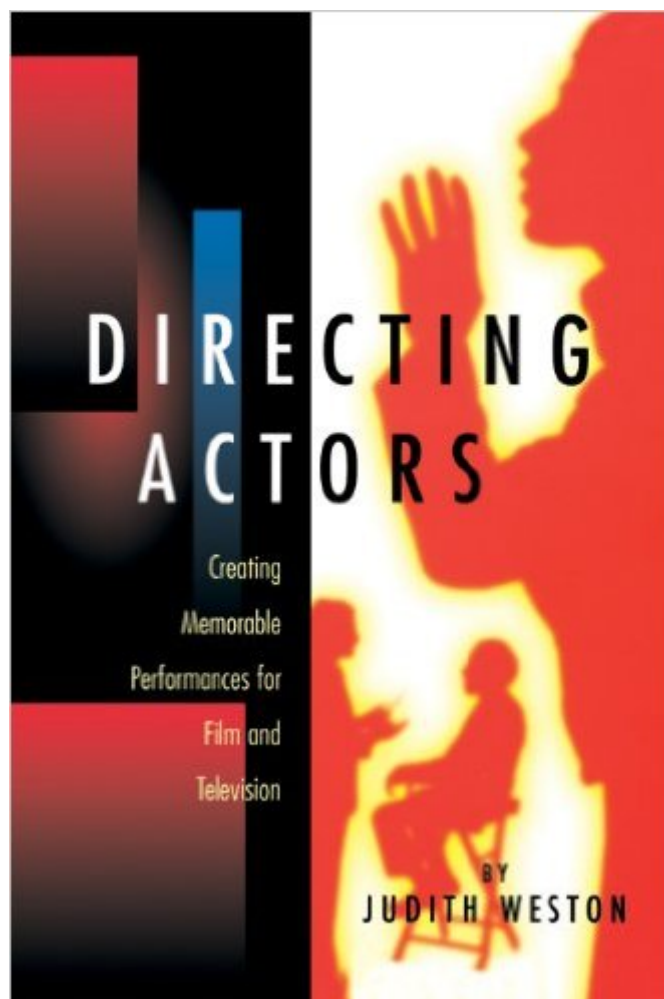


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# Directing Actors



## Synopsis

Demonstrates what constitutes a good performance, what actors want from a director, what directors do wrong and more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Though I felt that this book was a bit too touchy-feely for my own taste, it did have a lot of valuable insights into the actors mind and how to work with them in a collaborative sense. If you are a director that does not believe in running with the actors own take on a character, then this book would be painful for you to try to read. Nevertheless, if you are looking to have a truly collaborative experience (not all of us are), the advice contained within is very solid. Weston breaks the process of working with actors down to how to give concise words to help get a performance. She further spends time developing adjustment techniques. I think this book is particularly strong in its discussions on script breakdown, and having multiple approaches to playing a scene. It gives some helpful advice on casting as well, and really challenges a director to cast the best person in a role as opposed to the one that they feel "nailed the part" based on ones preconceived notions. The biggest

weakness in this book is that really favors the actor over the director at times, and leaves me asking (as a director) why would I want to have this relationship. I do not believe, as Weston proports, that a director should always allow the actor to find the voice of his or her character without explicit direction. Nevertheless, it certainly challenged my own technique, and I am a better filmmaker from having read it.

A practical, technique oriented introduction to directing actors. It's really from an actor's perspective, and has a very condescending attitude toward directors. But this is useful. The anecdotes are really enjoyable. Not a substitute for acting and directing experience, just one set of possible tools to try to put into practice. Harold Clurman's "On Directing" is of the same aesthetic perspective, but at the same time broader and more succinct, and more sympathetic to directors.

Completely unpretentious. Thoroughly knowledgeable and confident. Allows you to discover the concepts yourself, rather than spouting them at you. And yet...also completely able to be referenced. In other words... the best book on directing I've ever read. The only I will ever recommend. To actors and directors alike. I hate to call it "hype," but after reading the book feverously (which, for a book on directing, is almost unheard of), it is safe to believe it here. All the endorsements on the back cover from people working "in the industry" no longer ring of marketing salesmanship, but of complete honesty. There are few things in this world I would endorse, given the chance. This is one of them. I don't want to say it "changes you." But I will say I had more thoughts and ideas OF MY OWN while reading this book than ever before. The reason? It's like any craft: if you sit down to make something, you usually don't really know what to make specifically until you get to know your tools. Then--once you know what you can be done, what things are available to you to use, the ideas of what you can do with these tools start flowing. I'd like to thank Ms. Weston for introducing me to some of the tools. Actually, I have thanked her. She called me back. I'm still floored by that.

First off -if you are serious about directing, then I highly recommend taking a directing class ---- the personal interaction is the best way to learn this stuff --- in addition, just making movies or working with actors also helps, but its only in a directing class where you'll learn the best techniques with that said ---- Weston has written a terrific book! I am a grad student in Film Directing, and I would have to say that the best lessons I've learned are all outlined in this book. Weston has a great directing philosophy --- make directions simple and make your actors feel comfortable --- as simple as it

sounds, there is an art to it, and Weston does a great job of explaining it. Mostly, I appreciate Weston's list of VERBS to use when directing --- those pages, alone, justify why every director should have this book around, simply as reference. For all that, especially students ---- I do recommend purchasing this book, but make a POINT of practicing what Weston's preaches ---- from there, you will give yourself the best chance of developing a unique directing style, that still caters to most actors. HAPPY READING!!!!

I have been acting in theater and film since I was a kid but I didn't really understand what acting was until I read this book. Weston is enjoyable to read and deeply wise about the actor's process and human behavior in general. DA is packed with vital information for the actor or director, and while it will take several re-reads and much real practice before I fully integrate all of the techniques presented here, there are many things I can adapt immediately to significantly improve another's performance or my own performance in a role or my performance in life.

A lot of this book is about motivating actors to perform and respond to director requests. I found the book useful but a bit too academic in places. My own approach, as a director of amateur actors, has always been to get an understanding of the limits of the emotional expressivity of each actor and work back from there into the character. I was glad to learn that the book approves of this type of method. Overall, it is a useful book, but there is a mechanical component to its instructional model which may jar with the European outlook. It is a personal opinion of course.

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