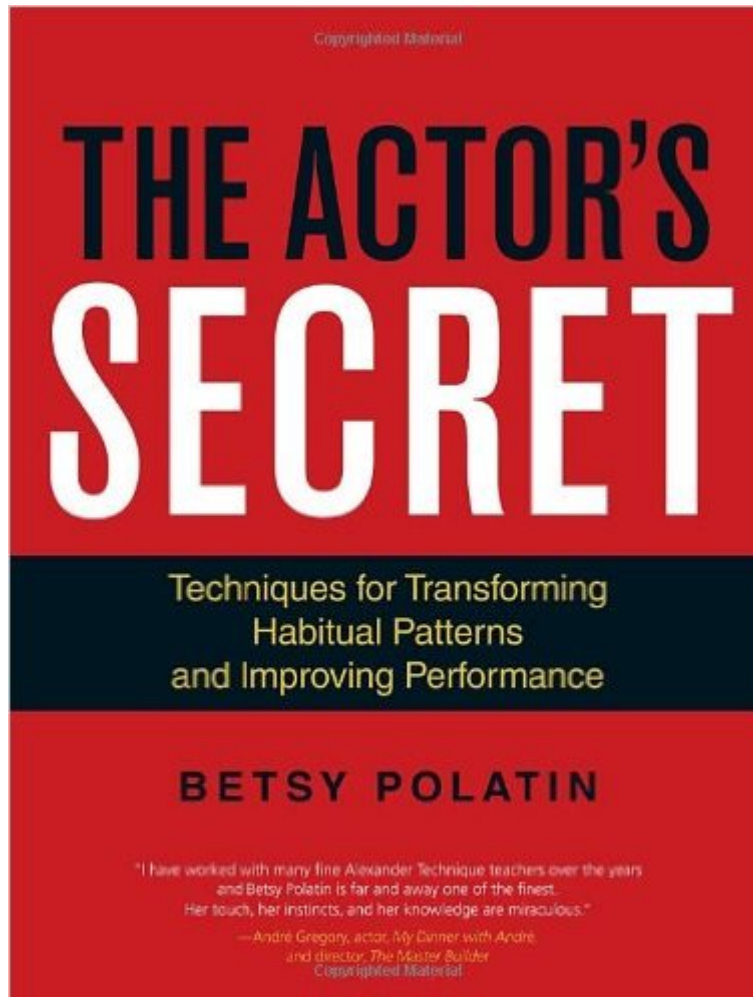


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# The Actor's Secret: Techniques For Transforming Habitual Patterns And Improving Performance



## Synopsis

Offering revolutionary new training for the actor, *The Actor's Secret* teaches actors and performers how to incorporate the fundamentals of the Alexander Technique, Somatic Experiencing®<sup>®</sup>, and Breathing Coordination in order to reduce performance anxiety and stress; improve stage presence, breathing, and vocal production; and restore well-being and healthy functioning. These three kinesthetic disciplines are designed to lead to profound change and healing through body-mind reeducation. Part I explains in detail the principles of the three techniques. A practical method for self-improvement and neuromuscular reeducation, the Alexander Technique focuses on changing inefficient habits of movement and patterns of tension that inhibit the ability to move easily. Breathing Coordination helps increase breathing capacity and awareness. A method for resolving emotional trauma, Somatic Experiencing®<sup>®</sup> follows a process of tracking bodily sensations to restore vitality and health. Enhanced with over 100 instructive photos, Parts II and III present explorations and exercises that draw on elements of the three methods. Topics covered include the importance of presence and non-doing; the proper mechanics of vocalization and singing; the understanding of character and role; and the actor's journey from auditions to performance, including initial script preparation, rehearsal, monologue, and scene work. Developed by Betsy Polatin, a movement specialist and master lecturer at Boston University's College of Fine Arts, the book's exercises provide the actor with simple tools for exploring his or her acting work. Most techniques and self-help books teach a new way of "doing." The secret of this book lies in "non-doing." When the actor learns to first recognize and then suspend habitual patterns, he or she opens the door to deeper artistic choices. "I have worked with many fine Alexander Technique teachers over the years and Betsy Polatin is far and away one of the finest. Her touch, her instincts, and her knowledge are miraculous." —Andre Gregory, actor and director, *My Dinner with Andre*

## Book Information

Paperback: 296 pages

Publisher: North Atlantic Books (November 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1583946829

ISBN-13: 978-1583946824

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.6 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #359,660 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #410 in Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Theater > Acting & Auditioning #1869 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > Mental & Spiritual Healing #7036 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Alternative Medicine

## Customer Reviews

Since attending university in the fall of 2010 I have struggled on and off with serious physical health issues; a mysterious illness which doctors are still attempting to diagnose caused me to rapidly lose weight, faint, develop mono several times in a year, and experience sudden drops in glucose levels. These issues severely impacted my quality of life both physically and emotionally. Enter Betsy Polatin and the Alexander Technique. As described in her book, Betsy integrates Breathing Coordination Principles introduced by Carl Stough in addition to Somatic Experience techniques into the already fantastic Alexander Technique. The result is a wholly encompassing approach to a greater quality of being and enjoyment in life. After working with Betsy I found that I had begun to physically change as well as intellectually rewire my approach to dealing with my health. As a result I've never felt more physically and emotionally healthy. If you cannot get a session with Betsy you should buy this book. Heck, if you can attend a session with Betsy you should still buy it. I have begun to recommend it to my friends and family outside of the theatre world and they are benefiting and enjoying it just as much. I cannot recommend it enough!

I heard a great interview with the author on The Dr. Shirley & Steve radio show. I'm not an actor, but their discussion was so interesting and it really built a case that her method could help non actors gain self-confidence and overcome interpersonal challenges. I took a chance and ordered the book. When it arrived, I was shocked at how substantial it was. It is a paperback, but it's very heavy! I thought, "What have I gotten into?" But when I opened it up, it was so readable and interesting. I am not finished reading it yet, but it is only because I'm taking notes as I go which is slowing me down a bit. Anyway, I hope you all take a chance on this book too. It's worth every penny!

Are you, Dear Reader, a quasi daily user of high-tech gadgets: iPods iPhones, Tablet, Laptops, Desk Computers and the like? If you answer with a resounding YES, then this title is a must ... you see it is all about posture. And how to improve and maintain a more aligned you. Unless you would prefer the Hunchback of Notre Dame look beyond the expiry date of MardiGras!! A cool, easy to follow text with illustrations/photos. Buy two one to keep and one to present.

I have had the privilege of one-on-one and classroom training with Betsy Polatin and highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to use their body more effectively, for any purpose. I am in software sales, with zero stage performance expectations and these techniques have improved my posture, the way I hold myself, my confidence and my communication with all. As a result, I am happier and more successful in my work!

I was a student of Betsy's many years ago, and found her to be an incredible teacher and inspiring person. The book is a great representation of her teaching and philosophy. Nice photographs of theatre students that look like real people (you aren't looking at overstyled, phony photos of models). Polatin provides a great background for the Alexander technique without making the book seem too clinical (yet she is still reliable).

This is a simple and quite brilliant guide to being a better actor. With explanations, photos, warm-ups, lessons, this book is fun to read straight through and then peruse sections as needed. This is perfect for the neophyte as well as the journeyman who needs to refresh the "act". Well done.

The work that I did with Betsy Polatin is invaluable to me. As performers, we are conditioned to "work" so hard. Betsy helped me inhibit my habits of "muscling" my work, and helped me to find a more economic and comfortable use of my body. -Greg Hildreth

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