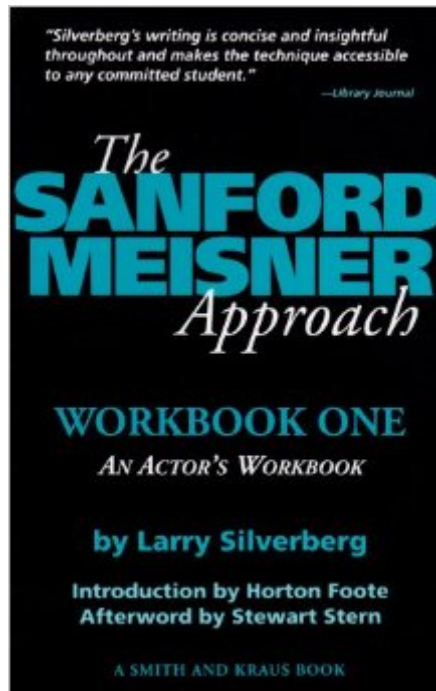


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# The Sanford Meisner Approach: An Actor's Workbook (Career Development Book)



## Synopsis

You can now experience the same training studied by some of our finest actors, including: Robert Duvall, Joanne Woodward, Diane Keaton, Jeff Goldblum, Mary Steenburgen, Gregory Peck, Jon Voight, Eli Wallach and many others. With a foreword by Academy Award Winner and theatre legend, Horton Foote, this inspiring new book will strengthen in you the most essential and vital skills of great acting! It will lead you to a very personal way of working, as an actor who is absolutely authentic and tremendously simple - so rare in today's theatre. The Sanford Meisner Approach: An Actor's Workbook Volume I is appropriate for any actor, from beginning student to working professional. As you experience the joy of discovery offered in each lesson, the Workbook will awaken within you a profound passion to create and a hunger to express yourself as an artist of the theatre, An Actor!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a required book for the Acting class that I am currently taking. It is literally a workbook for the exercises that we practice in class. The book is fairly concise and contains the 15 sessions practiced in the Sanford Meisner method. The author provides a brief description of what the method entails but mostly outline the exercises in detail. If you are looking for a book to help you learn more about the acting method from a theoretical point of view, this is NOT the book for you. You should go with Sanford Meisner on Acting or other method acting books. This book is solely for the exercises within the method. Those exercises require at least two participants (with the third as

observer as necessary) so you will not be able to practice the methods without a partner. Because of the fact above, I only gave the book 4 stars rather than 5 stars because I think the author should have spent a little more time in describing the method prior to starting with the exercises. I think it would help not only students in a classroom setting but also general students of acting if more description is provided.

Any study of the craft of acting will invariably lead you back to Stanislavski. The big three acting teachers (Meisner, Adler and Strasberg) were all attempting to make the grandfather of naturalistic acting accessible to the American actor, and by extension, the American theatre. The difficulty in Stanislavski's books (*An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character & Creating a Role*) is that they are written from the first person perspective or they present what is essentially a transcript of the classroom. Similarly, "Sanford Meisner on Acting" by Sanford Meisner and Dennis Longwell takes a similar approach. Even in the Sanford Meisner Master Class DVD, the format is one very much like a documentary with some great commentary from Mary Barter. In all of the above texts one must infer the objectives and process to Sandy's exercises. Meisner evolved Stanislavski's principles. Silverberg has broken them down with precision and made them accessible. It is not a book one reads "to know" how to act. It is a workbook where one must "do" the exercises. When one does them with a partner (and hopefully with a teacher to guide them) they have a palpable result and give the actor a technique (an organic habit) that they no longer think about but do instinctually. Thank you, Larry, for sharing Sandy's life work with the rest of the world.

Speaking as another graduate of the Neighborhood Playhouse who actually studied with Sandy (as well as continuing to study with him in his private class after graduation), I had some reservations about Larry Silverberg's book. Acting is experiential, not intellectual. Larry Silverberg implies that Sandy's technique can be learned from a book and practiced by amateurs. That was never Sandy's intention. Learning the Meisner Technique is an organic process that requires the guidance of a trained teacher. Preferably, this should be someone whom Sandy actually trained as an actor and as a teacher. The problem with expressing "the reality of the doing" in writing seems almost self-defeating. To put it bluntly, you've got to do the work. Sandy once said, "You know those books, *AN ACTOR PREPARES* and *ACTING: THE FIRST SIX LESSONS*? Tell you what, you learn to act and then read those books to see if they knew how to act." Read Larry Silverberg's book and *SANFORD MEISNER ON ACTING* to see if this is the Meisner Technique seems to suit you. Then you will need to make the commitment to study and learn first hand. Be warned, it requires talent and hard

work. The vital issue is to acquire a viable technique to be able to work on a professional level. Sandy's technique is time proven, providing you learn from the right teacher. Above all, Sandy knew that acting can be painful at times and the actor's life is a hard one. However, he wanted acting to be a healthy process. "Acting is fun," he used to say, "don't let that get around." It becomes fun when you begin to know what you're doing. Just remember, that reading about the process is not the same thing as doing the work itself. For the record, Sandy Meisner was the greatest teacher of any subject that I ever encountered in my life. He was truly one of a kind.

Silverberg's Meisner workbook series is a jewel for acting teachers and students alike! Filled with a step-by-step approach and essential exercises that allow actors to genuinely understand what it means to "live truthfully under imaginary circumstances" onstage, Silverberg's books are direct and practical, yet also astoundingly inspirational. As a university acting professor, the artistic growth that I have witnessed in my students as a result of this material is phenomenal. Do yourself a favor and read this series. I cannot recommend this work highly enough!

This first book and the series that follows is simply focused on the practical steps of DOING, for a technique that is both rigorous and progresses very specifically by steps, by doing. It is true a student who simply reads this book or any of the others by Silverberg, who only reads and doesn't trust the practice, will get very little from just the reading - in fact may develop misconceptions because the book is intentionally a WORK book - the learning that comes from the work is what Silverberg understands deeply and has given to actors, teachers, students for many years, and with Meisner's permission. I know a group of highly committed professionals in Sao Paulo, Brazil, who are using these books (with one of Larry Silverberg's students guiding their practice) - a group of young strong actors who do not care about the acolyte battles around who "owns" or "knows" Meisner's technique - they care about doing the work as carefully and fully as Silverberg details it. And they have learned greatly and are grateful for their experience. This book and the rest of the series open doors to a practice, to experiencing that practice, for many who do not have access to a Meisner "veteran." I've watched Larry Silverberg teach - his books are an honest expression of long experience in teaching this technique, in his acting and directing (making use of the technique). I recommend these books, but only to those who are committed to the work ahead, to the doing. I do not recommend this book to anyone looking to secure their own biases.

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