

# What Is Your Objective?

What does your character want?  
from Bill Ball's book,  
A Sense of Direction

"There is never a moment when a human being is not wanting to do something...Wants are what create drama. Wants are what give life to the character. Wants are what the waking individual is never without. Wants cause action. Wants create conflict." By finding out what your character wants throughout your piece, you can make your character come to life. You will need to constantly ask (as your character) what do I want? What am I trying to get him/her to do? or What am I trying to make him/her do?

As you go through your piece, deciding what your character wants, you will want to apply the following sentence.

"I want to         (verb)        "

Always use verbs to describe what your character wants. Verbs are more exciting and allow you, the actor, to fight for what your character wants. "Here are some examples of using verbs versus nouns or adjectives:

## ADJECTIVE

I am angry with her.

I am nervous.

I am frustrated.

I am in love.

I am being charming.

I am confused.

I am giddy.

I am drunk.

I am friendly.

I am arrogant.

## VERB

I want to DESTROY her.

I want to FOCUS my  
attention.

I want to FIND a way out.

I want to TAKE CARE of her  
forever.

I want to DAZZLE the  
guests.

I want to FIGURE OUT a  
solution.

I want to CONTAIN my  
rapture.

I want to PRESERVE  
business as usual.

I want to WIN him over.

I want to BELITTLE him.

NOUN

VERB

I want a motorboat.	I want to EARN enough for a motorboat.
I want a wife.	I want to WIN Georgia's heart.
I want peace.	I want to ELIMINATE distraction.
I want attention.	I want to FASCINATE everyone.
I want order.	I want to ORGANIZE this mess.

"The actor is working at his best when he, as the character, has a vivid want at all times. Secondly, the actor's power is increased when his want is directed to a specific person. And thirdly, the vitality of the want is amplified when the character's want is immediately dependent on a specific response." Thus, in every moment that you are your character there should exist---

1. An ongoing want
2. A receiver (the person you are communicating with)
3. A desired response from the receiver

For example:

VERB	RECEIVER	DESIRED RESPONSE
I want .. to WIN .....	Gloria's .....	admiration.
I want .. to AWAKEN ....	my father's ..	enthusiasm.
I want .. to REDUCE ....	my lover ....	to tears.
I want .. to IGNITE .....	the crowd ...	to riot.
I want .. to PERSUADE ..	Ann .....	to kiss me.

The following is a list of some more active verbs that will help you as you decide what your character wants throughout your piece:

I want to CONVINCE.	COMPLIMENT him	I want to HELP.	CHARM her
I want to ENCOURAGE.	FLATTER him	I want to SEDUCE.	FASCINATE her
I want to PREPARE.	PRAISE him	I want to IGNITE.	DAZZLE her
I want to ENLIGHTEN.	REINFORCE him	I want to BUILD.	WIN her
I want to ANNIHILATE.	ENCOURAGE him	I want to HURT.	MANIPULATE her
I want to GET EVEN.	STRENGTHEN him	I want to AWAKEN.	SEDUCE her
I want to OVERWHELM.	FORTIFY him	I want to MOCK.	SURROUND her
I want to REASSURE	INVIGORATE him	I want to CRUSH	OVERWHELM her
I want to BOMBARD.	ELEVATE him	I want to INSPIRE.	DOMINATE her
I want to SUPPRESS.	EXALT him	I want to DESTROY.	VICTIMIZE her
I want to BELITTLE.	IMMORTALIZE him	I want to INCITE.	CONQUER her
I want to LAMBAST.	LIONIZE him	I want to TEASE.	TYRANNIZE her
	MONARCHIZE him		POSSESS her
	DEIFY him		OCCUPY her

**Existential verbs** These verbs include those vast activities that go on without our volition. They are too vague to be endeavored in. For instance, one can hardly push hard for ten minutes on the verbs *to be, to exist, to die, to become, to live, to use, to try, or to think.*

**Adjectival verbs** This classification is extremely subjective, and one director will consider a certain verb in this category to be dangerous, while another will consider it acceptable. The determining factor is this: Does the choice of the verb sound dangerously close to indicating—or playing the adjective? For instance we might discourage the use of a verb such as *argue*, because it slides so unnoticeably into the adjectival playing of *argumentative*; *charm* because it slides into being *charming*; *pitiful* leads to *pitiful*; *imagine* leads to *imaginative*; *deceive* leads to *deceptive*, and so forth.

**Trigger verbs** These verbs depict actions that occur so quickly the doer could not pursue them for ten minutes: *shoot, slap, kick, kiss, touch, quit.*

**Actable verbs** These verbs, it is worth repeating, are commonplace, gutsy activities that an ordinary person could put his shoulder behind and push hard for ten minutes. One can certainly work hard for a long time to *convince, excite, tease, encourage, destroy, prove, entice, intimidate.*

The following rough chart could be augmented and refined by any student of directing. It provides a graphic way of looking at actable verbs. Gradually the director becomes selective in listening to the actor; so that, for example, when the director asks, "What is your objective?" and the actor answers, "I want to castigate him," the director will suggest, "Give me the down-and-dirty form of 'castigate.'" The actor might say, "bawl him out"; "give him hell"; "curse him out." The director: "That's better, those are more actable. You can't put your shoulder behind 'castigate'; it disappears. But you can really push hard on 'give him hell!' Use the down-and-dirty form; it's more actable."

**VERBS**

ACTABLE	INTELLECTUAL	BEHAVIOR, OR CONDITIONAL
hurt	reciprocate	walk
inspire	atone	sneeze
suppress	glean	cry
incite	repudiate	laugh
enlighten	reign	shout
crush	blame	run
encourage	mollify	eat
lambast	avenge	sleep
explain	vilify	sit
organize	obfuscate	stand
destroy	ruminate	fear
prepare	reinstate	like
build	postulate	endure
ensnare	avow	hiccough
tease	require	belch
cheer up	accomplish	wait
reassure	adjust	record
justify	narrate	see
mock	impugn	recover
<b>EXISTENTIAL</b>	<b>ADJECTIVAL</b>	<b>TRIGGER</b>
think	create	slap
use	aggravate	kill
try	discuss	shoot
be	argue	kick
live	forgive	touch
exist	charm	kiss
die	pity	quit
become	deceive	slice
create	pine	tweak
do	deplore	wince
need	adore	lock
intend	enchant	notice
hope	marvel	omit
love	loathe	meet
happen	grieve	flash
begin	judge	snap

(desires) (receiver) (action) (verb)

## Eye Focus Possibilities

*The Moving Focus:* The eyes move from point to point, stopping briefly at each point then moving on as though trying to find the thought. If the search is not intense but wanders casually, it conveys boredom—a wandering mind. If the search is rapid and intense, it suggests anxiety or fear.

*The Fixed Focus:* The eyes fix on a point but in such a way that it is evident that one is not looking at an actual object—one is simply thinking about something with great concentration. (I believe that we do this when trying to concentrate to eliminate the additional sensory input provided by a wandering gaze.) If one is looking at an actual physical object, one often moves the head slightly as though to see it better. . . . Although one sometimes speaks of focus as though one were seeing the experience or idea or person being thought about, one should be careful not to imply that the performer should actually “see” things, although some do. When used properly, the performer may appear to see a vision or to be singing or speaking to the image of someone, but in training the focus technique one must be certain that the performer does not try to show that he or she is focusing (as opposed to going through the eye-mind thought process that creates the focus). The “showing” syndrome is a counter-productive tendency for singer-actors generally, and it should be watched for here and elsewhere in the training process.

*The eye shutter:* When one closes one’s eyes, one is pulling inside the self either to concentrate or to deal with something strongly emotional (apart from relaxing or sleeping, of course). When the emotional situation is happy, it communicates a sense of intense joy that can be relished better by shutting out the world. Similarly with an unhappy situation: the person must either pull inside to control the situation or cry out in anguish. Whenever I introduce this concept there is at least one student who has been told that shutting the eyes shuts out the audience. This is wrong on several counts: first, the audience is not present for the character in a dramatic situation except for those rare moments of direct audience address; second, the communication between performer and audience is not based on the kind of eye contact found in everyday life. The audience is observing a character go through an emotional experience, and the strength of the emotional experience is what is important, not whether one can see the performer’s eyeballs. Because shutting our eyes under emotional stress suggests a character undergoing a heightened emotional experience, the communication becomes more powerful rather than less so.

Because of the intensity suggested by the eye shutter, it is a technique that must be used judiciously. If used too often, it becomes an affectation. . . .

*The light bulb:* The name comes from the well-known cartoon technique in which a character has a sudden bright idea that is shown by a light bulb glowing in the thought balloon over the character’s head. The sudden change of process suggested by the light bulb concept is created by a sudden shift of focus by the eyes or, more rarely, the whole head as well. It is like seeing a new piece of information or hearing a sudden sound: the eyes (and sometimes the head) shift suddenly to another point of focus.

The performer should be watched carefully for the tendency to bring a startle-tension into play in the attempt to “show” the reaction with additional and unnecessary tension. . . .

Just as with the eye shutter, the number of light bulbs in a performance is limited by the relative rarity of the occurrence in human behavior; but the very rarity of that kind of mental event is what makes it special and useful.

*Environmental focus:* On many occasions, the vast imaginary space between the performer and the audience can be transformed into an actual environment. The performer can focus on actual elements of the imaginary environment, looking at trees, mountains, moon, clouds, armies, etc. Two prototypical environmental arias occur in Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah*: “Ain’t it a pretty night” and “The Trees on the Mountains”, both involving a character focusing on various aspects of the mountain environment. This kind of focus is similar in structure to the search, but the search is mental whereas the environmental focus intends to create the sense of seeing actual objects and landscapes.

*The vision:* While all focus techniques tend to create a sense of the performer seeing things, events, and experiences, the heightened fantasy focus becomes literally visionary. It is one thing to think about a series of ideas and another to envision the face of one’s beloved, a field of skulls, one’s deadliest enemy astride the world, or any powerful fantasy. Such visions can become panoramic, filling the entire proscenium frame.

## Gestural Qualities

smooth or staccato  
rounded or angular  
large or small  
fast or slow  
expansive or tentative  
open or closed  
flowing or jerky  
above the midsection or below the midsection  
full arm oriented or hand-wrist oriented

## *Facial Expressions/Attitudes*

- Attitudes chiefly rational:** Explanatory, instructive, didactic, admonitory, condemnatory, indignant, puzzled, curious, wistful, pensive, thoughtful, preoccupied, deliberate, studied, candid, guileless, thoughtless, innocent, frank, sincere, questioning, uncertain, doubting, incredulous, critical, cynical, insinuating, persuading, coaxing, pleading, persuasive, argumentative, oracular.
- Attitudes of pleasure:** Peaceful, satisfied, contented, happy, cheerful, pleasant, bright, sprightly, joyful, playful, jubilant, elated, enraptured.
- Attitudes of pain:** Worried, uneasy, troubled, disappointed, regretful, vexed, annoyed, bored, disgusted, miserable, cheerless, mournful, sorrowful, sad, dismal, melancholy, plaintive, fretful, querulous, irritable, sore, sour, sulky, sullen, bitter, crushed, pathetic, tragical.
- Attitudes of passion:** Nervous, hysterical, impulsive, impetuous, reckless, desperate, frantic, wild, fierce, furious, savage, enraged, angry, hungry, greedy, jealous, insane.
- Attitudes of self-control:** Calm, quiet, solemn, serious, serene, simple, mild, gentle, temperate, imperturbable, nonchalant, cool, wary, cautious.
- Attitudes of friendliness:** Cordial, sociable, gracious, kindly, sympathetic, compassionate, forgiving, pitying, indulgent, tolerant, comforting, soothing, tender, loving, caressing, solicitous, accommodating, approving, helpful, obliging, courteous, polite, confiding, trusting.
- Attitudes of unfriendliness:** Sharp, sever, cutting, hateful, unsocial, spiteful, harsh, boorish, pitiless, disparaging, derisive, scornful, satiric, sarcastic, insolent, insulting, impudent, belittling, contemptuous, accusing, reproving, scolding, suspicious.
- Attitudes of comedy:** Facetious, comic, ironic, satiric, amused, mocking, playful, humorous, hilarious, uproarious.
- Attitudes of animation:** Lively, eager, excited, earnest, energetic, vigorous, hearty, ardent, passionate, rapturous, ecstatic, feverish, inspired, exalted, breathless, hasty, brisk, crisp, hopeful.
- Attitudes of apathy:** Inert, sluggish, languid, dispassionate, dull, colorless, indifferent, stoical, resigned, defeated, helpless, hopeless, dry, monotonous, vacant, feeble, dreaming, bored, blasé, sophisticated.
- Attitudes of self-importance:** Impressive, profound, proud, dignified, lofty, imperious, confident, egotistical, peremptory, bombastic, sententious, arrogant, pompous, stiff, boastful, exultant, insolent, domineering, flippant, saucy, positive, resolute, haughty, condescending, challenging, bold, defiant, contemptuous, assured, knowing, cocksure.
- Attitudes of submission and timidity:** Meek, shy, humble, docile, ashamed, modest, timid, unpretentious, respectful, apologetic, devout, reverent, servile, obsequious, groveling, contrite, obedient, willing, sycophantic, fawning, ingratiating, deprecatory, submissive, frightened, surprised, horrified, aghast, astonished, alarmed, fearful, terrified, trembling, wondering, awed, astounded, shocked, uncomprehending.

## *Gesture Possibilities*

Hand to head	Both hands to head
Hand to shoulder	Both hands to shoulders
Hand to stomach	Both hands to stomach
Hand to chest	Both hands to chest
Hand on hip	Hands on hips
Hand to neck	Hands to neck
Hand touches thigh	Hands touch thigh
Hand to cheek	Hands to cheeks
Hand to forehead	Hands to forehead
Hand caresses body	Hands caress body
Hand touches opposite side of body	Hands touch opposite sides of body
One hand held out, palm down	Both hands held out, palms down
One hand held out, palm up	Both hands held out, palms up
One arm held out to side	Both arms held out to side
One hand finger point	Two hands finger point
Hand slaps chest	Hands slap chest
Fist held out in front	Fists held out in front
Fist hits chest	Fists hit chest
Fist strikes thigh	Fists strike thigh
Hand held over head	Hands held over head
Head turns sharply	Head nods

*The Singing Actor, pp. 38-40*  
feelings list

abandoned  
 abashed  
 adamant  
 affectionate  
 aglow  
 agonized  
 alarmed  
 ambivalent  
 angry  
 annoyed  
 anxious  
 apathetic  
 astounded  
 awed

baffled  
 beautiful  
 betrayed  
 biting  
 bitter

distraught  
 disturbed  
 divided  
 dominated  
 doubtful

eager  
 ecstatic  
 eerie  
 electrified  
 enchanted  
 enervated  
 envious  
 erotic  
 excited  
 evil  
 exasperated  
 exhausted

fascinated  
 fawning  
 fearful  
 flustered  
 foolish  
 foreboding  
 forgiving  
 frantic  
 frightened  
 frustrated  
 furious  
 furtive

blaming  
 blissful  
 bold  
 bored  
 brave  
 bullying

calm  
 callous  
 capable  
 captivated  
 carnal  
 charmed  
 chaste  
 cheated  
 cheerful  
 childish  
 clever  
 combative  
 condemned

helpless  
 helpful  
 high  
 homesick  
 horrible  
 hot-blooded  
 hurt  
 hysterical

ignored  
 impressed  
 indignant  
 indulgent  
 infatuated  
 infuriated  
 inspired  
 intimidated  
 isolated

jaded  
 jealous  
 joyous  
 jumpy

keen  
 kind  
 kinky

lazy  
 lecherous  
 lively

confused  
 content  
 contrite  
 cruel  
 crushed

deceitful  
 defeated  
 defensive  
 delighted  
 desolate  
 despairing  
 despising  
 destructive  
 determined  
 diffident  
 diminished  
 depressed  
 discontented  
 distracted

naughty  
 nervous  
 nice  
 niggardly  
 nutty

obnoxious  
 obsessed  
 obstinate  
 odd  
 ominous  
 outraged  
 overwhelmed

pained  
 panicked  
 peaceful  
 persecuted  
 petrified  
 pitiful  
 pious  
 playful  
 pleased  
 precarious  
 pressured  
 prim  
 proud  
 puny

quarrelsome  
 queer

gay  
 glad  
 gleeful  
 grateful  
 greedy  
 grievous  
 groovy  
 guilty

happy  
 hateful  
 haughty  
 heavenly

sad  
 sarcastic  
 sated  
 satisfied  
 scared  
 screwed up  
 servile  
 settled  
 sexy  
 shocked  
 shot down  
 sickened  
 silly  
 skeptical  
 slavish  
 sneaky  
 solemn  
 sorrowful  
 spiteful  
 startled  
 stingy

loathing  
 lonely  
 longing  
 loving  
 lustful

mad  
 maternal  
 maudlin  
 mean  
 melancholy  
 menacing  
 miserable  
 mystical  
 stunned  
 stupefied  
 suffering  
 sure  
 sympathetic

tempted  
 tenacious  
 tense  
 terrified  
 threatened  
 thrilled  
 thwarted  
 tortured  
 trapped  
 trifled  
 troubled

ugly  
 unconquerable  
 understanding

rabid  
 raging  
 raptured  
 reckless  
 refreshed  
 rejected  
 relaxed  
 relieved  
 remorseful  
 restless  
 reproachful  
 righteous  
 rousing  
 uneasy  
 unsettled

vehement  
 vengeful  
 violent  
 vital  
 vivacious  
 vulnerable

wacky  
 warm  
 weepy  
 whimsical  
 wicked  
 wild  
 wonderful  
 worried

zany  
 zapped

## Readings: Gestures

The believable initiation of a gesture depends upon a nontension state of readiness. Any unnecessary or superfluous tension in the upper body makes a natural, believable gesture impossible. . . . Even a realistic gesture can be sustained for an amazing length of time so long as it has been initiated without superfluous tension. (pp.201-202)

One of the biggest challenges in the sustaining phase is keeping the gesture alive rather than simply holding it out like a piece of dead wood. As with decay in the sound of a piano tone, there is gestural decay. To keep the gesture alive, one must first understand clearly, on a body-mind level, what the gesture means. This does not mean a verbal definition, but an intuitive, kinesthetic understanding which can only be achieved if there is a state of readiness free of superfluous tension to begin with. (p.203)

A gesture is difficult to sustain if it goes outside our personal space, that cylindrical zone that is ours and that extends eighteen to twenty-four inches from us on all sides. . . . Anytime the arms are fully extended they reach outside the private space, and it takes a great motivation—quieting a large crowd, holding off potential attackers—to sustain it. (p.204)

Careful attention should be given to the completion of the release. Performers commonly hold onto slight residual tensions, and the tiniest bit of held tension (in the hands, for example) draws the attention of the viewer in a compelling way just when that attention should return to the facial/emotional mode as the primary visual communicator. Wherever superfluous tensions reside in the arms or body, the average audience is remarkably accurate in identifying and being distracted by them rather than concentrating on the true source of power in the performance. Time after time I have pointed out a slight and (I thought) unnoticeable tension in a performer to a lay person in the audience, only to find that the person was not only aware of the tension problem but was disturbed by it. We must watch closely for those tilts in the wrist, stiff fingers, clenched fingers; all are tiny statements, but they indicate an overall tension that will interfere. (p.204)

Any gesture can be incorporated in *any* context. All it takes is exercise and imagination—practice, play, and persistence—by the performer. Strengthening the performer's imaginative power in making sense of any gesture is a fundamental goal of the exercise. Accomplishing this requires observers who are deeply involved in the process of diagnosis and validation, for it is their feedback that confirms the development of the new creative capacities and nurtures the continuing growth. (pp.205-206)

Another exercise that expands the gestural vocabulary is the use of arbitrary gesture cards, which function similarly to the arbitrary attitude cards. . . . Their purpose is very simple: to find a stimulating, nonjudgmental way of compelling the performer to expand the gesture vocabulary. . . .

Each card has a specific gesture suggestion: a hand held to the forehead, a fist held out in front, both hands on the chest, a hand caressing the thigh, a finger pointing in the air, and so on. The number of possible gesture cards is limited only by the imagination of those creating them. The quality of the gesture can be left undefined so that the performer can give each of them the kind of energy that makes sense in context. It is possible, of course, to include quality cards as well that define the movement of the gesture: jabbing, stroking, punching, and the like. The important thing is for the performer to be able to test virtually all possible gestural and quality combinations, allowing them to take on different meanings as dictated by specific situations and characters. If a full range of gestures is included in the list, the performer is able to explore most of the inhibited "wilderness" areas in his or her physical communication system. Having done so, the brush is cleared for the intuitive, impulsive self to work in those areas without inhibition. (pp.206-207)

An interesting phenomenon occurs when working with the arbitrary gesture concept, whether with mirror incorporation or with arbitrary gesture cards. As performers execute the often unusual gestural suggestions, they often find it very difficult, stopping in the middle of the gesture to say, "This doesn't make sense." And the observers respond, "You were doing beautifully!" because it made perfect objective sense to them. . . . Our habitual intellectual mind-set rebels against anything it cannot immediately and conventionally rationalize. But if we allow our body-mind to make the statement, it finds the reason-for-being that the observers immediately perceive as a possibility. (p.208)

For gestures to be filled with meaning, they must interrelate with the focus and attitude of the facial/emotional mode. If the face is blank or neutral, gestures seem to lack content and become the empty semaphores of popular parody. The interconnection is vital: gestural exercise must be accompanied by and integrated with facial/emotional statements. Without that involvement, gestures are worse than not useful: they are counterproductive because they establish a habit of neutralizing gestural meaning for both the performer and the observer. The kinesthetic statement is like music—it is suggestive but unspecified energy; the facial/emotional statement (along with the words and the situation) gives that energy specific meaning. . . .

In exercising the kinesthetic mode, there should always be a specifying, sense-making message from the facial/emotional mode. (pp.208-209)

### *Readings: Gestures*

Performers making new performance choices, whether gestural or emotional, are confronted with responsibility for their choices. The judgment that comes from this responsibility often inhibits the growth process. Both arbitrary gesture and mirror exercises remove responsibility from performers because they are relieved of making the choice. But can we also help performers take the next step? Can we put this creative freedom of the arbitrary assignment in the hands of the performers themselves? Can we allow them to provide their own creative stimuli? (p.209)

In life, of course, it is ludicrous to gesture with sustained tension. (Try it while gesturing naturally.) But in performance, the practice can quickly become a habit, and eventually any gesture calls full-body tension into play automatically.

In most cases, more tension energy is expended in a gesture than is needed simply to make the gestural statement. The hands go to the head in a gesture of anguish, but at the same time the shoulders hunch up and the whole body tenses spasmodically. The hands to the head are the meaning of the gesture, but the extra body and shoulder tension attaches itself to that meaning. (p.211)

### *Readings: Eye Focus and Attitudes*

A simple and effective way of exercising the focus idea is to set up a sequence of focus ideas and then have the singer use the sequence regardless of its seeming inappropriateness. The sequence could be: moving focus search, fixed focus, eye shutter, environment, light bulb, moving focus search, fixed focus. Surprisingly, this or any sequence will make total sense with any aria even though it is totally arbitrary. This suggests, again, that anything specific communicated from the facial/emotional tends to make sense for the observer. (p.167)

A young woman who sang her aria with an arbitrary focus sequence exclaimed as she finished, "That's the first time I really *knew* what the character was thinking about! And the only thing I did differently was to get specific with my focus." For many singers, the facial/emotional mode is often incongruent with the thought process implied by the aria; that is, the mode is sending generalized messages that don't relate to the potential meaning of the text and music. Anything specific crystallizes the inner-outer relationship. The important thing is that the singer realize that she can *do* that, that she can make specific focus choices that give the meaning a channel through which to flow and communicate. (p.168)

In the arbitrary attitude exercise, the performer picks several cards from a deck on which are written various emotionally oriented suggestions—angry, rhapsodic, frightened, amazed, ashamed, and the like. Regardless of their seeming appropriateness to the aria in question, the performer then sings the aria using the attitudes drawn. The arbitrary attitudes almost always seem appropriate in action, despite how one might judge them intellectually. Any attitude can be made to work if the performer blends it with the existing attitudes implied by the aria. There is no such thing as a pure attitude; that is, there is no such thing as pure anger—it is always anger with a mix of other elements. The same is true of attitudes in general—they are all blends of various combinations. One can almost always blend a combination of attitudes to make sense out of any aria situation. In this way, the exercise becomes a challenge to the imagination, compelling the performer to think about the character and the situation in different ways.

Here again, performers have the opportunity to keep their creative processes fresh. The intellect analyzes characters and situations and comes up with an eminently logical set of attitudes. But have a performer draw four attitudes from a pack, and the choices (although seemingly irrational) make as much sense as the logical ones. What is more important, those arbitrary choices are often more interesting, compelling, and theatrical. They are sometimes more believable. They also keep the performer's mode minds alive with the challenge of new ideas and keep the intellectual mind off the vocal process. A little practice with arbitrary attitudes helps keep the performing process to become easier and more flexible.

Several young singers with whom I had worked in a summer training program auditioned for me some years later. I was pleasantly surprised by their performances. Their emotional choices were particularly interesting, showing a mental vitality and spontaneity that was very attractive. Only after the auditions did I discover that each of them had been using arbitrary attitudes drawn just before the audition from packs of cards they had made for themselves. Needless to say, I was delighted; but I was even more pleased by how much they enjoyed the process of auditioning as a result of giving themselves arbitrary creative challenges to work with. "It gives us something fresh to think about and keeps our minds off all the judgment going on." (pp.169-170)