

Apply this to you, the Playwright (Composer, Lyricist) and to each of your characters. It sort of goes along with what I wrote last time, but since humans have been talking about this for at least 2000 years, I thought it would be good to mention it again.

“TENTATIVE efforts lead to tentative outcomes.

Therefore give yourself FULLY to your endeavors.

Decide to construct your character [yours and those in your play] through EXCELLENT actions and determine to PAY THE PRICE of a worthy goal. The trials you encounter will introduce you to your strengths.

Remain steadfast...and one day you will build something that endures; something worthy of your potential.”

--Epectitus,

Roman teacher and philosopher -- 55-135 AD

I think Epectitus should have been a playwrighting teacher. This advice is perfect for creating characters in your plays and musicals who live and breathe in the moment, who strive against all odds for their goals, and who keep going through every setback. [A playwright can use this to shape his or her life, also.] This is not necessarily a rose-colored-view. Our characters can do all this and still fail. [Tragedy] They can try again and again and fail and fail until they finally succeed [either Comedy or Drama]. Or they can succeed admirably, having learned the lessons along the way, and having survived the process of life. [again Comedy or Drama]

TENTATIVE means, of course, half-hearted, not fully committed, hesitant, not thinking they/you are up to the task. They/you must believe, even if the goal seems impossible.

FULLY above means a depth of commitment to achieving whatever it is your characters or you have set for themselves/yourself.

EXCELLENT means that only the best actions will get them/you where they really want to be. Anything less than EXCELLENT and they/you will not come close to the realization of their/your needs. As a teacher in a drama classroom for over a decade, one of the mantras on the wall was “What is easy is seldom excellent.”

PAY THE PRICE means that they/you choose to take the risks, even if those risks seem impossibly high, for those are the ones which most often help a character achieve success.

Engage yourself in the work. Engage your characters strongly. Allow your characters to engage each other with zeal and that do-or-die attitude. That will make excellent theatre, whether it is traditional or experimental in form.

by C. Michael Perry

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