



## How to Stop Acting: A Renown Acting Coach Shares His Revolutionary Approach to Landing Roles, Developing Them and Keeping them Alive

By Harold Guskin

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**"The Great Guskin" (John Lahr, *The New Yorker*) shares the approach he uses to help actors land roles, develop them, and keep them alive**

Harold Guskin is an "acting doctor" whose clients include Kevin Kline, Glenn Close, James Gandolfini, Bridget Fonda, and dozens more. In *How to Stop Acting*, Guskin reveals the insights and techniques that have worked wonders for beginners as well as stars. Instead of yet another "method," Guskin offers a strategy based on a radically simple and refreshing idea: that the actor's work is not to "create a character" but rather to be continually, personally responsive to the text, wherever his impulse takes him, from first read-through to final performance. From this credo derives an entirely new perspective on auditioning and the challenge of developing a role and keeping it fresh, even over hundreds of performances. Drawing on examples from his clients' work and his own, Guskin presents acting as a constantly evolving exploration rather than as a progression toward a fixed goal. He also offers sound and original advice on adapting to the particular demands of television and film, playing difficult emotional scenes, tackling the Shakespearean and other great roles, and more. His book will find an eager and appreciative audience among novices and established actors alike.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

No, this isn't a guide to helping introverts learn how to loosen up and be themselves. Rather, it's a new perspective on auditioning for theater. "Acting doctor" Guskin, who's worked with Kline, Glenn Close, James Gandolfini, Steve Martin and others, explains his strategy, which, at its core, states that actors do not have a responsibility to create characters, but to be continually responsive to their lines, wherever their inclinations take them. It's an honest, non-gimmicky take on a perennial problem. With specific anecdotes (e.g., "Peter Fonda came to me in 1993, he wanted to rethink his acting") and concrete advice (e.g. "take it slow" and "let the script guide the research"), Guskin covers various acting scenarios, from the stage (including Shakespeare) to film and television. He imparts much wisdom, yet counsels, "discover what makes you tick as an actor. Use what works and discard whatever gets in the way, no matter how sound the concept."

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### Review

"Ask an actor who the coach of the moment is and no matter whose name comes up as well, Guskin's is mentioned three times out of four." ?*The Village Voice*

"Reading through these pages, I realize not only how much I learned from Harold, but also how safe he made me feel. The courage to take the risks that pushes us into new discoveries-new emotional territory-does not come without trust. Harold created a place filled with a trust that ultimately freed me to find my wings . . . one role at a time. This book will be invaluable for anyone passionate about learning the craft of acting and for those of us who need to be reminded of the basics of the craft we have dedicated our lives to." ?Glenn Close

"Many actors, newcomers and veterans alike, often wonder why it's so difficult to be as real, natural, and emotionally charged on stage or in front of the camera as we are in our daily lives. Harold Guskin explains how, by habit and misconception, we tend to undermine our potential. *How to Stop Acting* is a clear and concise actor's guide to living the truth in our work." ?Christopher Reeve

"Harold gives a very sane point of view to a very insane business and a very insane craft. Sometimes, when I read a script, I'm tempted to put on seven different wigs and change everything and do all this stuff-like knock my head against the wall twenty times before I know what I'm doing. Then I'll come to Harold, and I'll realize it's a lot simpler than that." ?James Gandolfini

### About the Author

**Harold Guskin** has worked with dozens of stage and screen actors and is himself an actor and director. He lives in New York City with his wife, the playwright and screenwriter Sandra Jennings.

## **Users Review**

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#### **Sharon Bufkin:**

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