



ALPHASHOWS

ACTORS MANUAL

To see examples of performances that model the outcomes outlined in this manual, view this video: <https://youtu.be/rqhqkUVsCII>

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

Alpha Actors Manual

This manual has been compiled to give you important, useful information that will assist you in performing in an Alpha Show. Whilst not required reading (like the “Touring Manual”) it is useful in preparing yourself for the unique performance style that is an Alpha show. If you haven’t read the “Touring Manual” yet we suggest you do so as it contains information about the fundamentals required to ensure you are ready to do the job as a whole.

THE OUTCOME

ALPHASHOWS’ outcome for our performances in schools are:

To provide an intense, memorable, high quality and high impact musical, that engages children the entire time. We hope to give them an experience of what ‘theatre’ is that encourages further participation in arts and theatre in the future.

To give performers an opportunity to work in a professional performance based job, and have them give a real experience of ‘being a performer’ to children by answering questions and generally being happy, accessible, fun and cooperative with children and teachers.

To provide the most outstanding role models of truthful and humble human beings within the stories and in real life.

To provide a launching pad for creativity, writing, drama, music, and fun in the classroom. To create enthusiasm and encourage children to be in the peak state for learning.

To have an artistic theatrical performance that expands a student’s soul to enable greater capacity in all learning areas (including learning areas not specifically covered by the shows).

To have an artistic theatrical experience that is of the highest quality possible, as close to a show at a big theatre in a capital city as we can.

To make available our shows to anybody who wishes to invite us for as low a cost as we can.

THE SCRIPT

Your script is your bible to the show. All of Alpha's scripts are customised and have had a great deal of thought put in to them from multiple angles. Firstly, the words of the script are not 'random' or cobbled together quickly without significant thought. Virtually every single line is worded in a way that is very specific. What may seem trivial to you, such as a change in wording, emphasis or even tonality, may change the entire outcome of the show, character or intention of the scene. And this is not an inconsequential occurrence if this happens. Alpha performs to huge numbers of children and grown ups every year; this is a big responsibility and as a result we will partner with you to ensure every word and meaning of the script and your performance of it is exactly in line with the intention behind the show and your character.

So please be sure to learn your script very very well before rehearsals (including both your own lines as well as the cues for your lines and what else is going on in the scene, and your songs), so that rather than having to concentrate on accuracy of lines during rehearsals we can instead concentrate on performance, acting and intention. When you don't get your lines right, or you decide to randomly change your lines at your own whim, this can have ramifications that you are unaware of, on multiple facets of the show, cast and company.

With that said, **the complete opposite is also true!** It might be advantageous to change it all up, whether that's you paraphrasing a line that makes it funnier or better for your style, trying different things for different audiences. Do not take the above as a hard and fast rule – and certainly do not let it make you paranoid or afraid to change things for fear of being given a 'note' or 'breaking the rules'. There aren't really hard and fast rules. So if this means trying out an addition to the script, changing something to include a pop culture reference etc etc... we'd love to see what you can add! You were selected for a reason and part of that reason is your intelligence, talent, fun, and we always want to make things better. So bring all your ideas to rehearsals, try things, experiment, we'd love to see it! We may ask you to change things or revert something back when it may not align with the overall vision, including changes you make later as a natural result of growth in your performance, however, this is fairly unlikely if once you have aligned yourself to the overall outcomes of the script and shows. Regardless, either way, just take notes in rehearsals and throughout the tour with professionalism and grace, and happily implement any onstage or offstage notes given at any time by the Director, Creative Director, Managing Director, any supervisor/manager or even your Tour Supervisor.

With that in mind, it is important to talk about the types of characters in the shows, and how we pretty much stick to those archetypes for each show due to the way children perceive and make sense of stories. Some of these 'rules' can be stretched a little, so a principal archetype can be funny sometimes, or a villain can also have some fun etc. In every show, there are variations on the following 'cast of characters' that make up the necessary components for a successful Alpha show:

- The Principal characters – usually romantic leads but not always strictly romantic
- Villain
- Villain's sidekick/s – but auditioned under the 'comedy' archetype
- Comedy roles
- Character roles (sometimes a Narrator as well)
- Wise character/s (who can also be comedy at times)

It's important to understand what kind of character you will be playing. You have to decide what your purpose is in each scene and stick to that. A principal character can't suddenly pull focus completely and start making crude jokes or stealing the comedy away from the comedy character in the scene. Of course, there's always opportunities to make jokes for every character, but it's important to understand your MAIN purpose in a scene and see how it works together with the others on stage. As a villain, you don't want to ruin a sidekick's joke by stealing it for yourself, you want to help setup the sidekick to have opportunities to make fun of you and get the audience laughing. If you have a bunch of social & emotional learning content to deliver and the scene is structured to help you deliver it by having a comedy character with you butting in, realise that's their job, and your job is to acknowledge the comedy but not delay the scene. Some stuff in the scripts can be very wordy – you have to figure out a way to deliver this without it being boring or monotonous. Find ways to keep the engagement up – using techniques in this guide.

The principal characters also have a very special purpose, allowing the audience to connect more deeply with themselves and their respective journeys. It is therefore imperative that these characters be played in the way that is true to the story and in a way that allows the message of the characters and their growth to be maximised. Naturalistic, relatable, and characters the audience would ultimately want to be themselves.

Be careful to decide in advance before you learn your script what sort of character you are playing. If in doubt, ask a question on the Alpha Shows SLACK group to discuss your thoughts.

PERFORMING THE SHOW

Performing an Alpha show is quite unique, but in many aspects it is the same as performing any music theatre show. You must project, speak clearly, and mostly 'face the front'... all the basics still apply! We don't generally do too many crazy theatrical/music theatre modern things, so your general 'performing rules' will most likely apply in most situations. There are subtle (and some not so subtle) differences, which we'll outline here.

Children in our shows are pre-framed and allowed to pretty much 'do what they want'. If they wish to 'yell out' and tell you something random, we usually allow it and often 'use it' for comedy / impact or to move the story along in a unique way for that specific audience. It provides a more memorable experience for the audience. You may have been used to learning a script over months and months at amateur theatre shows or at drama school and then performing each show identically regardless of the audience. This won't be like that. You must learn the script in advance to a very high standard, create and block your character during rehearsals, then be willing to be flexible enough (and certain enough about what you're supposed to be doing) to adapt to each unique audience. Some hard and fast rules you may hold dear for 'acting' or 'theatrical conventions' will be enthusiastically ignored by all of us who have worked with Alpha for a while. This is because we must do what is right by the audience. Too often children have a negative experience of theatre when they are young (which turns them off for life) so we do whatever we can to ensure that they 'love it' or at least have some strong positive emotional experience. Expectations that they sit and listen quietly are ruinous to the 'good time' we want to create for the audience, the positive anchor to theatre we want them to develop for life.

Remember that the purpose of this experience for these audiences of mainly children is different to a normal piece of theatre. It is there to engage them in specific ways that may differ from other theatre. Whilst you may have many skills you've developed for engaging an adult audience emotionally, we also use some different techniques that are streamlined to work best with children, although many of the techniques you have trained in will also aid you in creating and presenting your character authentically as a real, dimensional human. So in addition to these points below which should help you during your pre-rehearsal stage, we'll also work with you during rehearsals to optimise your performance for our audiences.

In addition to the differences between adult's theatre and children's theatre – our outcomes, techniques and intentions are different yet again from ALL other children's theatre. So even if you have performed in children's theatre in the past or other child-aimed entertainment, be prepared yet again to throw much of that out the window, as that experience can sometimes not apply at all to our shows, although it does give you valuable experience of how children react and what engages them (and what doesn't).

So here is a rundown of some of the operating principles for performing an Alpha show:

- It is loud! Part of creating an emotional experience is to overload the senses of the audience to whatever the safest maximum is. We also encourage the audience to be loud, so be used to a 'loud' experience for everyone. Most theatre tries to be 'appropriate' but we take it to the level of it being an overwhelming experience. Even if it annoys parts of the audience, we prefer that to being boring or quiet or low energy. This is a loudness that we create, with our sound and performing style, but also the audience itself.
- It is fast! Children get bored easily, so we keep the pace to a maximum. More specifics on this are:
 - Speak your lines fast, but ensure your diction is impeccable. A great technique is to speak MOST of the content of each line fast, but whatever the KEY WORDS or punchline are in the sentence, emphasise with an 'attacking' way of delivering the line. This way the 'essence' of the line is understood by the children. It should be fast enough for adults to be overwhelmed slightly, but kids to 'get it' without thinking. The difference between adults and children is that adults want to hear every word, whereas children are more impatient and 'get it' – they get the point of what you are saying quicker and they also are more attune to non-verbal cues like tonality and physiology.
 - NO GAPS! Don't leave any gaps between another actor's line and yours. It should feel UNNATURAL. There are no 'dramatic pauses' except in very special circumstances. If any pauses need to exist, put them in the MIDDLE of your line, or make some sort of 'sound' immediately after the previous actor's line is finished, to indicate that it is currently your line. This helps children focus on who is speaking and to understand the plot better. Remember, if they don't 'get it' they won't sit there trying to understand (like adults would), they'll just tune out. So you'll know if you're not doing a good job of keeping them engaged by your pace, energy and lack of gaps if they start to disconnect and/or 'chat' to each other. It's very easy to tell when your pace is off or you're leaving too many gaps.

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

- Enter the stage whilst the last person is still exiting – leaving no time for a ‘blank stage’. This should also feel completely unnatural. You’ll want to get on stage asap and when you’re on, keep thinking about wanting to ‘get off’ stage as soon as possible too. Even if you’re ‘looking’ for a character that just left or is even on stage, it doesn’t matter. Just get on stage and don’t leave gaps.
- Don’t BABBLE to try to be fast or quicken your pace. It’s more about clarity, speed and energy than anything else. Variation in tone helps too, no monotone!
- “Play against the script” most times. Most importantly, don’t play lines that are seemingly written as ‘sad’ as too depressive – except for when you are specifically directed to emotionally process/feel negative feelings (usually during the Closed Eye/Emotional Process sequence) or the scene is specifically dramatic or intense on purpose. Keep things upbeat and happy most of the time. That said, some content is designed to illicit a profoundly sad, angry or fearful response from both the character having the transformation (such as Fairy Godmother or Nanny Neptune allowing their Cinderella/Ariel principals to cry) and the audience. Also feel free to allow the real emotions of the scene to guide your performance. We aren’t asking you not to ‘act’. Feel your feelings. It can be a profound and life changing experience, especially if you allow it to connect to real life emotions you might be wanting to embrace or challenge.
- Most of the time you will be looking at the audience when you perform, not so much at other performers. Eye contact with specific audience members is very useful at certain times. Find the audience member (using your instincts) who would be most impacted by what you’re saying. Direct it to them.
- The audience is another character essentially, and in most cases they will abide by answering on cue. There may seem to be a LOT of questions and references to ‘everyone’ in the script but trust us, it really works. As you start to perform your character and get some experience, you may even find it necessary and useful to add in even MORE questions (eg. “don’t you think that’s true everyone?”) to ensure maximum engagement. Constantly checking in with the audience with questions and other techniques (see further below in this manual for specifics) is an awesome way to engage our audiences. The way you ask the question is essential, it’s very easy to sound like a teacher, so keep it fun and upbeat and ‘cool’.
- Sing your songs as music theatre style, in almost all cases. Even when they are pop songs we want to introduce children to the genre of musical theatre. However, we must also engage with children and we want to avoid ‘arrogant’ or disconnected music theatre singing styles. If you have a specific skill in pop music styled singing, show us what you’ve got in rehearsals and we’ll work out what’s best. Sometimes it is great to show children we can be ‘all things’ including a full on pop singer or a belty diva!
- Keep engaged in the show at all times. Don’t ‘lie down’ or ‘tune out’ when you’re not on stage or the sound desk (unless you physically need a break). Watch the show on the monitor, listen, keep engaged. Look and listen for what’s going on stage that might be relevant to next time you’re on stage.
 - Because what happens on stage changes EVERY show, you need to be in ‘up-time’ at all times in case what changes affects you and your character. No reading, sleeping or lying down during the show! Every audience is different and an essential part of your responsibility on stage is to be super aware of what the audience is reacting to, how they are feeling or whether they are having a good/entertaining time, and alter things up (using the techniques in this manual) when things aren’t going quite right for whatever reason.
 - Remember your ‘performance’ is seen as a holistic thing combining your ‘on-stage’ performance with the off-stage components. You must embrace the fact that you are not being hired to just ‘perform’ in the traditional sense of the word, where you could lie down and relax when not on stage. The scripts are written very specifically with all tech, lighting, sound, and set changes all thought out and your role includes all this in a complex and streamlined journey from start to finish incorporating all of the above tasks. It’s important that you see yourself as part of a ‘show creation machine’ so that you can be most effective and positive in all your roles.
- Be flexible and willing to divert from the script if one of the more experience actors is doing so, or be flexible to deal with the audience taking you somewhere, but always be wary of ‘losing focus’ and ‘mumbles’ (and time!). Any adlibs or random lines you make up to deal with an audience should be CLEAR and like any other line. Don’t get funny about other actors diverting from the script and playing with an audience for a moment. Embrace it and have fun, but also focus on staying on track once its done.

Most likely you will be performing the show with other cast who may have a lot of experience performing with Alpha. Use them, and to a degree you can learn from them. However, also note that many of our performers have not read this manual, so if you are reading this, you’re ahead of most! Use this guide as your bible foremost, not other actors, even if they have been performing with Alpha for a while. They may have developed some habits that aren’t in alignment with guidance in this manual, so feel free to establish your own set of onstage performance standards that are driven by the knowledge gained from this manual.

There is also a tendency to want to ‘mimic’ what the comedy character is doing or the villain, when that isn’t necessarily your job. Again, know your character and don’t try to ‘compete’ with other actors as everyone has a different outcome and purpose in the team of an Alpha cast.

MORE INFORMATION ON PERFORMING AN ALPHA SHOW

The clients are all provided with pre and post-show discussion and activity packs. The following is an edited excerpt from what we provide them that will probably be valuable to you with regards to performing in an Alpha show.

These activities and points for discussion are great if you want tips on how to create characters on stage or even for emotional mastery in all areas of life. For example:

- ◆ the experience of being an actor:
 - Managing feelings of embarrassment on stage. This is a common issue for children performers. Our answer to it is always “Who do you have to focus on to feel embarrassed?” The answer is, of course, yourself. So we use the example of the actors on stage and say we’re focussing on the audience’s enjoyment, not ourselves, so we don’t get embarrassed. This is a great lesson for life too. Focus on other people and contributing to others and your life will be better and you won’t get so ‘internal’ and embarrassed all the time
 - Learning lines, the importance of doing this BEFORE rehearsals
 - Having fun and playing FULL OUT. The best parts in the show were created from us being silly, being over the top and having a lot of fun in rehearsals or previous shows
 - Making the decision to “BE AN ACTOR/PERFORMER”. If you have children who would like to do this as a career one day, or even just want to be in the school production, this is the NUMBER ONE thing they must do first. Make the choice, and declare to everyone “I AM AN ACTOR/PERFORMER”. That way all the necessary teachers, lessons, opportunities etc will come into your life to create this identity for you. Make sure they understand that they don’t need to know “how” to do it, just make the choice and everything will eventually fall into place if you focus on who you have decided to be, and keep having fun and feeling good.
- ◆ the process of developing and portraying a character on stage:
 - Specifically, state management. All emotions are created by your ‘state’, your emotional state. State is controlled by ONLY 3 things:
 - PHYSIOLOGY. ie your physicality, your internal biology etc
 - FOCUS. What you’re focussing on (and what you decide things mean)
 - LANGUAGE. The words you use to describe things and communicate with.
 - You can use these 3 things to create any emotional state on stage that you want.
 - Incidentally, this is also how you can teach children to manage their emotional states at ANY TIME in their life. If you’re feeling bad about something, first thing to do is change your physiology. Drink water. Move around. Put your shoulders back and head high. The other 2 have a similar effect, although physiology is the most powerful, especially with children.
 - If they also change their focus, and what things mean to them, that will also change how they feel in any moment. Same with language – what you label things with in your language creates your reality.

Theatre and any storytelling are different to ‘real life’, even when trying to be hyper-realistic in tone. Here are further ways that performing an Alpha show has unique characteristics

- ◆ Repetitions (usually groups of three). We don’t usually speak like this in real life.
- ◆ Clichés and stereotypes.
 - We use these to quickly communicate the type of character, situation or problem
- ◆ Comedic traditions
 - Like our ‘He’s behind you’ ‘Boo!’ asking the audience questions or other traditions we use in some of our shows.
- ◆ ‘Asides’
 - ie. talking to the audience without the other characters hearing
 - some of our shows have two scenes going simultaneously on either side of the stage
- ◆ Stage conventions
 - Like the fact we all talk to each other whilst facing the front
 - Stage Right (SR) and Stage Left (SL)
 - Add singing and sound effects (you can make all kinds of sounds with your mouth!)
- ◆ Gestures
 - These are always BIG! This is different to real life and part of playing a character on the stage
- ◆ Suspension of disbelief
 - You can’t get emotionally involved and excited without this occurring
 - Discuss the importance of this with ALL theatre, movies and stories

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

- ♦ 'Cheating'
 - The way we might enter on stage when a character we're not supposed to see is just leaving – to avoid gaps in the show
 - Maybe we are pretending to be able to see something when we really can't
- ♦ Time distortions
 - To keep the show moving and maintain a good pace, we distort time. So even though 60 to 70 minutes passed it could represent days or weeks, and sometimes even years

We have found many students are just generally much more excited about theatre in general after seeing one of our shows – you can encourage more participation in the arts as well as going to see more live theatre outside of school.

CONTROLLING THE AUDIENCE

An Alpha audience can vary quite dramatically. From small quiet audiences to large audiences of 500+ children, to the most rude, over-the-top groups to lovely, polite (but also loud in the right places) audiences. Many audiences are in the environment of a school, which can vary from lower socio-economic areas to private schools or catholic environments, and everything in between that will smash any expected stereotype. No audience is the same, no expectations can be had of any one particular group based on ethnic or socio-economic background. They're all different and unique. If you tour with us for a while, you'll start to recognise the groups from school to school and have memories of how they reacted, and it will typically be consistent across years of performances, which is bizarre especially when you come back years later and they're still the same, even though the entire student body of humans has been replaced as they move on to high school!

Other shows take us to theatres with families; festivals with all sorts of variety of people to even the occasional adults only show where we really adapt the performance.

As a result many techniques are required for various audiences. If an audience is polite and willing to do everything 'as scripted', it is usually a pretty easy gig because it's as you would expect from your reading of the script initially and rehearsals, and there isn't anything you would need to deal with that would be out of the ordinary.

However, most shows don't work out like this!

Most of the time we are dealing with audiences that are anywhere from a little bit to VERY out of control and rambunctious. Very occasionally we deal with an underwhelmed audience (this might happen once or twice a year for us, very rare. Usually in 'open to the public' venues, not schools). We'll discuss both here and what to do.

HOW TO CONTROL AN AUDIENCE WITH LITTLE OR NO WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE:

- Assume participation. Always follow the script and continue to ask all the questions. Be prepared to 'wait less' for audience response and 'move on' quicker, especially when dealing with other actors on stage. Some cuts may occur too, as experienced Alpha actors keep the show focussed on the needs of this particular style of audience, so be ready for a fast show, quick costume changes etc etc. The general principal of trying to 'get off stage' as quick as possible is enhanced with this type of audience, not because you're not enjoying it, but because it's best for the audience.
- Never ever ever criticise an audience for 'not being good enough' at participating. Keep to the script. They are always the 'best' audience for that moment. They don't know how a show is normally for us so more than likely they are having the time of their lives; it just doesn't look like it to you because you're comparing. Don't compare, be in the moment.
- Enjoy it as usual! Don't look like you're 'over it', even if you are. You don't require energy from the audience, you create your own energy.
- That said, don't let them 'get away' with not responding. You only need 1 child to respond but it's best to continue to expect a high standard of participation – just be willing to be flexible on what a 'high standard of participation' might mean to this particular audience.
- Encourage the desired result (positive reinforcement) rather than being negative about something they're doing/not doing.
- Usually audiences of this type are small in number and/or young. Be aware below of some techniques needed to address this type of audience, as they may be very quiet to begin with but with some encouragement, they can turn into a completely disruptive small crowd that starts to derail the entire show. We want to engage with the interaction and use it, but keep it focussed and moving the story along as well.

HOW TO CONTROL AN AUDIENCE THAT IS OUT OF CONTROL:

We use some primary and specific techniques for controlling an audience that has stepped over the line of being 'out of control' and not listening etc. Also included below are some other ideas, but the first list are the primary tools we have.

An audience that becomes out of control usually results either from actors who aren't performing in a way that is engaging for the audience, or as a result of certain personalities in the audience who affect the entire audience, thus creating a lack of focus, regardless of how well the performers are using engagement techniques like those listed below. Meaning– sometimes it just happens and there's almost nothing we can do – the audience is just feral and it'll be exhausting and overwhelming. Just try to remember the gift you're giving, the positive experience they are having, even if they don't seem to appreciate it.

Sometimes it is also just because the teachers have really gone overboard with our suggestion to 'let them do what they like and not shoosh the children' (even though we ask them to watch for inappropriate & over-the-top participation and stop it/curtail it) or it might be an audience of children with parents and the parents find it amusing to let their children run riot. Whatever the reason, do your best using the techniques to keep them listening and engaged with the story and message.

Some audiences are just 'talkers' and the way they experience the show is by discussing it with their friends as it happens. That's ok. Don't get offended because they're not 'listening'. They may not have much experience with being an audience and have never been shown that that's the norm. We don't want to enforce norms on audiences when it's likely their first or early experience of actual theatre. Let them be who they are naturally, and use it and go with it and adapt to it.

Generally, this is all ok, we pretty much let anything happen, however, there may be something that is imperative that the entire audience hear or you just want to 'get them back' for whatever reason. It also looks bad to the client if it looks like we've lost control. It looks unprofessional and unpolished, so we want to use our skills to avoid that perception as well. Here's how:

- **Tell a secret.** Instead of trying to speak over the top/louder than the audience when they are talking or being over the top (which communicates that they don't need to quieten down, as they can still hear you), try telling 'a secret'. So get down low, almost whisper and they'll come with you because they want to know what you're saying. What we mean by a secret is just simply a variation on your line (or the actual line), that lets them know you're talking to them and it's something 'juicy' that they really want to hear. You don't have to literally say "do you want to know a secret" – although that has sometimes worked too!
- **Ask a Question.** Often an unfocussed audience is just due to randomness on stage and the resulting randomness in response from an audience. This random energy might just be part of the show, where lots of characters are talking and interacting at once, and it's all mayhem on stage in a comedy scene, which can lead to audiences thinking we're not paying attention to THEM and they can get away with chatting amongst themselves. So – if you bring back focus from the mayhem that's been happening on stage, stop it, and then you ask a question clearly and loudly, and you can get a unanimous response in return, it will normally settle them down. The audience feels like they have been 'heard' and they return to being 'one' instead of "multiple audiences" doing different things! If you can't get a unanimous response, try again (ask the question again), or try another option. This also applies to other universal responses, such as 'booing' or anything else. Any way you can get a universal response from the whole audience, it will help get them back under control. So you could literally quiet an audience down by encouraging them all to boo as loudly as they can. They'll get it all out and then you can move on.

- **Create a Suddenly.** A classic children's theatre term is what is known as a 'Suddenly'. Each script should have 1 or 2 Suddenlys per page as a minimum, and in the TikTok age we really need something every 10–20 seconds as that's how often their neural pathways have been conditioned to expect a stimulus (dopamine hit). This would increase the need to 4–5 Suddenlys per script page. So our show essentially has to model the pattern of what it's like to scroll TikTok, something to make them jealous (envy or a feeling of 'lack'), something to make them excited, something to make them angry or a sense of injustice (villain's and sword fights are good for this), something to make them laugh (our main strategy), something to make them triggered (mainly during closed eyes), something to make them shocked or grossed out (taboo jokes or the kiss, depending on age). These can all be various things, anything that gets the attention, jolts the nervous system in a small or large way, not quite a 'shock' but almost. They include a character entering stage, a random loud noise, a song, a kiss, a funny taboo word, a joke, a sword fight, a dance, a familiar pop song starting, a comedic sound effect, any other sort of interesting interaction, etc etc etc... The possibilities are endless – anything you use to create a minor nervous system jolt and/or dopamine hit that gets attention and keeps attention until the next Suddenly. Sometimes when you have an out of control audience, just 'getting through it' as fast as possible to when you know the next Suddenly is the best option (provided no important plot-related dialogue is contained in what you are speeding through). However, if you're really clever, you can just go ahead and create an **additional** suddenly to get back control of the audience.
- **Confusion Pattern.** A great way of controlling an audience is to say something that absolutely confuses them! This is because children, as a rule, don't pay attention when they don't 'get' something, ie. When they don't understand something. In our shows, this is generally not a problem, so purposely confusing them can help to slightly 'disconnect' them for a second so you can find a way to get back control and move on. Genius! You'll find this plays out by a reaction from the audience of 'whaa?', and they'll all go quiet for a minute to try to process what you just said, and then that gives you the space to move on.
- **Move on!** If you are struggling, sometimes just get moving and they'll come back once something happens they're interested in. The scripts aren't perfect (from a maximum engagement point of view), there are bits in there that are boring or bits that just never work but we have to keep it in for some reason – probably plot or message or some other outcome.

THE 'OPPOSITE TECHNIQUE'

Often the OPPOSITE of what you would think would work is what actually works best. Too often I've seen actors on stage trying to get back control, and really struggling. I've come on and done the complete opposite of what they were using to try and get back control and it has worked. For instance, a simple example is if an audience is booing and they won't stop, there might be a tendency to try and 'stop' them booing, or to 'move on', ask a question, or tell a secret, to get back control and get them listening again, but none of it is working. I'll instead come on and say "Is that the best boo you can do?!" So they boo even louder! But they get it out and then they're done. It acknowledges and shows appreciation for their willingness to participate, and it's so different to what they are used to with teachers always telling them to settle down and be quiet that it gains respect as well. So whilst this example is specifically for a villain, have a think about how the 'opposite technique' may apply to your character and when you may need to use it – perhaps simply joining in and encouraging the very thing you were trying to stop. This also works with a quiet audience that you want to encourage to participate more.

TRAILING OFF

See if you can get the audience, or a single person or a group in the audience, to finish your line! You do this with a specific tonality, where you raise your pitch slightly, extend it out, and wait for a response. It's a great way to get their attention and focus on what you want them to be focussed on. It's especially useful during message portions (where you have to explain something values education-y and it's hard to get them to understand or focus). **Also very useful during Question Time!!** I typically find I use this in what seems like the majority of my sentences in these contexts (QT & EPs) to be effective. Getting them to finish your sentence almost makes it the same as if they had said the entire sentence themselves, which is incredibly powerful for engagement and learning. Vocalizations are a super powerful way to manifest and create, so we want to engage their voices as a priority as much as is possible. So try something like "If the Beast would learn to be loving and let go of his limitingggggggg.....'BELIEFS'! Yes! Then Belle might...yes fall in love with 'im!" would be a good example. Feel free to point and acknowledge at the person or group who said the answer as it will give them a positive anchor to yelling out story-relevant stuff and that will then also be useful to 'control the audience' as you've given them direction in a positive way of the type of interaction that will get rewarded. You can almost create a competitive environment to see who can finish the sentence or answer the question the fastest, so look for those who are interacting and answering the quickest, acknowledge them immediately as well, and you'll be rewarding the type of behavior that is helpful to keep an audience on track for the rest of the show. So this is particularly important in early scenes if you can find spots to do it!

PAUSES

One technique that is very very tricky to pull off but is a subset of trailing off and the opposite technique, is a literal 'pause/wait'. Because the rest of the show is non-stop and keeps going almost without a break, now a pause is VERY obvious to the audience. So then it becomes a powerful tool. When you have chattiness or an audience all over the place with responses or lack-thereof, an actual stop of the show, where nobody is doing anything – literally, will be super powerful. You must also use the below technique of 'eye contact', do not just freeze whilst looking at another character, you must pause/wait whilst you're looking at the audience, and look around at different problem areas to wait either for them to talk to you to 'get out' what they're preoccupied with, or wait for silence again, then continue. This isn't a silly 'freeze', you're still moving and engaged, you just stop talking and start looking around at the audience to pause and wait to engage with whatever is going on, instead of just blindly moving forward as though you don't notice. Very easy for this to look like the classic teacher technique, so be very careful with this one, but because they've probably had it done to them it can work to your benefit because you're not telling them off at all, but there is a fear being instilled that maybe you're not completely happy with how the audience is behaving now, and it's time for them to step up and be better. Even the brattiest of children still have an innate desire to please and have people like them, especially the 'cool performers' that have come to their school. That's why it's important for you to seem cool and adult and a good role model for someone they would want to be when they grow up from the moment they first meet you or see you setting up. Now they will definitely want to 'please' you if you seem to be waiting for them in any way or they have a concern that maybe you notice them being rude and it's not workin' for ya. Never be visibly annoyed or angry though. A 'smile & pause' sometimes works too.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AN AUDIENCE

Always be on the lookout to notice individual (or group) contributions to the story. If someone yells out the actual end of your line, as suggested above or even just randomly (ie. Before you do!), or an answer to a question that wasn't necessarily even asked of them, you want to acknowledge them. This makes an audience feel 'clever' and will increase the level of engagement, and your level of control. If an audience knows you are listening to them and noticing everything, then they will be less likely to 'misbehave' as an audience. This is imperative. Be super super aware of anyone at all, even just a single quiet child, saying or doing anything that shows they are listening and 'getting it'. Acknowledge them. This is one of the best things you can do to increase engagement especially for introverted types. Also acknowledge those who are angry at the villain or are having any sort of emotional reaction whether negative or positive, even at a 'good' guy character. Don't take it personally, don't let your ego be triggered, use it for the story, use it to maximise engagement. The magic of an audience knowing that you're seeing EVERYTHING and that you're not just off in your own little performing world is revolutionary when it comes to getting them to listen and be with you fully engaged. This is not something you do in theatre or tv, this is a unique thing that works great in an Alpha Show, pretty much exclusively.

As a villain, you can even acknowledge the groups that identify or connect more with that archetype (at least at their level of development, we're talking usually Year 4–6s) and just go with it. Encourage it, get them pumped, get them on your side, make deals with them, include them, ask them for help with your evil plans etc etc.

EYE CONTACT & LEAVING THE STAGE TO GO INTO THE AUDIENCE

A simple way of controlling an audience is just through eye contact. Make sure you 'calibrate' your audience as early as possible. If you identify 'problem areas' early on, then you can usually minimise this by creating a connection with them early on with eye contact. Like above, this works especially well as a villain. Some audience members won't connect with ANYBODY on stage except the villain, so the villain role is especially vital to not just charge on through your scenes, but stop to acknowledge and interact with these so-called 'problem' areas of an audience. They won't be such a problem for everyone else, if you make them feel seen and heard.

So if you find certain children either behaving in a way that is disruptive or completely disconnected, eye contact can help them to know they are being noticed. You can choose certain lines to deliver directly to them, perhaps a line that directly 'moves' them in some way (as a villain I'll direct insulting lines to children who are bratty and not paying attention or being annoying, so they know I noticed, or as above, do the opposite, align with them and get them on your side as part of your crew / evil gang etc).

At times, during a monologue (on stage by myself) I'll even wander through the audience (if physically possible, which it is in 90% of venues) to get closer to audience members who need controlling, and hold direct eye contact with them. You can do this as all sorts of characters. Just come offstage and literally go down to the bratty section and single people out especially if you have a sequence already scripted for the purpose of audience interaction. Don't limit yourself to doing that part from on the stage. Just go down and direct it to 'em! This is particularly powerful with older children who are up the back and don't think you notice them. Just wander down and do your scene / monolog right to them at the back! Very helpful when the whole school is attending, as the younger students at the front can monopolise the interaction opportunities because they're the easiest to hear and see. So almost every performance that has older children up the back a bit separated – someone should get off the stage and go down to them, whether it's a villain monolog, a comedy bit where you're out in the audience looking for someone etc etc. Might be a bit harder as a principal character but it's been done! Hercules could wander down for some reason at some point etc.

One final fun idea – if you can find a way to EXIT the venue from backstage, and run around outside and enter from the OTHER side of the audience, usually where they came in from, behind them, that's a great Suddenly and a great way to ensure the back part of the audience is engaged.

Any time a performer leaves the stage it's like a breaking of norms and expectations, like an invisible barrier of expectation has been breached and therefore a very powerful Suddenly. "This performer is no longer in that safe arms-length space on stage, they're now in OUR space!!" You can literally see the shock and surprise when you do it – great experience for a performer. So it's a very powerful technique to integrate yourself into the audience for an even more memorable experience.

Same with Fly Away finale song – get out there! Interact, high-5 the audience etc etc.

Same with Question Time – get down there if you have to throw a wristband or talk to someone closer.

Bottom line, stay connected with your audience at all times, look at them, get close to them. Don't just do what you did in other shows outside of Alpha, and stay stuck performing to your other performers on stage and nothing else.

OTHER POINTS TO REMEMBER

Otherwise, it's just generally about effective performing, following the rules above with 'how to perform an Alpha show' and keeping things snappy, 'punctuating' your lines and the way you deliver them etc etc. If you do this, 90% of issues will be mitigated.

Generally anyway, it's just great to be really skilled at controlling an audience in a way that isn't like a teacher or isn't 'telling them off'. I find I do most of these things regardless, even for the most perfectly behaved audience, as they're all just great engagement techniques to make the show more memorable and great. It's respecting their participation and focussing the energy of that into what is going to serve the greater good. That way they'll have more respect for you as a performer and be willing to stay with you in the future.

Bottom line – do not ever tell them off or be teacher-like or admonishing in any way. You want them on side :)

STYLE OF PERFORMANCE for VARIOUS AUDIENCES

In Alpha, we often have to perform to audiences of varying natures. This is in addition to the overall 'culture' and 'style' of an audience as mentioned above with being over-the-top or underwhelmed. On top of this dynamic is also other facts about an audience which will affect how you perform:

1. **Young group.** Often we'll only have a group of younger children, or more difficult, a very small group of Preps or Year 1s (like only 50 of them). You need to slow down ever so slightly and be clear with everything. They may be over-the-top or just normal but what is important here is understanding that the plot is essential and they may confuse things in their heads easier, leading to the need for the skills above with 'addressing audience responses' and 'controlling an audience'. We also have often gotten the feedback that the plot went over their head, so we want to mitigate this perception by teachers of younger grade levels, take the time to check in with them and ensure they are 'getting it'. They will also enjoy the sequences that are more silly, behind you gags, poo jokes and other stuff for the younger members. Therefore you can be free to 'silly' stuff up even more, the suit characters will be liked more than the sarcastic or older characters, and they'll also love the princesses and heroes more too. Just be aware and ensure your performance is streamlined to them understanding and enjoying the show to the maximum possible. Also, very small audiences tend to no longer act as a collective, you end up with a lot of 'pop ups' whether physically or verbally (or both). You have to engage with this as it may be the only type of engagement you are getting...OR the younger small group will just be completely out of control with constant things they want to tell you or absolutely losing it at the villain or scary bits. Some younger small audiences can be very very angry as well!
2. **Equal spread of ages 4–14.** These shows are an average audience, which means we need to keep a balance in our performance, to appeal to all ages. The shows are written with this age group present in mind, so this kind of show is as you have rehearsed and what we perform most of the time. Only if they are especially small (for instance, a small regional school of only 80–120 students) would you have to alter things, or they have a very separated cohort of older students up the back who aren't engaging as you would like (use the above techniques for this scenario).
3. **Older group.** Often the 9–11 year olds, or even older, up to 14 or 15 years old. This is Alpha's speciality, to be able to ensure maximum engagement for even students who aren't into theatre or are really 'blah'. However, it is the most challenging type of audience to perform for so it is when we need to be most alert and ready to be flexible with our show. Generally, alter your performance in the following ways:
 - a. Speed up even more.
 - b. Skip or skim over bits that are clearly for younger students. New Alpha actors check with your TM first.
 - c. **Lower your voice tonality/pitch.** Very very important. Don't be so silly in the way you deliver lines. Swag it up. More sarcastic tones of voice work as well, especially for principal characters. If you've been playing a comedy sidekick as very silly and child-like, it's time to change that drastically and age it up!
 - d. These shows are ALL about the comedy, and as 'adult themed' as you can make it without crossing the line. Not so much the silliness or silly audience participation segments like a panto gag. They want to laugh. They want to feel smart. They want to feel old and cool. Try out taboo adult jokes that you think you can get away with, double entendres etc. Just be very careful.
 - e. If you can get them in enough, they'll be willing to 'go with you' on more serious bits like the Emotional Process (EP). So you need to start out with massive efforts to create rapport, especially if you're the 'wise' character who does the EP. This goes for everyone though, start out where they're at, so calibration of the audience is essential.

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

- f. Most likely this means being far more cynical and sarcastic, especially first up. If there ARE silly sequences in the show that are normally enjoyed by younger students (eg. A behind you gag) then let the audience know that you 'know' what's going on and you also think it's daggy. They'll be more willing to play with you. Make it obvious you KNOW the character is behind you, for instance, instead of having to feign ignorance or surprise. You can do it faster, get through it, find the character, or watch them doing the stupid thing, make it as though you know it's dumb and get to the jokes. Even find ways to take the piss out of the moment in the show or the script – we call this 'contempt for the script'. It seems at odds with what else we've told you about having respect for the script and the words and the intentions, but it does work to engage an older audience. I've even used this with the EP I do in Sleeping Beauty, a teacher even noticed how I knew getting older kids to scream "NOW I AM THE VOICE" is kinda full on and silly, but they saw the look in my eyes and whilst I showed a bit of cynicism, because I still assumed full participation that we were all going to do it despite it being daggy, they played full out anyway. We're making fun of it but because you're still engaged it still gets into the 'unconscious' programming. Any way to get them to 'play full out' works because the unconscious does not process negatives. That's why in language patterns, always say "Remember" vs "Don't Forget" because the unconscious literally cannot process negatives. So even if you're consciously being cynical about something, the unconscious doesn't get it and will only remember the positive experience of jumping up and down and celebrating for no reason etc etc.
- g. Don't be over-enthusiastic until the time is right. More of a 'whatever' attitude is good.
- h. Principal characters, you need to work hard at this, being almost like a Year 6 student in your stance and attitude. You can even calibrate different areas of the audience, some will be more 'mean girls' and you can be really 'whatever' with them, but then over another side there may be some more enthusiastic students where you can be more like that with them. Go direct your performances to the mean section, don't be afraid of them. You're obviously way cooler than them, but Year 6 students can still be super mean! Just don't fall into the trap of ignoring them and just playing with the safer younger ones. Challenge yourself and get out there!
- i. **Pace & Lead.** Top of your priority list is RAPPORT first...THEN when it's really important for your character or the message of the show, go where you need to go (eg. When Jon/Rose want to make better choices, that's their time to start 'stepping up' and showing up as the heroes they are, before that, he can be more cool and laid back and cynical). When the stakes are high enough, (and for older students they need to be high) they'll be willing to go with you. This technique is called 'pace and lead'. So you pace (align) with them, where they're at to begin with (thinking this whole thing is lame, feeling cynical) then once you have rapport with the pacing, you then lead them where you want them to go, getting out of their comfort zone, having fun, yelling out positive incantations during the EP etc etc.
- j. Being 'whatever' doesn't mean you lose the 'high stakes' aspect of the show. Still take the plot and message seriously, it's still real for your character. But you can take moments to step out of the show/story for comedy or rapport, within reason.
- k. Otherwise, the 'rules of engagement' previously talked about are imperative here, eye contact etc etc.

CONSERVATIVE AUDIENCES

Every so often, you will be told by your Tour Supervisor before a show that the audience you are about to perform for is marked on the client list as 'conservative' (it should also be listed on Filemaker for you) or they have chatted with the staff at a school and they have indicated that the culture at their school is more conservative than most.

What this means is to be aware of the culture of the school, have respect for that culture, and be aware of the words and actions you perform on stage, during the show. The request for a conservative performance has nothing to do with you offstage at the venue or during your work shift except for the content on stage. Jokes, language patterns, adlibs, that kind of thing.

Here's what we communicate to our clients, to find out from them if they want to provide any guidance or make a request. In addition, the Tour Supervisor **MUST** ask every new client directly if they need a conservative show. This is to avoid bad feedback from these unique clients and to ensure we are entertaining people with the perfect show just for them, pitched at their level.

We send them this in the Touring Pack & Cheat Sheet (which you can download the full doc from <https://www.alphashows.com.au/downloads>) and read more about the type of requests a school can make here: <https://www.alphashows.com.au/conservative-performance-request/>

IMPORTANT: HUMOUR & TABOOS – Is the culture at your school extra conservative?

We sometimes integrate jokes and humour that are a little taboo to make the children feel at ease and have jokes they understand and find funny – align with them at their own level, essentially. This maximises engagement and rapport, and ensures we have their attention for later in the show when we present the main message in terms of values education. Please discuss with us before the show if we might offend with this content so we can adapt to your culture. Occasionally actors must go off-script for adlibs as all audiences are unique, so by knowing beforehand if you're a conservative school, we can ensure adlibs are also kept within suitable boundaries. Pre-scripted humour includes very tame innuendo (eg. "you're hot"), teacher inclusion/interaction (children love this), teasing/ highlighting the villainy of the bad guy (what every kid dreams they had the courage to do, so they find it funny), the villain exhibiting bullying type behavior and name calling of 'good' characters (eg. 'stupid' or 'idiot'), and some naughty kid level jokes similar to Andy Griffith's "Bad Book" (fart/vomit/burp, that kinda thing) that has been seen as a great way to get kids to read – *we use similar strategies*.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU TELL US BEFORE THE SHOW as we will not appreciate negative feedback if you don't tell us about your culture! Also – no need to worry too much – everything in the standard / scripted version of the show is G-Rated, it's perfectly appropriate and fine for all schools in Australia, and is aligned with all facets of our diverse Australian culture and this generation of children, with inclusivity and diversity and the embracement of all cultures part of the shows already. For instance, we never swear in the shows or encourage negative stereotypes or anything like that, and we aim to represent every facet of Australian culture. Everything in the show is done with specific thought and intention for a specific and beneficial outcome, so you can trust us and know that nothing in the show will offend within that context of Australian culture. However – please just tell us if you are an exception/conservative school and we will mark you as such on our database and alter the show accordingly every year. If you have previously made this request, you are already marked as a 'conservative' performance on our database, along with the notes you filled in previously, so you do not have to fill out the form every year for every show, unless something has changed or you just want to make sure we have all current information about your culture and school community. Thank you!

So you can see that we take it very seriously and want to make the show right for every audience. There's a school up in Toowoomba that we performed for the older girls (it's a girls only school). They giggle at such innocent stuff, that there is just no need to do anything taboo or slightly risqué! They are already engaged just from very minor things. There's some schools that will get excited just if the principal male says to the female "you're very beautiful"! At an Islamic school we had to cut all the kisses and be very careful with any queer jokes or innuendo! Sometimes less is just enough for that audience, due to their upbringing, unique cultural taboos and school community. We always want to make it just right for each audience, so no judgement, ever. Sometimes less is more, and you can still get the laugh (and not offend) and that's enough for that audience.

So your job is to know in advance any lines you have that might be considered not appropriate for conservative type schools. The thing is, the scripts have always been written SPECIFICALLY to jolt, get attention, cause a reaction, trigger emotionally etc all of people's issues, all of people's hang ups, all of people's false beliefs or even their bigotry, and all of people's shame based feelings, which can often lead to different emotional reactions including anger or outrage. Our opinion on this is as long as people have an emotional reaction to the show, that's a good thing. However, we don't want to go overboard, there's always a balance of how much we do this and how much we also respect the culture of the school. And we don't want bad feedback and we definitely don't want them to decide to not have us back because we were 'inappropriate'. We can still achieve the outcomes at all schools by being adaptable and flexible with what we present in the shows.

Truthfully, all content in the script has been tested and refined to be fine for 99% of schools. But each audience is different so STAY PRESENT and feel your audience. Connect and be sensitive to adult's reactions to things. Some teachers get angry when you even reference them, some teachers want to get up on stage and dance with you, and then grab your butt and call you sexy! (however inappropriate this might be). It can be widely different. You have to be able to accurately feel where an audience is at (especially the grown ups). Try not to let 'fear' be your guide on this, try to let it be your positive intention to make the show appealing to every audience – again just like any talented improv or stand-up comic. The purpose is just to give an audience the most appropriate and perfect show for them, not about you being asked to suppress yourself or certain representations or make it all about you. You are there to provide a product, and part of your job responsibilities is to be adaptable for every client to make a customized show just for them. So much of this actor's manual has been about customizing the show and being adaptable on stage and this area is no different.

So, to prepare in advance for this job responsibility, go through your script, work out and mark anything that is obviously taboo or inappropriate from a conservative point of view. Every conservative show will be different. One school may just not want any sexual references or engaging with teachers about their 'beauty' or something like that. Some may just not want toilet humour. That's fine. Just be aware of it.

The most important thing is that you stay aware because there may be conservative teachers in the audience that aren't in charge of the booking, and the booking teacher might be actually quite liberal and said to not bother with being conservative.

Generally it's also not about just CUTTING stuff. Try to replace it with something else funny, without using the taboo words. The script contains these jokes just because most people are fine with it, and kids find it (the most) hilarious. It's the type of humour they all get, they all make these jokes in the playground (even at most conservative schools!) and it's a great easy way to get rapport with them if we show we're not afraid to make the same jokes as them. But there's also a wide spectrum of responses, and sometimes going 'too far', in their view, actually turns them off and causes the opposite reaction. A joke that's worked everywhere else is just too taboo and you'll just gross them out. They'll find something more tame much funnier! So don't you want to be as funny as you can? That's really what this is about. Making the show the best it can be for that moment, for that specific audience.

Your job is to be prepared in advance so when your Tour Supervisor says to you this is a conservative show, you can just go 'yep, got it'.

Note that Alpha is not and has never 'censored' the show. This is not about censorship. We have always had progressive characters and triggering humour in the shows, since the start. And the history of the company has traditionally erred more on the side of 'we aren't changing anything' just because a certain school might be super conservative. But it's not about that, it's more about aligning with your audience, just like everything else in this manual alludes to. A stand-up comedian alters their act for each audience as they feel it out. We're talking about the same skills here, to play to your crowd. Be aware of what's working and what's not. Yes, there's the element of 'we don't want to get bad feedback

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

or lose bookings' but it's really about providing customized entertainment, no different than if you ordered a pizza and asked for no olives. Someone else might be a huge olive fan, by customizing the pizza to this specific customer to not include olives is not offensive to those that love olives. And it's not censoring olives.

IDENTITY

So this leads us to how this relates to your own identity as a human being. Is Alpha Shows asking you to alter or censor or hide your identity in any way when it receives information from customers about what they would prefer for their paid product that they are ordering from us? No. It never has. Alpha has had all types of performers work for us and never, ever, asked anyone to not be All Of Who They Are. This is a fundamental principal and philosophy of the company, a foundational and founding truth for why the company exists, to encourage a more loving environment and how to treat each other, to have not just tolerance but love and acceptance and non-conditions on how others are when they are being All Of Who They Really Are. You should own your identity at all times when working for Alpha, be truthful about You You Really Are always. However, on stage, you are playing characters and this is not the job of being an actor, to insert your own agenda, identity or intentions into Alpha's shows (you can write your own shows and perform them if that's what you want to do). Your job is to implement and represent the shows and characters as created by Alpha's founders and creators. However, at no time has Alpha ever asked any performer ever, when off-stage and out of character, to change anything about Who You Are, and we answer all queries and questions asked of us (provided you are comfortable to answer) truthfully, whether that's about relationship status, sexuality, gender identity, age or any other fundamental truths about you that you are ok to share with those asking you those questions. We have always had curiosity from our audiences about everything about the performers, who is going out with who, if you really kissed, if someone is gay, why were you a boy playing a girl, how does it feel to be on stage...you answer all of it honestly. Dealing with altering your performance in any way, as is the overarching theme of this entire manual, is never about asking you to be someone in real-life that's different to your true identity or about asking you to hide it. It's only about show content, just like a movie might get a rating or have an edited version for television or an aeroplane version to ensure it's suitable for the potential audience.

BE AWARE IN THE MOMENT EVEN IN NON-CONSERVATIVE MARKED SCHOOLS

Your only other job is to take notice and if you think something didn't go down too well, to tell your Tour Supervisor off stage and you might have to go 'conservative' mid-show. So if this happens, or you're just getting a 'vibe', the Tour Supervisor or people with the taboo lines may change them on the spot! So if you're in a scene with someone you need to LISTEN and be ready to change stuff! Again, this is all about being aware and being smart, just like any great performer, to maximise the engagement and enjoyment of your audience – the audience that is in front of you right now. It's not about you judging their beliefs or their attitudes, or the fact they can't handle the same jokes and content as other audiences. Alpha Shows is inclusive and accepting and non-judging, so that goes for every belief. You cannot be a free speech supporter but then only accept the speech of those you agree with, and then try to disconnect from those you don't agree with. We are right where we need to be every time, every show, every audience, and can make a difference, have an impact, on every audience with our messages. But we'll have a greater impact if we don't 'piss them off' with content that they believe is inappropriate for children or their culture (or both!). So be very aware on stage, as your fellow performer might notice something and change it in the moment! Be careful to never disengage and just 'phone in' or 'run through the motions' of each performance. You can't do that at Alpha Shows. Every show is going to be different – in multiple ways – by design.

We had an actor not listen one time and as the Villain changed their line to a conservative one, the Sidekick responded with the original, non-conservative line! Not only did he end up saying something non-conservative when the Tour Supervisor (as the villain) was picking up a vibe from the teachers, he also said something that made no sense!! This is a terrible outcome, it would make the line stand out even more! And it's very unprofessional to not be listening to your fellow actor on stage!

IMPORTANT: CONFLICT

Conflict is part of life, and it's part of good storytelling! Whether it's an internal or external opponent, overcoming hardships in life, something Alpha teaches students how to deal with effectively, is going to involve CONFLICT. All clashing of truth & error, love & fear, will result in conflict. It's not the absence of conflict that is important, but how we handle it. So because of this, we portray different types of conflict on stage - theatre being a safe place to explore conflict and how we respond to it. We can't avoid it in life, so we shouldn't avoid it on stage. When it comes to external opponents (eg. the villain) the hero of the story will often face the choice to use violence or a weapon of some sort. We usually have some sort of sword fight, along with the lesson that must be learned. We also sometimes change the meaning of the weapon to be something empowering or important in our real life. Sometimes it's appropriate to the time period or the original fairytale/book/myth, so we want to honour the story appropriately as well as tell an engaging story that's true to the spirit of the original.

Depending on your culture, some audiences will be VERY entertained/engaged and perhaps even over-excited by these scenes in our show. This is ok - this is why these scenes are in the show, to create a memorable experience, the excitement of a 'real sword fight using real swords', just like any good form of entertainment. However, it's important to note that **we do NOT encourage or endorse any sort of audience interaction that condones violence, including the common school yard chant of 'FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT' or any other sort of yelling or screaming encouraging the use of violence.** We highly encourage you to discuss this tendency with your students BEFORE the show and, especially if you agree with us that encouraging violence is inappropriate, show them that these sorts of chants are not to be done during the show. We try as hard as we can to channel the desire to chant into something more positive (such as chanting the name of the hero) but we sometimes do not succeed.

If you find that your audience is getting too rowdy or chanting/encouraging or revelling in the violence, it's important to try to either deal with this before and/or after the show - or you may even need to intervene during the show. *Alpha's shows DO NOT endorse violence*, we merely present real-life type scenarios on stage (in a fantasy setting) and then try to show the correct/loving way of dealing with conflict. For instance, we usually have the hero 'back down' or choose not to fight/finish off the villain etc, or learn a lesson through the conflict that is relevant to the story and the character development/message. **AS WITH TABOO HUMOUR, WE WILL NOT APPRECIATE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK THAT ALPHA 'ENCOURAGES FIGHTING/VIOLENCE' or that we ENCOURAGED CHANTING 'FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT'. WE DO NOT. IF YOU REQUIRE CERTAIN BEHAVIOURS FROM YOUR STUDENTS, PLEASE HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND THOSE EXPECTATIONS BEFORE THE SHOW AND HAVE A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE IMPORTANT ROLE CONFLICT PLAYS IN STORYTELLING, AND THAT IT IS NOT REAL!** Also help them understand prior to the show that what we present on stage is DEFINITELY not an invitation to mimic or re-enact the conflict out in the playground or to glorify violence or conflict. If you watch the whole show, especially the 'closed eye'/'emotional process' (EP) message portion, you will see how we transform negativity, violence and conflict, through storytelling and personal development techniques, into a powerful lesson that can be used in real-life conflicts. You should use these teachings that we present in post-show discussion so they learn positive conflict resolution techniques. Let us know before the show so we specifically address these issues in our Question Time.

If your culture is especially sensitive to conflict (eg. there has been a real-life violent incident in your school/community) or you are concerned that your students will not have the capacity to analyse and evaluate the conflict resolution steps and methods we present on stage and will instead just get carried away and over-excited by what they just see as 'violence' and nothing more, discuss with us before hand and we will look at how we can minimise physical conflict on stage and mitigate this issue for you. Note that many of the stage combat on stage is integral to the plot, so we usually cannot cut it out as changing stage combat on a per show basis is actually very dangerous, but we can minimise the response to it and being aware is certainly helpful. As above, we want to make the show JUST RIGHT for your school and group of children! Thank you for your support of great storytelling and the theatre experience!

As for the above box about 'conflict', we generally do not change stage combat choreography as that would be unsafe, however, change how you perform it. Rather than with aggressive tonality and verbalisations, instead swap out with more 'please stop, please don't hurt her/him' etc. So it's very clear we're not reveling in the conflict but pleading for it to stop, it's something you don't want, it's something being forced upon you and it's really really undesirable and unloving.

PRONOUNS / GENDER ISSUES

Be very wary of pronouns from stage. We generally err on the side of not using any specific gender pronouns. 'Everyone' instead of 'boys and girls'. They/them is much safer when referencing an individual, or use a descriptive word about something they are wearing ("Yes you with the wristband on"). In Alpha's shows, there is a lot of selecting children from the audience to answer certain things or tell us their truth/choice/wish etc so it's very important to not mis-gender a child as that could be catastrophic for their future wellbeing.

Some schools have specific collective nouns that you can use if you find them out. Your Tour Supervisor may know or ask beforehand. Examples are like 'team' etc.

Just generally be accepting of all and not pigeon-holing anyone at any time.

AD LIBBING / CHANGING THINGS UP

Part of performing in our shows means that you, depending on your character, will most likely add to the script in some way. We do want you to have fun performing and... adlibs are best if they focused on the audience's enjoyment, not just our own so please keep adlibs that are for yours or other cast members entertainment only to a minimum or not at all. Some further tips:

- It is best to only add to the script, rather than changing/dropping lines that are written, but as I said above, this is not a hard and fast rule. Some things don't work the same for certain actors, so find a way to make things work in your performance style for some reason – some jokes only work when performed by a particular performer, and if something is just not working for you, try to find something else that achieves the same outcome and is potentially funnier. Everyone is unique. The focus should be understanding the reason for a line and ensuring whatever you say, if you do consciously choose to change the wording, communicates the same thing. Practice this in rehearsals, as quite often there are reasons for why it's written as it is and your director will tell you. If you just simply haven't learnt your script accurately and your choices to change things aren't conscious, this isn't good...so...don't do that.
- Most lines in the script though, have had a lot of thought gone into them and it is disrespectful of you to change things randomly for your own amusement / at your own discretion, just because you think you know better. So whether it's on purpose or just because you haven't learnt the script accurately, you will be challenged during rehearsals to 'get it right'. However, again, we want to utilise your skills and talents and we always want to make things better, and you're part of that! Just do it in a fun and experimental non-ego way and you'll be able to keep the show evolving and growing to maximise the engagement – especially when it comes to up to date pop culture references or any other comedy that would be enhanced by you being 'on it'. You are not being asked to perform the same show for the entire tour – we do want you to try things and change things up, we just don't want it to come from laziness (not learning lines properly) or ego. Once you're aligned with the outcomes you'll naturally be changing things in a really great way.
- If in doubt, just come discuss a line or characterisation if you want to change or drop it, ideally at rehearsals or at least early on in the tour. Or feel free to even ask as you're learning your script before rehearsals. But once you've been on tour a bit and understand the show, we trust you to alter things for different audiences and try things out, so you can also be free to do that as long as it remains with the purpose of making the audience more engaged or to get them laughing etc.
- Do not ever perform anything you feel is inappropriate because of your cultural background compared to the accent or character we usually have done in the past or what a script or character description states. If you're of a certain background and don't have any connection to a specific culture but it's obvious a character has been played in the past by someone with that cultural background, it might be best to find your own version / accent that is appropriate. But it goes both ways. Find ways to make the character you're playing appropriate for your culture. All performing has elements of 'appropriation' in it because we're playing characters that have differing backgrounds to ourselves, that's the nature of the job. We want to honour our diverse culture and there's enormous flexibility in all Alpha's shows. We don't have to stick to expectations like Disney does, not nearly as much. So having to be a certain skin or hair color for a character is no longer a thing. If you have a desire or idea to play a specific character, just suggest it! We want to confuse / challenge the audience and break / smash any negative or expected stereotypes. Different ethnicities for characters, contrasting characterizations from expectations... We have to stay true to the story and the intent behind the message. So for instance, if a character's journey is more about dealing with a male character making them feel a certain way about themselves that's not empowering, we will need to deal with masculine emotional injuries. Elsa in Snow Queen is all about finding her feminine power and not suppressing her gifts and talents, and this requires the advice and help of a feminine energy and should be played from that place (regardless of the gender of the actor). That said, we welcome diverse actors who can come in and show us what they can do especially playing roles that do not traditionally conform to their gender assigned at birth.
- Be careful of careless paraphrasing– For instance, Fairy Godmother used to have a line that is to the audience when she's meeting Cinderella for the first time but she's in disguise: "Shh everyone, it's me, don't tell Cinderella etc etc"... This actress paraphrased to: "Shhh it's me, everyone!". It ended up sounding like she was saying "Shits Me"! And the school was not happy. Another example is saying 'Funky' in an adlib – this can easily sound like a swear word, so don't use it.

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

- Ideally you would run any adlibs/changes you have in mind by your Tour Supervisor / Director first, but this is only for major things. Some things just come to you in the moment and we want you to have the freedom to say them. Just be aware of the culture and appropriateness of what you're about to say, and don't get too tangled up in extra weird things that cause a loss of focus or a derailment of the show/pace. Don't say things on stage just to try to throw off your fellow performers. As above, adlibs should be for the benefit of the audience.
- Please be understanding if you are asked to drop a certain adlib or line that you have changed; your Tour Supervisor or Director may know something about the show and the outcome of the scene that you do not. However, feel free to ask for clarity / reasons why, or even follow up with Kat or Ben directly who has written (and re-written multiple times) all the shows.
- Be very careful with your adlibs with thought to the previous section about Conservative Audiences and the requests they might make, or the vibe you might pick up on. If you've found an adlib that's just working great for most audiences, be aware that you may not want to say it for EVERY audience. Maybe it's too sophisticated for a younger audience, maybe it's a bit too cheeky for a super-conservative culture. So be super aware of all your adlibs from this point of view as well.
- Generally we won't give much acknowledgement to all the great stuff you may have added to the script in rehearsals and on tour. We hired you with that expectation in mind, that your talent would add to the overall texture and dynamic of the character/s
- Make an effort to understand the philosophies of the company by reading the Teacher Notes for the show you're in as well as other materials like the Senior Cast Member Manual (and ask questions). That way you will have a better understanding of what is appropriate and what isn't from the start. You can download these from:
 - a. <https://www.alphashows.com.au/downloads>
 - b. <https://www.alphashows.com.au/downloads/actors/>
- We're not putting on some dinky di lame kids show. This is an important event, every show, every day, and everything we say on stage is remembered and incredibly significant to tens of thousands of audience members; **we have been in trouble before for random adlibs that got misinterpreted**. Like, losing a booking and then telling others, having to have huge discussions with the entire school staff etc. That's not good. Just from a single ill-advised adlib!
- The shows are usually also to create subconscious learnings for the adults in the audience so don't assume it 'doesn't matter' because it's a show marketed at children. The tiniest things you say are remembered, we know because we have literally received thousands of letters/messages and other interactions from children with the most amazing insights, learnings and revolutionary thought and reflection after experiencing an Alpha Show. We also have children who have had their lives trajectory changed because of Alpha's annual visits at their school – including those who have grown up and auditioned for us and come to work for us!

VALUES EDUCATION / SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

All of Alpha's shows have a specific theme, and then a bunch of sub-themes scattered throughout subtly. The main theme of the show usually is addressed and directly communicated to the audience through an 'Emotional Process' ('EP') or 'Closed Eye' (see below, these terms are used interchangeably). However, even if you're not the person performing the 'EP' you will undoubtedly have a part to play in the overall communication of the themes and/or sub-themes.

What is most important for you to understand is that our clients GREATLY appreciate the level of impact and our unique ability to have an audience take ownership of advanced ideas about life and the soul etc. It is what has secured us additional business as a company beyond the limited market of schools and venues who are content for us to just 'put on a show' that is aimed at simple entertainment. And it has gained us additional respect and attention by parents committed to taking their children to valuable learning events during the holidays at theatres too, that aren't activities that suck the energy out of their children or provide no valuable educational content or worse, teach them negative role models and behaviours.

Also remember – we were doing SEL decades before it was 'cool'. There is now deep and established teachings that big organizations are pushing to integrate into school curriculums. We have been doing this the longest out of any company, true and deep and profound social and emotional learning.

Here's some additional points for you to know:

- All values education in Alpha's shows are based on ideas and concepts that originated from the very best in education, personal development or spiritually-based techniques or philosophies.
- We are not making it up based on our own personal beliefs, rather it's stuff learned over decades of difficult personal emotional work by the creators of the company.
- It differs greatly to any other "theatre-in-education" which tries to tackle 'bullying' or other such ideas. These shows all offer value and have their place in the market. Their strategy is usually just to present the ideas in a unique and fun way and provide a platform for discussion in the classroom. For example, using animals as a metaphor for various ways of 'dealing with a bully'. This is of course valuable, however our outcome in our shows is not to look at 'behaviour management' or simple strategies of what to 'do' when someone treats you badly. Instead, we focus on how to create a new level of consciousness, and a foundation of emotions, that not only helps a child become more resilient emotionally, but would additionally move a child to a place of understanding and compassion, and focus on contribution; and perhaps even solve the underlying emotional challenge the bully (for just one example of negative behaviour we might notice transforming from taking ownership of the ideas in an Alpha show) themselves may be dealing with. All behaviour results from emotion; it is difficult to 'stop' a behaviour just by dealing with the surface behaviour. Instead if you can change the emotions, or even better, change whatever belief is determining the behaviour, or vehicle for meeting a need is being used or what's driving the 'choice', then you change their life permanently. It has moved beyond simple 'behaviour management'. Behaviour is always linked to emotion, and we have a bunch of techniques we use to both release negative emotions and to foster and condition positive emotions that become the dominant and habitual way a person lives. The degree to which we are successful at this pretty much relies on the performers implementing the script and the strategies in this manual in an effective manner that engages and moves the audience to the maximum possible.
- We are also not trying to 'force' children to believe certain things; only to offer them ideas that are based on WHAT WORKS to create more joy, passion and happiness in life. You can think what you like, but it is a fact that the ideas we present are proven to WORK in all contexts and for all people. All the teachings in our shows have been TESTED and proven. I personally have done every technique and process taught in every show and tested personally that it has a positive impact on my life.
- These ideas are also not rooted in stuff that only works 'on kids'. This is the most cutting-edge personal development technology modelled from the world's leaders in this field; as a result, the ideas WORK in real-life scenarios and are therefore ideas that would work for YOUR life too. Alpha values actors who grow and take ownership of the messages we communicate. By focussing on your own growth and willingness to become a real-life walking talking role model, you become someone who is greatly appreciated by the

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

company. An actor's job is to feel emotions. Alpha's shows focus a LOT on emotions, so it would make sense that you as a professional and dedicated-to-your-craft actor you would want to investigate and immerse yourself in emotions. And not just a peripheral, intellectual understanding, but a broad and deep understanding of your own, your triggers, your pain, your hurts, your trauma, and how those emotions show up in your life and how it affects your successes and your experience of life and your career.

- As much as it is nice to give an audience the choice of whether to enjoy the show as a simple entertaining show or whether to use it as a chance to learn and grow as well, our clients have been reasonably unanimous with their praise for the direct ways we impact children. Therefore you may feel that the show is pretty full on in some of the ideas we portray and the way the ideas are portrayed, but everything we do is based on a great deal of experience of knowing what engages children/humans at the highest level, and the best way to impact a person's soul condition and awareness. Additionally, this is what our customers need, and in the end, what serves the greater good for the children given the outcome of providing a 'measurable progression of consciousness, awareness, connectedness and love', as per the opening page of outcomes at the start of this manual. This is what we get paid for! And what we are passionate about.
- Some people don't always agree or like everything we communicate in our shows. This is always an interesting dynamic to notice on our part, as it usually is the result of a set of beliefs or rules that are outdated or very rigid, and it only makes us realise even more that we need to keep doing what we're doing, as we're on to something good! Teachers, parents, actors and others interested in the company who seem primarily focused on contribution, love and joy all seem to appreciate what we do and how we do it.
- In order to make the ideas 'stick', we use techniques in the show to get the children in a 'peak state'. This means an emotional peak state, where they are in up-time, engaged and feeling good. Only in this state can you effectively learn and remember things. So with this in mind, you want to ensure your performance follows this strategy, that in order to get them to learn and remember the stuff we're offering, they need to be engaged emotionally to begin with. For the most part, engaged emotionally (for children) is usually done by humour or excitement, and very occasionally by 'feeling' empathetically for the character (eg. When Cinderella's ball dress is ripped by her stepsisters, it's actually a moment when the children will feel genuinely sad for her, as it's a pretty 'real' and 'intense' moment). You may feel that the audience is encouraged to be too over-the-top, however, it really is done for a very important reason and it is definitely the way it works best. At the pinnacle moment at the end of each EP/Closed Eye, we always ALWAYS celebrate. This means an audience on their feet, jumping OFF the ground, hands in the air, acting the same as if their favorite sports team just kicked a goal, or their favorite pop star is singing their favorite song in front of them. We want screams, yells, good feelings, peak states. If you're in charge of this segment of the show, you have the most important job. It's your job to feel it with them, go with it, relish in it, make it last the longest it can (even when you're exhausting from performing and touring, this segment should GIVE you energy not take it) and use it to lock in lifetime memories and conditioned positive responses of how to handle challenging situations and how to build emotional resilience. This is the moment. Do not back down, do not perceive it cynically. All the work has been building to this moment, so get the entire audience celebrating like a rock concert, like they're just won the award for champion of the universe!
- All shows follow the same pattern emotionally. We set up the problem, we point out the unhealed emotions that have caused that problem, we get the audience to help the main character feel those emotions to get them out, and then we reinforce better actions/choices/beliefs/emotions etc with some technique, and then celebrate that success as above. Get on board with this outcome and do whatever you can do reinforce this pattern and make it more powerful. Be wary of being too 'obvious'. We don't want the audience to be feeling 'yeah yeah we get it, enough about emotions'. Keep it focused on the CHARACTER'S JOURNEY, not projecting at the audience that they need to change. Use the audience as 'experts' of change psychology, and elicit their help to assist the main character. Never go into 'teaching' mode towards the audience. They'll come along with you and the repeating of certain phrases and incantations (under the guise of helping the main character) is what will lock in new learnings, and then the celebration at the end is what conditions the positive state for good.

PERFORMING AN ‘EP’ / CLOSED EYE

Performing an EP in an Alpha Show is a privilege and a responsibility only given to select Alpha actors. It can be a profound, unique and quite moving experience both for actors and the audience. It is what will make this job a special experience, whether or not you are part of it onstage or not.

All of the EP processes are generally created, decided and guided in intention and message by Ben. They are often based on spiritual concepts, emotions that are necessary for children and adults to lead effective lives and the process of anchoring them in, and powerful processes that allow an audience to decide what they want out of the show and out of life. It is important to allow an audience to ‘choose’ if they just want to experience 70 minutes of entertainment or are willing to go that step further to get more than just entertainment out of our shows. The ideas portrayed are not ‘made up’ or based on personal belief. They are modelled from excellence, of what ‘works’, and are offered simply as a guide for children and teachers and adults to use as a way to bring more joy, happiness, truth and love to the world. You may find a certain message or value in conflict with one of your personal beliefs, but just remember that these processes aren’t based on our beliefs, but simply universal truths that have been proven to create the result of a better life. Remember, if you’re performing an EP, this is YOUR process, and you own it. However, Ben still takes final responsibility for the greater outcome and part of your role is to work within these outcomes. Please be ready to work closely with Ben if you perform an EP, as he will no doubt have specific language or portions of the process that are essential that you cover, and will also be doing his normal thing of looking to ‘make it better’ whenever possible. EPs are the most impactful part of the shows so it will get the most attention from Ben. Other than that, this is all about the children and how you can find the best way to reach them.

As always, we are always growing and are determined to make things better. This is an art form and a combination of many genres of ‘stage-work’, and we are open to ways of making it all even better!

PERFORMING AN EFFECTIVE “EP” FOR CHILDREN

An Emotional Process, for the purposes of this, is defined as any process whereby the audience are asked to participate with the actors on stage, in order to help the protagonist come to a realisation about themselves. They have become an integral part of Alpha Shows, with many amazing experiences coming from actors, both onstage and off, and most importantly, audience members! They are Alpha Shows’ major point of difference from the massive amount of TIE and children’s theatre that exists these days, and is something that, if handled correctly, make an already hugely dramatic and moving experience into something that will stick with a young audience member for many years to come, and hopefully, for the rest of their life. This is by no means a bible, just a guide, as everybody will find their own way to do this that works for them.

There are three basic areas to any EP. I call them **the setup, the game, and the victory** (notice I say victory as there is no way you can lose! I’ll get to that later). These three areas work together, play off each other and are all vital in equal parts to the success of your EP.

Before we get to them, I should talk about the EP as a whole. An EP is a process that is usually only done with adults, often using techniques derived from Neuro Linguistic programming, or NLP. This technique uses words and imagery to conjure images, thoughts, feelings or memories in a person’s mind, and then anchors in or alters a person’s neural and emotional pathways to create a new, positive association, or collapse a negative association. NLP is a very effective therapeutic tool, and combined with the high energy, high stakes environment of an Alpha Show, it has an even higher chance of being effective. The goal of an EP is to create a positive physiological response in an audience member, in essence, showing them how good it feels to feel good, and showing them a way to feel like that all the time. This is done through NLP* and techniques adapted from many many other philosophies and teaching styles. If I was to say to you “remember when you were really happy” how would feel? Happy for a second maybe... Try this “Think of a time when you were the happiest you have ever been, feel the way you felt when you are this happy, see all the things you see when you are this happy, hear the things you hear when you are this happy. Feel all of those feelings right now. As you fully feel and remember this feeling right now, say yes and squeeze your fist” etc... how do you feel? Pretty happy, and probably for a longer than you did the first time. The difference is in the language that is used. A few simple words can have a profound effect on the way something is perceived and the way it is received.

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

All you are doing with NLP and indeed with an EP, is eliminating the variables so that all that is coming across is your intention. Eliminating all the variables does not mean cutting half your dialogue, it means making what you are saying crystal clear. Crystal clear words have the most impact and will be the ones that last the longest. In the end, the audience will remember how you made them feel, not what you say, but your words can be used to elicit the feelings you want to help facilitate in the audience. You don't need to know too much about NLP, however the understanding that everything you say needs to be headed in the direction toward your goal of getting your message across is paramount to your success. The way you perform an EP is different to the rest of the show and your character. You need to step outside of the plot for a moment, and be very connected to the audience, to the outcome, and to use verbal and visual cues to get the audience doing what you want them to do. This will require very specific ways of speaking and moving, specific tonalities etc.

Again, when it comes to the purpose of Alpha's shows – these moments, the closed eyes, they are the entire purpose of why the show exists and why we bother to do all this work: writing, producing, rehearsing and touring it.

So with that intention in place, we want to ensure that because we know that ALL the work has been leading to this moment in the show, it's important to not back down even if you're faced with a challenging audience. I'm encouraging you to take it further, rather than just rush through it. If an audience is feeling challenged or not wanting to do it, the answer is not to pull back and give less. When you have a difficult audience, it's not time to rush or skip over or let them not participate... but you amp it up further. Find ways to serve this audience, in whatever they need. It might require going off script. It might require you take a moment to pause and get real with them. Don't rush over it, don't get nervous. You know what needs to happen in your heart, and you can take it there and take it even further. This is your process, again, that's sacred, and you are giving them a gift. It's not boring or stupid – this is potentially the most profound moment of their lives, as long as you believe it to be.

Not in a teacher or disciplinary way, but in a loving way in how you provide options, you address it with a flexible approach. Now, there's still free will involved so I would never push things to the point of forcing anyone, and even when you get negative reactions you allow that emotion too because they will learn from that too! All I'm saying is, the answer is not to pull back and give less or worse, cut the script back in an EP to appease uncooperative audiences in advance or anticipation of problems.

For one example, in Beauty and the Beast Luminaire performs the 'Dickens Process' which is taken from another process from years and years ago. It has a very specific format that maximizes it's impact. It gets its name, as I'm sure you can guess, from Charles Dickens Christmas Carol – with the 3 ghosts who come and motivate Scrooge to change. They show him the past, present and future, and that's how it goes in the show too! It's a 3 part process of past, present and future and helping the Beast (and the audience) understand the pain associated with refusing to budge/change in his beliefs, in his actions/choices, and in his feelings about himself.

It requires flexibility and allowing of whatever the audience needs to do to associate to the pain of not changing. For some, it might be screaming the pain out still, but some, it might just be quiet and thoughtful reflection, as they consider something they've never thought about before. It's also about awareness that it IS possible to change, and even the Beast, who is almost too far gone and a lost cause at some points in this show, can change and grow in love.

The main idea of the Dickens process is about LEVERAGE. People only change when they have emotional leverage. And the dickens process is designed to provide an opportunity to experience your own leverage points to change (your beliefs) that you've been avoiding. Beliefs have 'references', like legs on a table. References are like the stories we tell ourselves. "I know I'm not worthy to be loved because I've been told it all my life from my parent" etc (an unloving or abusive parent in this case). Or "I know I don't deserve to be treated with respect in life, because whenever I ask for it I get abused or disrespected". "I know I don't deserve to achieve my dreams because whenever I try, my family humiliates me or teases me for trying" (in this case, they might be projecting their own fears and limitations on the child, perhaps saying "we can't afford to send you to dance classes" or "give up on wanting to be an actor, there's no money in it, you need to have a backup!" – that would be the stereotype. Or another one might be "I feel that I only deserve money / love / acceptance if I work really hard and earn it, the moment I stop those behaviors I am worth nothing" etc etc etc.

Things like that. All the shows have a different slant or focus that follows a similar formula, in Sleeping Beauty it's about choices we make and how to make them more loving and not fear-based, in Hercules, it's about forgiveness and learning how to be a true hero and what emotions and ego might get in the way, for King Arthur, equality, for Aladdin it's about wishes and goals you are going after. But regardless, they all follow a similar formula and once you've done one you can do any of them.

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

Mostly negative emotions or limiting beliefs, or choices we think we have to make based on fear – they are all just LIES that we have adopted, but they are very hard to shake. People will fight to hold on to them. And at this point, you can't just cry about how people aren't respectful or how you don't get what you want in life....it goes deeper as these patterns are ingrained in our neural pathways and they literally just create our reality and it keeps SHOWING UP in our reality to reinforce the reference (legs) – it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But now we've also become stubborn ourselves, and some people will FIGHT to HOLD ON to their (limiting) beliefs, because they think their beliefs give them power. For instance, they may believe that they have to work really hard in order to deserve getting love, from a parent or partner etc. This belief makes them work hard, and probably achieve a lot in life! So there's power in that belief. And there's nothing wrong with working hard, and in fact, that's a good thing, but the belief is still a limiting one. Because the truth is, we all deserve unconditional love without having to do anything specific to 'earn it'. So if you try to tell someone straight up that they probably would be more happy in life if they didn't have this limiting belief, then they may fight you for it!

So in Beauty and the Beast, the Dickens process is designed to get around this. So with this process, instead of arguing with them, we just take them on a journey to their past, to their present, and to their future, and have them associate with the pain that's come about because they believe these limiting things – their own imagination does the work, rather than you arguing or fighting with them. Once these references start to be shaken a bit, now you have an opportunity to help them install something better. That allows for more freedom (honoring free will), and more of an easier path to experience joy, and to achieve the things they want in life, and to have the types of friendships and relationships they want. It's not based on conditions or obligations, now it's just based on love and acceptance and freedom and joy.

The leverage process/dickens process is designed to remove those references (legs) to a limiting belief (table) so that the belief (table) falls down and has no' legs to stand on' basically. You can't just tell someone "come on, just believe in yourself!". It's impossible to just change all those deep seated beliefs just by someone saying "why you so down on yourself, just believe in yourself, come on". In fact, it's been my experience that there's NOTHING more frustrating than someone saying that to you when you're struggling to feel worthy or deserving of love. It doesn't help.

That's why we do this. To try to loosen it all up and do something more than just saying to someone "believe in yourself". Yeah but HOW? This is how. We are showing them HOW. Which is just something that's not normally done. That's why it's unique, why it's powerful. If we can face the pain of these references, and see them for what they are, they will start to have less power and there will be more motivation to change and be willing to start believing something else.

There will be a great portion of the audience who doesn't participate in EPs, doesn't get it, doesn't want to do it, and just wants us to get back to the funny people doing funny things. That doesn't mean we scale it back. My way of handling that would be to dig in FURTHER. Push, prompt, jolt, encourage. Take it as far as you can. Challenge. This is the perfect opportunity to really get in deep with an audience, especially one who is resisting. You can go into 'maybe your belief is that feeling things fully is only for babies and that you're 'tougher' than that'. And you go in further with examining the consequences for believing something like that. The people who you won't connect with. The friendships that won't be based on anything real. The relationships that will never be deep, or maybe the relationships that you will lose because you stayed rigid and wouldn't open up emotionally.

No judgement, that is important too. Never shame or judge someone for the beliefs or causal emotions they hold – the beliefs that have been protecting them. We just want to explore the consequences with love and honesty. You address the experiences they've lost in the past, how you are missing out today in the present, and how you will definitely be missing out in the future. This is 80% of the process, as most people lack the leverage to change. Once that's established, change is almost automatic. Or at least they're open to it. Same with any of the EPs in all the shows, once the underlying painful emotion is released (usually through experiencing it fully) the love and positivity flows naturally. All emotion must flow – e-motion means energy in motion, so when it gets shut down, it gets stuck inside us and can manifest all sorts of issues both internally and externally in our lives.

Note that I'm not overstating this or deluding myself that I'm expecting everyone who experiences the show to have a life changing experience. I don't. But you never know, there might be a kid or adult here or there that just has a real pure honest moment with themselves, that kid who just feels down about themselves, and this process just jolts them to decide to believe something better about themselves, to feel better, and move on from the suffering. And for some audiences, there might be a great deal of change that happens for the better.

That's the magic, that's why we do it :)

So play around with it. With especially older children it can sometimes just be about having a frank discussion with them about these issues rather than forcing them to express an emotion of pain, as it won't really connect (expressing sounds in all our shows EPs is really just demonstrative with the purpose of helping primarily the very young children participate and have a reference point for what we are saying, that expressing emotions loudly and fully is ok).

If you have a challenging audience, you can watch them and just notice that most of them aren't doing it (that's ok) and then USE that to spur on the next adaptation for how to approach that particular closed eye for that audience. Remember also, this isn't always about focussing on resistive kids who refuse to do it (and no matter what you do, they'll always refuse) or spending a lot of your energy trying to encourage them or get them to participate in exactly how it was designed to work. Perhaps shift your focus to a single child who you can feel will be impacted by this. Sometimes it's about adults or others who need to hear this message over and over again, or perhaps give them a good reference for how to talk about it and teach it themselves or address it with their family or – who knows where it has an impact. That's why you can never hold back. You just never know. We have to remember, very few people have these types of conversations in life, or are willing to tackle difficult emotional topics.

Sometimes if we can show that 'hey, we know what we're talking about' (ie... we are experts in consciousness development), are unapologetic about it with confidence, and do not back down and are super clear with what the process is and how powerful it is, that belief in yourself and that confident attitude in itself is what really prompts the change, for the audience to think about their own emotions or limiting beliefs with some humility, with some honesty, and face those things, to realize that they aren't based on truth, that they are based on programming and trauma and we should perhaps consider that these things aren't immutable within us and can absolutely change by our own choice and effort and leverage points. So I'm just giving you that encouragement that you are the expert here, you have a right to be confident with this, as most people don't ever have a discussion like this in their entire lives. And with greater focus in society on mental health, there should be little resistance to the importance of this stuff.

***“The person with the most certainty
in every interaction will always win”.***

Not winning in terms of causing someone else to be a loser, but just saying, just be super certain, super clear that you're the expert here, and every EP you do will have a positive impact.

Thank you for all the extra work you'll inevitably have to do to master your EP, but I know it's going to be very special and touching and emotional.

This is the big payoff – life will be great, life will never be the same, so it's important to lock it in emotionally with a long and powerful celebration, the reference always being 'like a rock concert' or when your team scores a goal etc...most people love those moments in life and we want to create a similar one here. Most people don't give themselves permission to celebrate a win, even small wins (except in very narrow moments, like when your team scores a goal or your favorite artist is on stage performing live), so that's why I'm very focussed on making sure this celebration moment in every show is as big and fun and just like one of those moments, to try to expand when we're 'allowed' to express that joy to that level, to have that realization that you can create one of those moments at ANY time in your life, just because! You don't need an excuse. Play with them, encourage them, challenge them to make even more noise to celebrate, and enjoy it yourself and they'll come with you.

So here's the overall process of how to make it work:

THE SETUP

Now, the setup. This is a crucial part of your EP, as it involves getting the audience on your side, and gaining their confidence as someone they can trust and look up to, so when the time comes, you have them right where you want them. The main thing you need to be aware of is keeping the audience on your side. Your character should not lose patience, yell, lecture the audience or other characters, or tease the audience too much (teasing can work, but not too much), as you run the risk of them casting you as the villain in their mind, or as someone who is not here to help the protagonist of the story.

Marking

Something else I find extremely useful in the setup is a process known as 'marking' where you target certain people in different areas of the audience, and look at them occasionally from time to time, for no longer than a

few seconds. This process comes in handy during your EP as well, but more on that later. What this is handy for now is making sure you are watching your entire audience.

Calibration

You should be what I call ‘calibrating’ your audience to find out where pockets of resistance may pop up, where the noisy full on kids are, where the genuinely nice kids are who will give you responses you really want (as a good example to everyone else of what is going to get your approval and positive attention), and where the genuinely bratty kids are, so you know who to go to and when. They all serve their purpose – don’t panic! Calibrating is probably your most useful tool in all of your setup, as it allows you to glide through the EP knowing exactly where you will get what you want in terms of responses. You may even find consistent responses to a line of dialogue and a line in your EP, so check out where it comes from. If you get a big response from one group, the others will unfailingly follow!

The final part of the setup is to calibrate the overall audience. How old are they? Are they rowdy? Are they from a remote area? Are they all one gender? Are they particularly slow in getting what you’re on about? Are they mainly English as a second language students? Etc etc... All of these factors can be taken into account both during and more easily BEFORE the show. There is a wealth of information open to you as you walk through the playground or listen to the teachers or look at the work stuck up on the walls around the school (note – do take your time to do this, look for social & emotional learning posters and look for the words that the students already are familiar with like ‘confidence’ or whatever you find). Even something as simple as asking someone (ie. One of the other actors) who has performed at the school before what they are like can really help, whilst audiences are sometimes different from year to year, some aspects never change as it’s just part of their culture. So now you have all the information you need to deliver this effectively, let’s figure out how.

THE GAME

Important aspects of the delivery:

First of all is your physicality. We all know that this is how children get most of their cues and ideas about a person or an idea, so your body needs to be telling the story first and foremost. If you want the audience to feel happy, show them how a happy person looks! If you want them to feel sad, show them how to look sad. Simple. The ideas you are going to be putting to them are quite advanced and your physical communication is your greatest tool to getting this across. The second layer to this is your neutral communicative physicality, that is, your physicality when you are talking to them during the bulk of the process, or the “game”. There is a balance to be struck here between character and what you are communicating. I have found that conversational tone with the audience is most effective, as they listen up and feel they will miss something if they don’t! Your aim is for the audience to not realise you are teaching them something; teach them while they are not looking so to speak! The last thing in this section is eye contact. This is gold! Staring someone in the eye or a look of understanding to a child that needs it can make all the difference.

Second of all is your language. It is best to use the simplest language that you can, as you want the children to consciously comprehend what you are saying as best they possibly can. This can come down to changing seemingly meaningless words or phrases for an adult, to phrases that have a palpable meaning for a child’s mind. For example changing the phrase “feel this love absolutely” to “feel lots and lots of love”. You may have lost the impact from an adults perspective, though the children now understands fully what you want them to do. A child does not have the same concept of absolutely as an adverb, and the phrase “lots and lots” is something they understand as that is the pinnacle of acquisition for them in regard to anything. So be careful of your language, it can make the world of difference. That said, we sometimes use advanced language on purpose, and the intention here is not to have it be understood by the conscious mind of a child, but be embedded in the soul/unconscious for later retrieval/awareness/knowledge. I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve heard something and only years later realised its power and relevance. You never know when what you say today will have an impact far in the future.

Repetition is also a major key to this process. Choose some key phrases (“really, really”, “all the strength of superman”, “with your eyes closed”, “grab it and pull it to your heart”, “Make the sounds of a hero”, “I now choose to” “I believe...”), and repeat them whenever you want the audience to perform another part of the process. It may be a little tough the first time around, though when you get to the second, third and fourth time, they will know exactly what you want them to do and do it eagerly.

Owning your own emotions helps. Not projecting at an audience as described above is paramount. But also looking at how you are blocked to any of the ideas you are actually supposed to be teaching is also key. Remember, all EPs let them express, verbalise and yell out their anger, fear, grief etc. Then we do ‘something’ with

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

the space created by the release of those negative emotions. So you have to be comfortable and passionate about the importance of getting an audience to express repressed negative emotions. So taking note of your own fears of negative emotions. If you allow this fully, then the follow up anchoring and NLP processes work so much better and easier. It's almost like once that's happened (releasing emotions) the rest of the EP is easy and can just be a fun celebration.

Please also be aware of the Law of Attraction. When we ourselves have emotions we have suppressed over the years, they tend to create a magnetic attraction that matches, which can include audiences! The Law of Attraction is less about getting stuff we want (although it can be purposed for that) but more about bringing us events and experiences that help us grow. If you have a fear of anger, you might find you keep getting audiences being angry with you. If you have a fear of people thinking what you say is not important or you have a worthiness issue about whether you have anything worthwhile to contribute, that can manifest into audiences that won't listen to you or be extra dismissive. So this is a great way to look at what you need to work on emotionally as well, and once you become clearer, you'll notice your EPs going better as well. I've had EPs go so bad for me that I collapsed on the floor afterwards, and upon emotional reflection, it was exactly what I needed at the time based on what I was denying in myself at the time. Then later I've had EPs that are so powerful for both me and the audience that it was a magical experience. Huge shifts in consciousness, audiences truly processing grief and fear, and then coming out the other side as true heroes or ready to make real change with new choices etc etc.

There is not too much more to the game other than to know your stuff!! Know your script inside out and know why each part of the process is there. When you know why each part of the process is there, you know what will serve each audience the best. Be fluid. You don't have to include everything every day because, depending on the process, it may not work for that particular audience. It is your choice, nobody knows this process better than you. Clarity is power here and the clearer you are on your structure and form and script, the clearer you will come across. Also be willing to fail (try to do most of your failing in rehearsals!). This will take time to become part of you automatically. You'll feel frustrated, especially when you 'just can't remember that next bit' for the life of you. But your team is there to help you, they'll have patience, and you'll get there eventually in a way that makes it make sense for you and your process.

There is a format to the game. It usually follows these steps:

- Pre-amble. Where you setup the issue and talk about the outcome. Lots of statements with questions, to keep them engaged. Lots of 'trailing lines' where you get them to finish your sentence, as above.
- Ask them for help, helping the story or the character. Treat them as experts, those who already know this.
- Identify the emotions blocking progression. Usually there are only 3. Grief. Fear. Anger. These 3 emotions need to be felt fully, and released. These are called 'causal emotions'. They are the 'cause' of our negative 'Law of Attraction'. The ones that need releasing are all from childhood. They are emotions that get locked inside us from childhood experiences. Most people are aware of childhood trauma, but there are very few psychologists talking about trauma that comes from ordinary childhood experiences (or what we consider ordinary). Even the parent who ignores you when they're busy, who doesn't validate you, or other minor traumas, when they are repeated every day, they get stuck inside. When we're very young, we naturally cry these out. But as we get a little older, or even still very young, we get told off and in trouble for expressing these emotions. "Don't be a cry baby". Parents all have their own fears and when their children are expressing their emotions, they are triggered and desire to shut them down. There isn't a single person alive that does not have minor traumas like this, that lead to repressed childhood emotions of grief, fear and anger.
- The emotions 'stack' or 'layer'. Grief is always the healing emotion. It's the main causal emotion. But we tend to get afraid of grief, after being told that it's weak or wrong to feel. So we become fearful. FEAR stands for False Expectations Appearing Real. So we start to believe that grief is scary, so we shut down our grief in childhood. Then fear takes over. But at one point, we start to get sick of always being afraid, and we start to look at ways to get back control. So the next layer is childhood anger. This is a childhood rage, the rage driven from being shut down, from being made to feel fear. We also have genuine fears as well, from things that are genuinely scary (eg. a parent yelling or being in a rage themselves). We can get angry about that sort of treatment too.
- As we get older, we get told and conditioned that anger is bad as well, so we cover that over as well with polite societal behavior. We then have another layer of fear – we are now afraid of our own anger. In children, they may not be all the way through these layers. The purpose of an EP in this context then, is to encourage the audience to not be afraid of their own emotions, from as young an age as possible, as society generally teaches us to be afraid of our emotions. They are just emotions. They just need to be felt the same as they used to do when they were a baby or very young. By the time they get to primary school thought, much of the expression of emotion is already being programmed out of them. Parents and teachers tend to punish children who are overly emotional or lashing out.

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

- Projection – we want to distinguish between owning and taking responsibility for our emotions, vs projecting them on others. Our villains are generally examples of the epitome of projecting negative emotions on others. Projection means – someone expects others to SOLVE their negative emotions, or they are expected to be the victim of them. So instead of owning your anger, you project it by raging at someone else and blaming them for all your problems. Just like an Alpha Shows villain!
- If we can break the pattern of projection and show the contrast of how to instead be responsibility for our emotions instead, then we can show an example of how to do it. At this point in the closed eye / EP, you will normally have them close their eyes and feel their feelings. You will then allow them to make the sounds and express out whatever negative feelings they have. Note that we don't usually refer to these feelings as 'negative' but for the purposes of this manual it's best to be clear about what type of emotions we are talking about – the ones that are painful and difficult for most people to feel/face. When you're getting the audience to feel these feelings, it is best to distinguish between the 3 main causal emotions, and the ultimate outcome is to try to get them to face their grief. This is difficult to do, because school children are unlikely to actually feel grief in the middle of a show that came to their school. So the majority of this is demonstrative. The characters on stage and the audience just have the 'rehearsed experience' of expressing emotion. It usually ends up with the audience screaming. But you can at least go through how we best fully express negative emotions. Anger we might scream in rage, fear we might shake and express vocally that fear, and grief we would cry and ultimately be like a baby sobbing, just like we did as a baby (which is the only way to truly have stored grief leave us, so we can heal). That's the ultimate goal. To show that process.
- At this point, we want to break the pattern and set up the solution. Now that we got rid of our negative emotions, we can allow more positive emotions in, and make better choices, have more empowering beliefs, or accept equality, or accept/state the truth – whatever the theme of your show is. This is the point at which the EP varies for each show. Hercules, it's about being a true hero. For Little Mermaid, it's about being in truth, for Snow Queen it's about being in alignment with your purpose and desires (law of attraction in the positive, Abraham-Hicks style). For Beauty and the Beast it's about letting go of limiting beliefs and the emotions that support those beliefs and believing something better about yourself. For Hunchback it's about letting go of the pain of your past and changing your physiology to stand up for yourself and what is right. Sleeping Beauty is about making choices based on love not fear. Cinderella is about accepting your worth and letting go of feelings that make you feel worthless or unlovable. Aladdin it's about how to make real wishes. King Arthur – accepting the truth of equality.
- Whatever your main theme, there will be more preamble here about what we need to do. Together the audience will help the characters come up with a better way of operating through whatever challenge they face. And the audience might give examples of new choices etc that they are going to make. Time to elicit audience responses!
- Once you have some good ones, and you acknowledge them, it's time to get everyone to do it and CONDITION it so they remember it. You can't just say it once and think it'll stick. This has to be done with their entire physiology and passion and voices, and it's your job to get them to do it with as much of themselves as possible. That means YOU have to lead the way. You have to be the biggest in the room and don't let anyone get away with playing small. Everyone has to play full out, even the teachers/adults. Everyone should stand with you and repeat the incantations you'll give them, or whatever it is you're doing. Yell it out, feel it fully, and again, you have to lead the way with that. Repeat it. **Repetition is the mother of skill!** You really can't repeat it too much! Emphasize different words. Until you're satisfied the audience has said it with passion and moved their bodies and it's gotten into their cells, not just a thing in the brain. True learning happens with emotion. It's the only way anything will be retained. We used high-energy music and movement and sound to ensure the new learning you want them to remember is retained beyond the intellect. It becomes part of their souls!
- You might do some NLP style anchoring as well, such as 'hand on heart' or 'squeeze your fist'. This is a short cut to the feeling to access in the future when you need it.
- If you're getting any resistance, take it further. Don't back down. Do more, break the pattern, use any language/NLP skill to break the negative pattern and provide a better alternative. And give them a good reason WHY. This is how you get everything you want in life. This is how you be happy. This is how you be strong. This is how you get to live the way you want! This is how you win.
- Finally, there should always be a celebration. "If you're ready to be a hero, then say yes". And "Just so we always remember this moment, we're gonna jump up and down and make a whole bunch of noise, ready, 123 GO!" Don't back down from this. Many performers in the past have not done this with full energy. This is a mistake. This is the most important part in a way, because it celebrates what everyone has achieved together and demonstrates to the audience that this was something special you just did together. There are very few experiences in life we all ALLOW ourselves to celebrate. It happens at rock concerts. It happens at sport games. But where else do we allow ourselves to play full out, celebrate, feel good for no real reason (just because we make the choice to). So ENJOY it. Feel

ALPHA ACTORS MANUAL

good and do it yourself with all your passion and the audience will follow. This is like you're a rock star. So relish it. It is having a strong impact. Believe it. Experience it. Grow from it too.

- You're done – get off stage and thank them and wish the characters good luck. This was something real you did, not just a story on stage. Leave them with that impression. You took it seriously, but you had fun celebrating life and emotion and passion and love and success and choices and free will and equality and being a true hero. You all had a victory together!

THE VICTORY

Which then does bring us to this final win! The finish of the process is a difficult one to write about, as it is different in every show, and each process commands a different ending, or "victory". The victory is when the character on stage has made their transformation and is moving ahead. Whatever it is, you want to make a clear end. Once again clarity and certainty is power. It is also up to the actor that you are working with to "sell the change". They need to show that there has been a definite transformation in their physiology and their soul through their physicality and their expression of emotion. This shouldn't affect you, as you are in the zone – this is for the audience, so that they can see the change that has occurred and see that it works. It is a kind of conditioning in their heads/hearts as well, they can see it work, so they know it does. You then want to get the audience to sit down with a clear command that they understand. You shouldn't have to say it more than once or twice, and you also don't want to leave the performers onstage after you with a mess to clean up!

It's also worth noting that many audience members will NOT actually participate. They didn't come to this show with a true desire to change something about their life. We are simply offering them that opportunity. So the example we set, to show this is something REAL that can be done any time, on their own time, is important. So it's important to remember this in your communication, to ensure they realise they can follow up with this on their own time (especially embarrassing things like feeling your negative emotions fully, like crying). It just has to be shown that this is something that WORKED for our character/s, so it'll work for them too. Follow up in Question Time with this concept as well – this part was REAL as anything and it's definitely something everyone should take seriously and go for whenever they're struggling with something emotionally in their life.

I said earlier that there was no way you could lose with this, and there isn't. It all depends what you want to achieve and what you want to give. You have all the tools in the script and in these paragraphs to smash this.

That's about all there is to it. Have fun, keep all of this in mind, and also find new discoveries of your own. Above all this should be fun. Serve your audience; it is a rewarding experience and an experience which you will enjoy. If you have any questions ask Ben or your director as we are always here and always happy to answer anything at anytime. You can also review past EPs we have on our YouTube to see how they can work. They're all different so remember to stay flexible and adapt each one to the audience. You'll still hit most of the major points in your script, but how you deliver it, the dynamic, will always change.

Good Luck and Have Fun!

To see an example of a Closed Eye / EP being performed in alignment with the above outcomes and standards, watch this video: <https://youtu.be/nc-NVugT2LA>

QUESTION TIME

At the end of each show, when time permits, Alpha's performers come back on stage to give the children an opportunity to ask questions. 99.9% of the time we do a Question Time.

We welcome and encourage all of the performers to have the maximum possible contact time with children.

Here is how Alpha does a Q&A differently:

- ♦ It is 'part of the show'. It's all pre-planned and made part of the final music track.
- ♦ We have a voiceover introduction and 'pump-up' music before the actors come back out on stage. It is always important that children (and us) are in a 'peak state' to ask and answer questions. It models the EP process and gets them excited in the same way we have earlier.
- ♦ The actors will come out in costume, but as 'themselves' (not in character). They will remain energised and enthusiastic, rather than showing fatigue (even if the Actors themselves are fatigued at all)
- ♦ It is not about YOU! Nobody is asking about your training or how much experience you have as an actor. Keep your ego out of it and focus on serving the needs of the audience, pivoting questions about yourself or your team into answers that would benefit the wellbeing and emotional development of children. **Watch the Question Time video (below) for examples of how to achieve this**

Question Time has become this 'gem' of a thing, something we are very passionate about and are committed to making happen every show, even if we're running out of time. It's our opportunity to meet with the entire audience as ourselves, communicate special messages that we may be passionate about (including your own!) and condition in positive anchors set during the show and ensure we can come back next time to continue the process with another show. So use the elements setup previously, use 'say yes', ask questions where they repeat things, get them to finish your sentences about the message etc etc.

This is about modeling success, being a role model, sharing your passions about acting and performance, and leaving the audience on the biggest high you possibly can!

Just before question time starts, you'll come out with pump up music, and do a 'whoa clap'. This is always the same, hands up, fingers waving, and then performers say together 'and say yes' and clap their hands together on the 'yes'. It's always SAY YES, nothing else.

Be very cognizant of inserting your own ideology into Question Time and ensure your answers align with company management and high-level truth. Be especially careful of commenting on politically hot topics or 'woke' ideology that is sensitive in culture across the political spectrum. Alpha Shows teaches foundational truths about emotions and how to bring ourselves into alignment with our true selves, but we do not align ourselves with a particular political bias or virtue signaling.

The quality of life is in direct proportion to the quality of the questions we ask, especially those we ask on a consistent basis

So there are a few standards we expect from you during question time, to make the process run smooth and to be most effective:

How to perform question time:

- ♦ DIRECTED FOCUS. Focus on whomever is speaking with your attention and eyes
- ♦ When you're the one being asked a question, repeat the question before answering! Always. Sometimes the audience can't hear the question which derails your answer if you just launch straight into the answer.
- ♦ Answer the question succinctly. Keep it quick and snappy in most cases. Ben or the Tour Supervisor may go on and on a bit but your answers should be quick and follow the standard answer for that question
- ♦ A good way to end the answer is to ask a question that relates (eg. Did you like the costumes?)
- ♦ When you're done answering, end your answer with "1,2,3 You rock" with claps and a point at the person who asked the question (or the Alpha Shows hand sign if you don't remember where they were). That's the signal for the next person to pick a question, and it also ends each question on high energy & positive anchor
- ♦ Understand Ben/TM or other experienced cast members may jump in on your answer to cover a certain topic or something important to that particular client. Don't take it personally. You're doing fine!
- ♦ Enter and leave the stage in the same order as you did for the finale song 'Fly Away'
- ♦ Pick children who are easily identified and/or are isolated, rather than trying to pick a child who is in a cluster of children all with their hand up. It just speeds things up & avoids confusion of who you've picked. Find something unique about them to call on them. Never use gender words to identify someone, be wary of pronouns and mis-gendering someone
- ♦ Never get overly personal or discuss personal lives on stage, unless you want to share a personal story of how an emotion affected you this way, and how you released it, and it had this effect in your life etc etc. It does help to teach that the message of the show is real. But this stuff will usually come from the Tour Supervisor. If you are particularly passionate about a specific message, feel free to express that (we don't want to shut you down, we like that you want to have a positive impact on kids!)
- ♦ Never lie! If you make a joke that includes a lie, always clarify that you are joking. Kids don't always get it. You should always be truthful about the questions asked of you, and own your identity and your history and passions (if you are comfortable).
- ♦ Be passionate but real. Speak in your normal voice as though speaking to an adult. Stand up straight!
- ♦ No 'kiddie talk'. No bending forward as though you're speaking to someone stupid. No teacher-like personas.
- ♦ DO NOT make random mumblings, noises, sneezes, coughs, strange faces at an answer, confused looks, or generally look like you are bored, tired or 'too good for this'.
- ♦ Listen to answers from other cast as a way to learn the best way to answer questions, but don't try to just 'mimic' or copy our answers. Come up with a way to answer each common question in your own style.
- ♦ Focus on contribution and serving the audience/greater good as a whole. Nobody is interested to hear how good you are, your life story as a performer or the 10 years of tap training you've had. Keep it relevant to children and what is going to interest, grow and/or impact them.

To watch a video illustrating various techniques for Question Time and successful implementation of the standards outlined in this section, go here: <https://youtu.be/pX9ThDEazg0>

Below are some examples of questions we've had or like to get, during question time and afterwards.

Rehearsals and Preparation

- *How long does it take to rehearse?
- Where do you rehearse the show?
- *Who makes up the dances?
- *Who writes the shows?
- Was it hard to learn your lines?

The Set-up

- *How long does it take to set the set up?
- *Who made/painted the sets?
- What's behind the set?
- Where did you get the costumes?
- How do you get changed so quickly?
- *Where does the smoke come from?
- *How do the lights/music/sound work?
- Were the swords real?

Show Specific

- Why is it different to the Disney movie?
- Why were there extra characters?
- ***Why was the Stepmother/sisters so mean?
- How did the magic work?
- Was the kiss real?
- ***Why did the Prince give up being a Prince?
- How did the Fireplace work?
- How did the flash and smoke work?
- ***Why didn't the Prince want to dance?
- *Why was X so kind/beautiful/nice/mean?

- ***Why did Cinderella not feel like she deserved to go to the ball?
- ***How do you really be a hero?
- ***Why was "comedy character" so funny?
- ***What sort of values were in the show?

The Company

- **What other shows does Alpha do?
- How many shows have you done?
- *Which show are you doing next year?
- ***Why do you do shows like this in schools?
- Whose idea was it to perform in schools?
- *Do you perform anywhere in the school holidays?

The Performers

- *How did you all get to be in the show?
- *What acting training have you done? (don't get into a whole thing about this)
- *Where/How did you learn to dance/sing?
- How old are you?
- Why did you play a girl/boy (when you're another gender)?
- *How does it feel to be an actor?
- *Do you get scared/nervous?
- Have you ever been on TV?
- Are you on TikTok? etc
- Will you follow me?
- *What other shows have you been in?
- *What is your favourite thing about performing?
- What is your favourite colour?
- What is your real hair like?

SYMBOLOLOGY

All Alpha shows contain hidden meanings and subtle themes. Also a focus is the value of "being who you really are", emotional truthfulness and expression, positive role models, inner beauty, bullying and its consequences, and many other themes.

We use various methods of communicating these ideas, through the above mentioned 'EP processes', but also through various other means, such as set designs, costume and other more subtle sequences in the shows. Suffice it to say, there is a lot going on beyond a silly children's show, so feel free to explore the symbols in greater depth and ask questions, either on Alpha's Slack Group or at rehearsals and during your tour.

SPECIFIC THEMES FOR EACH SHOW

Please download the teacher notes for the show you're in to get more information. We'd love it if you did! The post show packs are the most helpful. They're all available at www.alphashows.com.au/downloads

Remember, all your actor downloads that you'll need are available on a separate link: <https://www.alphashows.com.au/downloads/actors/>

Thank you and we hope this manual is helpful in assisting you to be an awesome performer in Alpha's shows! To read all this, we very much appreciate it. So you rock and we love you!