FREE FROM SECRET ACTOR SOCIETY

6 steps to learn your lines without locking in your choices

From my class Performance Preparation.

Hi, Kym here.

If you rehearse emotion while memorising, you lock in your choices. Then the director redirects you on set… and you can't move.

Ideas don't arrive as words. When the words are muscle memory, your brain is free to listen, react and hit your mark.

Every scene I've performed and wasn't terrible in, I've probably run 70, 80, maybe 100 times. In a neutral way.

Memorising is step one. Over the page is what comes after: the four notes that turn "give me more layers" into something you can actually do.

Kym

01 **Record the other characters' lines.**
Into your voice memos. Mouth yours silently to leave a gap, plus about two seconds.

02 **Listen, glance down, grab your line, look away.**
Then say it. Reading while speaking tells your memory it doesn't need to keep it.

03 **Say it flat.**
No emotion, no intonation, no choices. Just the words.

04 **Write the first letter of every word in the margin.**
Fold the page so only the letters show. "Helping her what?" becomes H H W.

05 **Take it for a walk.**
One or two scenes, phone on airplane mode, over and over.

06 **Then nap, or sleep on it.**
You'll wake up knowing it better than when you went to bed.

> **COUNT YOUR RUNS WITH PIZZAS**
> A circle plus four lines through it is five runs. On a first walk I'll run a scene about 30 times.

SCENE	DATE	RUNS

What "layers" actually means

"Give me more layers" is one of the most confusing notes an actor gets. It's actually four things you can write down. The scene: my character walks in on her boyfriend drying coffee off her coworker's chest. He says he's just helping.

LINE	ACTION	SILENT LINE	SUBCONSCIOUS REACTION	SUBTEXT
"Helping her what?"	To accuse	"Oh, really?"	"I know exactly what you've been doing."	"Oh, come on. Seriously?"

Action: what you're doing with the line (not "to ask"). Try not to repeat one in the same scene. **Silent line:** the thought before you speak. **Subconscious reaction:** what's underneath. **Subtext:** what you're really saying.

> **STUCK ON A LINE?**
>
> Say the action out loud, then the line: "To accuse... Helping her what?" Then drop the action. The intention stays.

This guide comes from **Performance Preparation**, one of the 18 masterclasses in The Journey at **secretactor.com**.