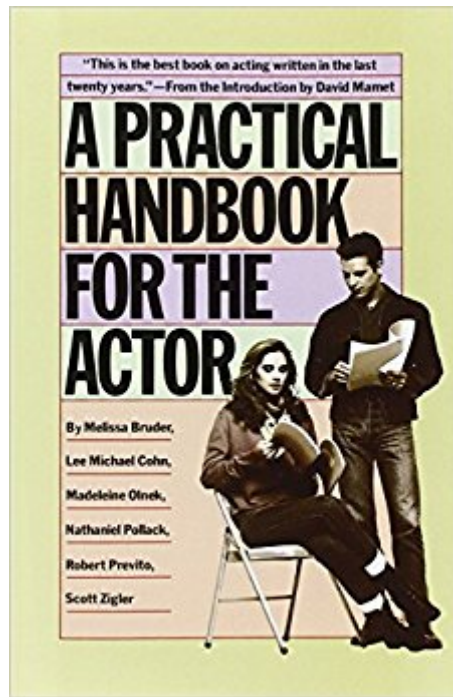


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# A Practical Handbook For The Actor



## Synopsis

6 working actors describe their methods and philosophies of the theater. All have worked with playwright David Mamet at the Goodman Theater in Chicago.

## Book Information

Paperback: 94 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (87 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I was recently enrolled in a second year acting class at a midwestern university with a decent theater department. The teacher was a no-nonsense Meisnerian with many years of acting and teaching experience, but I just couldn't get the method. I read many books, including those by Moni Yakim and Michael Chekhov. None of them helped. I was angry, frustrated, and despairing. On the night before I was to act in the first presentation of my final scene, I picked up my old copy of *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. Suddenly everything I had been taught in class made sense. The book brought into relief all the effective aspects of the Meisner approach while trimming the nonsense. I stayed up till 2 a.m. analyzing my scene according to the guidelines in the book. The next day, December 7, 2000, I performed my first real piece of acting. I was powerful, alive, and in some small degree even knew what I was doing. I scared myself I was so good. Following the book's directions, I dispensed with "emotional preparation" and just silently told myself before the scene started what I would do. Emotional prep never worked for me, but by telling myself what I would do I was nearly quaking with rage. During the scene I was free to perform without worrying about whether I was getting it right. I didn't try to be emotional, yet the feelings poured out, just as the book said it would. Hallelujah! *A Practical Manual* is one of very few books on acting that is worth reading. (*Acting One* by Cohen is another.) It packs more wisdom and common sense than books

many times its length. I've read it twice and will probably read it again. (I find myself extrapolating its ideas into playwriting as well.

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