Overcoming Stage fright and other hints for new actors

The world of the stage awaits

You are in costume backstage. You can hear the low murmur as the crowd shuffles in. Your palms begin to feel clammy. You look over at your cast mate and she seems fine, but you swear you can see her trembling. This is it. All that practicing is finally going to pay off. Those long hours of memorizing have finally come to fruition. Suddenly the lights flash. It's almost time. The lights go down and you take one final gulp. The stage manager motions for you to go and get on your mark. You make your entrance, lights go up, and you begin....... 

Stage Fright Remedies

a list of my most effective remedies and a few that don't work

Stage fright, it gets to every actor. It's a problem every actor must face at some point. Learning to conquer it can be a daunting task. Studies consistently show that public speaking is feared more than death itself. So what can make someone defy their natural impulses and get on stage? Well that is what I am here to help with. While no one method works for everyone there are a variety of techniques to try. As one grows they will develop new and more advanced ways to do so. Rest assured even the most experienced veterans get nervous before a show sometimes, they simply have found their way of dealing with it. The key is find what way works best for you. So use these tips to give you a spring board to get out there and start acting!

1. Get alone- Directly before a performance it helps many people to get alone. Focus your mind on the task at hand shut out all distraction. Mentally brush over the lines in your head. You will find you confidence rise to a great degree.

2. Tell yourself you are not afraid- Face it your mind has this nasty habit of listening to you. If you continually tell yourself how afraid you are your mind will believe you. Instead, take hold of your thoughts and refuse to think on your fear. While this may seem trite, you could be amazed at how much of an impact a conscious effort might have.

3. Get courage from veterans- If you’re new to a troupe chances are that there will be someone there who is experienced. Spend time with them before the show. Watch how calm they are before they go on. Confidence has a habit of being contagious, make that persons strength yours.

4. Get lost in the lights- When you’re on stage the lights are....bright. They drown out everything not on the stage. Use that to your advantage. Focus only on the bright areas inhabited by your fellow troupe members and you will find the presence of the audience far less nerve racking.
5. **Build artificial confidence**- Once again your mind listens to you. Don't believe that the only way to build confidence is simply by proving yourself. If you simply refuse to believe that you are anything but extraordinary you will find your stage fright melting away. Acting is mental in many ways. Mastering the mind is vital.

6. **Practice**- all the stage fright remedies in the world won't work if you are ill prepared. Any actor will tell you, to perform you need to rehearse long and often. The more you practice the more the lines become like second nature to you and the less chance of freezing up on stage.

Now over the years a number of different ways of overcoming stage fright have become recognized as the norm. Many of these are complete fallacies that really do not work. Some can even be harmful. Some are simply too advanced to be useful for the new actor. **Here are a few methods to avoid.**

1. Picture the audience naked- Now I am not sure where this started, but I am here to say it is absolutely foolish. Where did the idea that a naked crowd is less intimidating than a clothed one come from? If anything such a crowd would be more intimidating.

2. Get lost in the character- If you are a new actor then it is safe to say you lack the ability to get completely lost in a character. So relying on this can be not only discouraging but harmful. It is ok that you can't so become your character that you don't notice the crowds your first play. No one can that early!

3. "Buy these surefire anti-stage fright tapes"- I am not saying these sort of tapes never work. What I am saying is that nothing in acting is sure fire. Acting is a process that everyone must take themselves. In the end you have to decide what works best for you.

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