

SMFA Your Business Plan Hot Lists and Calendars

Please see page 102 (the chapter on **Your Business Plan**) in the 4th edition of *Self-Management for Actors: Getting Down to (Show) Business* for detailed instructions on how best to utilize these lists as you map out your ideal actor days.

The Biggies

- Audit, enroll in, or move up in a class, so your craft is never stagnating.
- Write, shoot, or edit a scene with fellow ninjas, even if it's popping up on a categorized list (below) frequently.
- Update your show bible using more detail than you do when it pops up on a categorized list (below).
- Wrangle a thing that currently feels unconquerable by doing a little more of it than when it pops up on a categorized list (below).

Craft and Your Instrument

- Download sides from Showfax, learn how that casting office marks up their material, and practice cold reading for a target show.
- Self-tape your cold reads from a set of sides on a target show, watch the footage back for tics or unconscious choices that don't serve your work, organically.
- Work on memorization by committing a block of text to true off-book status.
- Create physicalization for a character by doing mini workouts you normally wouldn't choose for yourself.
- Stay fit by doing yoga, Pilates, meditative stretching and deep breathing—or just go for a walk.
- Read an article from a magazine (popular, political, how-to, fashion, technical—whatever kind of magazine you'd like to use) aloud and take on different characterizations as you work through the text.
- Do vocal warm-ups and tongue twisters, speak in hums and hisses, really work your voice.
- Dialect day: practice your favorite monologue or scene using a new dialect or accent, then move on to new material so that you can improvise and perfect that new skill and add it to your resumé.
- Audit a class that's way outside your comfort zone: tap dancing, stand-up comedy, stunt training, Krav Maga, improv, pole dancing, screenwriting—and if it really scares you, enroll in ongoing classes.
- Sit and "people watch" for a half hour, making notes about personalities, conversation styles, accents and dialects, emotional intensity, physicalization.
- Change up your rhythm, whether in your acting life or in your non-acting life, by playing with your words and your thoughts as if you're conducting a symphony, expressing nuances via crescendo or a change in pacing.
- Break down a character: objectives, intention, backstory, status.

For updates to this doc, quarterly phone calls, convos at our ninja message boards, and other support, visit smfa4.com.

Bonnie Gillespie

- Break down a scene: structure, subtext, dialogue, story arc.
- Audit a craft class.
- Go see a play.
- Attend an open mic night.
- Go to—or even participate in—an improv jam.
- Sing karaoke.
- Attend the table read of a work-in-progress (participate if you can).

Research and Prep

- Read a play you've never read before.
- Read a chapter in a biography or autobiography of an actor whose career and craft you admire.
 - Read a script written by someone whose work you hope to voice someday.
 - Read three pages in a trade publication—every word—and mark names of players about whom you want to know more someday.
 - Hit the local library and read a chapter in a book you're not sure you want to buy; people-watch while you're there.
 - Watch a great movie or episode of a TV series on DVD with the director commentary turned *on*.
 - Explore a new podcast about the entertainment industry and listen to a few archived episodes.
 - Update your show bible using Google Alerts that have been flowing into your inbox.
 - Update your show bible using notes from your recent networking activities.
 - Update your show bible using recent news in the Twitter feeds of both trade publications and those folks you're targeting.
 - Spend an hour tracking the career moves of the "tier above" *you*; that person who is just one or two seasons ahead of where you currently sit—look at what roles they were taking on a few years ago and where they were planting seeds to get where they are now.
 - Do a lap at Actors Access and Casting Networks to be sure you've self-submitted on projects that line up with your bullseye.
 - Check your Actors Access and Casting Networks messages for any requests for self-taped auditions or visits to the session room.
 - Study your targets: spend time watching the resources that your targets are putting out there via blogs, vlogs, printed interviews, and their own social networking profiles.
 - Watch an archived livestream from the SAG-AFTRA Foundation library (even if you're not yet a SAG-AFTRA member).
 - Watch an episode of a TV show from which you previously downloaded sides to track how the finished product looks (which lines are thrown away, what type of actor booked the role, any relationships you can track on IMDb-Pro) and consider choices you can make in future reads that may make you feel like a booker.
 - Watch an episode of each new series that makes it to TV to track trends and keep tabs on what your targets in show-running are up to; also check in on hot webseries and "alternative

platform" series that go straight to Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, etc., and update your show bible accordingly.

Mindset

- Build your brain in ways that Facebook cannot by doing a half-hour of Lumosity, Words With Friends, Sudoku, or a pen-and-paper logic puzzle.
- Face your fears by writing down three things that terrify you about pursuing a creative career (save conquering those fears for another day; for now, just dissect 'em a bit).
- Do something "little" differently, y'know, like brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand or driving a different route than you always do between two points.
- Do some non-acting enrichment using a site like Skillshare, Coursera, Udemy, Creative Live, or iTunes U; then watch a TED Talk on something you imagine might be boring.
- Mentor a newbie—and if you have no access to young, up-and-coming actors who could benefit from your expertise, contribute to the collective knowledge base that exists at free message boards online, where simple words of encouragement or reminders that actors are *never* to pay up-front for representation can be hugely helpful.
- Set goals for the week, the month, the quarter, the year, 5 years, 10 years—leave yourself lots of dreaming room here, and don't get so rigidly locked into anything that this task becomes torture.
- Write a list of those to whom you will always be grateful, as you continue to succeed in your creative career; especially note those who will be thanked in those "holding up something gold and shiny" moments to come.
- Journal, write freely, do the "morning pages" à la *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron.

Tools of the Trade

- Test various pieces of your auditioning wardrobe on camera using your self-taping set-up; discover what each color and neckline and pattern does to your skintone and overall vibe.
- Test your self-taping set-up at different times of day to see what the existence of natural light at various hours does to your artificial lighting.
- Style your hair and makeup different ways as you self-tape to track the impact of a little shine-reducing powder.
- Make sure your receipts are organized and categorized so it's not a bear of a task, come tax time.
- Revisit your recent paystubs to be sure your agency commissions are being properly calculated and reported.
- Accounting analysis: tally up your union dues, photos, acting classes, membership on submission sites, and marketing materials.
- Contact a producer from whose project you've not yet received your footage; be polite and professional, yet firm in asking for an expected date by which you will receive your scenes for your reel, even if the team is not yet finished with final edits on the project.
- Perform some resumé feng shui.

- Update your bio.
- Revamp your cover letter.
- Tighten up your reel.
- Update your social networking presence—spruce up that "about me" logline, refresh your photos, check your Googleability.
 - Reach out to your fans—shoot an email, write a new blog post, put together some postcards for an upcoming targeted mailing.
 - Do a targeted mailing of postcards, general submissions, or career updates—again, a *targeted* mailing.
 - Update your website.

Mastering the Game

- Watch a half-hour of junket footage from a recent movie's press tour using the "related videos" feature at YouTube; learn which interviewers employ what style, observe which actors handle curveballs best, note when answers are crafted by publicists or improvised by the actors—think about what your style will be.
 - Visit WireImage or Getty Images' editorial-entertainment galleries and search out the fashion choices of actors in your type and vibe, to see what they wear to red carpet events, charity appearances, upfronts, luncheons, or any other time they're photographed (and not just by *TMZ*).
 - Search out discount versions of key items you'd like to add to your networking wardrobe—get smart with the best colors for you and add *one* great piece to your closet (while purging the items that simply don't work for on-brand *you*).
 - Drill yourself on your monologues—yes, even if you are never asked to perform them; don't let 'em get rusty.
 - Drill yourself on your 16 bars—yes, even if you don't really audition for musical theatre any more; you may need 'em someday.
 - Drill yourself on your pitch, your logline, your answer to, "So, tell me about yourself," and all other Brandprov prompts at smfa4.com, so you're ready for every possible networking scenario.
 - Write a scene for yourself and two friends.
 - Shoot a scene—do it for your reel, do it for the practice, do it for relationship-building, just do it.
 - Transcribe and practice like a ninja; that means, if you're targeting a show written by Aaron Sorkin, you transcribe a lesser-known Sorkin scene and practice its pacing, its rhythm, its style (also avoid iconic characters).
 - Watch actors on everything from *Inside the Actors Studio* to *Watch What Happens Live* to study the art of Brandprov.
 - Watch a "dumb reality show" that you otherwise would never care about, and pay particular attention to the music, and how producers are branding good guys and bad guys with their choices in sound editing—master producer-end branding by deconstructing it and considering what your theme music might be.

- Hit up a local film festival, panel discussion, theatre company fundraiser, or student film showcase for some low-stakes networking experiences.
- Engage in a DIY power group—find other creatives (start at smfa4.com) who might like to jam about what's happening in the industry, your community, your personal and professional lives and then do so, regularly; split up targets and share the research load, thereby creating a beautiful mastermind experience.
- Do something from your "things I love to do for my acting career" list that's not otherwise represented on this list.
- Do something from your "things I hate to do for my acting career" list that's not otherwise represented on this list.

Phew! Feeling good? Yay! Feeling overwhelmed? Also yay! You have a starting point. You have a recipe for where to restart when you falter. It's okay. You're building a muscle and that takes time, consistency, and patience. An actor who fails at even 75% of the things mapped out on a year's calendar of the above items is *still* advancing more, controlling more, tier-jumping more than most actors out there! Promise me you'll give yourself room for success to happen. I want you to have many ideal actor days in your life.

Self-Management for Actors 4th ed. bonus content by Bonnie Gillespie. © 2017

SMFA	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				01 CRAFT/INSTRUMENT: download sides from Showfax and practice cold reading for a target show	02 RESEARCH/PREP: watch "Pitch Perfect" on DVD with the director commentary turned ON	03 MINDSET: journal and list what scares me about starting acting at this age	04 A BIGGIE: audit a scene study class
05	TOOLS OF THE TRADE: check last quarter's paystubs for accuracy of agency commissions	06 CRAFT/INSTRUMENT: vocal warm-ups and tongue twisters, hums and hisses	07 RESEARCH/PREP: Actors Access & Casting Networks, check submissions and Email	08 MASTERING THE GAME: watch and analyze "Pitch Perfect" junket footage at YouTube	09 CATCH UP: totally expect to bail on the money thing; will catch up	10 RESEARCH/PREP: read a chapter in "Bossypants"	11 CRAFT/INSTRUMENT: dialect day: practice favorite monologue or scene using a new dialect or accent
12	A BIGGIE: storyboard my demo reel scene with Ninja Jen	13 MINDSET: volunteer at local high school to do a Q&A with the drama class	14 MASTERING THE GAME: pitch, logline, and Brandprov drills for networking	15 TOOLS OF THE TRADE: perform some resumé feng shui	16 CATCH UP: I so love "Bossypants," I think I'll want to read another chapter	17 CRAFT/INSTRUMENT: break down a scene: structure, subtext, dialogue, story arc	18 TOOLS OF THE TRADE: update social networking presence ("about me" logline, photos, Googleability)
19	RESEARCH/PREP: read all Laurie Records' archived articles and skim her tweets	20 A BIGGIE: show bible day! ALL day! ALL the updates!	21 MINDSET: update my "gold and shiny" list and drop an email to my college drama prof	22 CATCH UP: more show bibling, because I bet I'll need more time	23 MASTERING THE GAME: transcribe and practice an obscure Jessica Bendinger scene	24 TOOLS OF THE TRADE: contact DM re: LfB raw footage (extend proposed deadline)	25 MINDSET: enroll in the History of Film class on coursera.org
26	A BIGGIE: blogging more personal stories and making my acting pursuit more relatable	27 RESEARCH/PREP: watch SAG-AFTRA Foundation archived livestream on publicity	28 MASTERING THE GAME: hit up Naked Angels' Tuesdays @9 reading group	29 CATCH UP: pick one thing I haven't yet done this month and DO IT!	30 CRAFT/INSTRUMENT: go see a play	31 MINDSET: reflect on my "why" and be sure all my submissions align with that	

January

Choose items from the master lists and give yourself room to build toward success with this!

