

Acting: Taking the Sting Out of Rejection

How to Keep Rejection From Getting the Best of You

From [Phil Breman](#), for About.com

According to most people in the profession, one of the hardest parts about being an actor is the constant rejection. A rejection usually has nothing to do with your talent and is more often based on something you simply can't control – it might be that you're too short, too fat, too tall, too pretty, too white, too black, too young, too old, or too whatever.

This is a reality of the acting game and for those willing to dedicate their lives to the craft they realize it's something that comes with the territory. But, that usually doesn't make it any easier to accept.

If you're new to acting this might be the first time you have ever been exposed to such a cold reality. You might have done everything you can to learn your lines and make sure you were 100% prepared for your audition. You might even feel like you absolutely, positively "nailed it" only to find out later that someone else got your part!

As frustrating as this process might sound, if you understand what's going on behind the scenes, a rejection can be a little easier to accept.

The fact is that auditions in general are nothing more than a chance for you to show the writer, producer or director why you're the only person in the world that can play that role. So, how do you accomplish this? First, let's review the casting process:

For film and television, being cast in a role usually begins with a meeting with a casting director. The casting director has received a script from the producer and through conversations with the writer and director they now have a rough idea of the type of person that each role will require. Keep in mind that it's a "rough" idea at best. Giving an award winning read to a casting director can certainly help improve your chances, but unless they have been working with a particular writer or director for years, they aren't the ones making the decision on whether or not you will be getting the part.

The casting director is a filter of sorts sometimes seeing dozens if not hundreds of people for each role at which time they bring their final choices in for the writers, directors and producers to see. That's when the decision making really begins and it differs a little between film and television.

In television, the writer is king. The writer of a given episode will often work with the showrunner and other executive producers to determine that episode's cast. The television director is usually not involved in the casting process. The casting director schedules a meeting and his top 3-5 choices for each role are brought in at which point the writers and producers make the final decision.

In film, the director is king. More often than not, the writer has little if any say in who is cast in a particular role. Also, sometimes films have a big star attached to the project prior to it being cast so close attention will be paid to finding actors and actresses who play well with the “name” actor. The casting director brings in his/her 3-5 top choices for each role and selections are made first by the director with the writer and producers weighing in.

Sometimes for either film or television, actors are given a “call back.” This means that the writers, producers and directors have an interest, but need to see the actor audition again to be sure they make the right choice.

Casting is a difficult process, because the fact is that most writers, directors and producers have a mental image of the type of person they see playing a given role well before a single actor auditions. Thus, a casting director’s first order of business is to find someone who fits the physical traits of the role. Obviously you don’t want a 20-something blonde male to play the role of the husky, 40-something, Latino. Sometimes good casting directors will experiment a little by bringing in someone who plays a role a bit differently than anyone originally anticipated. It’s a gamble that sometimes pays off and sometimes just leads to a long, uncomfortable casting session.

Now, much of this information might seem a bit depressing. After all, you don’t need me to tell you that getting acting jobs is difficult. But know this – if you closely resemble the physical traits of a particular character, the writers, producers and directors are praying that you’ll nail the read. They know how hard it is to find someone who can perfectly fit a character description, so when you come in looking exactly the way they pictured, it’s your job to lose.

So, how do you succeed if you don’t look the part? Well, actors who make it in Hollywood usually master these three traits:

- **Patience:** This is one virtue you must have when working as an actor. Actors who race like a tortoise and not like a hare are more likely to succeed. It takes time to develop your craft as well as a name for yourself. The more people you meet in Hollywood, the more chances you will have for opportunity. The patience comes with knowing that one day that opportunity will present itself.
- **Persistence:** The one thing that most successful actors will tell you that they did on their road to success was that they never, ever gave up. Persistence is by far the most important virtue to have if you want to be successful as an actor. You have to believe that with each new day you are one step closer to your goal. The only way to lose is give up along the way. Stay focused and stay driven and success will find you.
- **Passion:** Acting is a craft that demands the utmost passion -- passion not only for the craft itself but also for the role that you are playing. Passion means commitment. By committing yourself to a character, you literally breathe life into that person. But also commit yourself to the idea of becoming a successful actor and more than likely you will achieve your goal.

One of the most important things you must learn about rejection is not to take it personally. Understand that the reason most producers, writers and directors choose the actors they choose is because in their minds they believe they most accurately portray the image of the character they have created. By learning and living by this general rule, it will allow you avoid being negatively affected by those roles that you don't get while at the same time helping you better appreciate the roles you do.

Acting is such a difficult profession because there is only so much you can control and one of the main reasons that you might not get a particular role is because of something about you. It might be the way you talk, the way you walk, your age, your height, or any number of reasons. But if you give the best audition you can for every role you're up for, you will eventually make a name for yourself and give yourself the best chance for long term success.

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