**Question 1: What should be your process to find the strongest actors for your project?**

**Answer:** The first step is to hire a casting director, via the breakdown services. <https://www.breakdownservices.com/>. After interviewing several casting directors, hire the one that has the best networking contacts and trust them. Ask them to narrow down the head count to 10 or so for call-back, and then begin your audition process.

**Question 2: What is the job of the casting director?**

**Answer:** The job of the casting director is to use their networking skills and get as many applicants as possible for roles in your project. He/She will slog through hundreds of actors that submit their headshots and portfolios and get us the best possible actors for our characters.

**Question 3: What is the best way to handle the audition process?**

**Answer:** It is extremely important to be positive with the actors during the audition process. Actors are very sensitive about their performance and the director should be able to nurture their creative process. To begin with, do not give any direction. Note what type of sensibilities the actor brings to the project. See if it is a good match for your character. If not, give a little direction and ask them to try it your way. Note if they can adapt and deliver. Note the chemistry you’re able to develop with the actor. This will go a long way in helping with the project.

**Question 4: What is the purpose of a table read?**

**Answer:** The purpose of the table read is to give the entire cast to sit with the director and read through the script a few times. This will provide every cast member to get in to character in front of the director (and each other) ahead of production.

**Question 5: What type of language is most useful when directing actors on-set, and why?**

**Answer:** Action words are way more important than adjectives. Good directors do not reveal the end result of the emotion for an actor; they let the actors go through the process, before arriving at the end result of the emotion required in a scene. “Be sad”, “be happy” aren’t phrases that a good director should use. Instead, use character motivations and objectives for the actors, so that they can properly get in to character and arrive at the required emotion through their process.

**Question 6: Why is it important to understand the purpose of a scene BEFORE discussing it with your actors?**

**Answer:** Character motivation is the reason for knowing the purpose of the scene “before” discussing it with the actors. For example: what does the character want in this scene? What is stopping him/her? What does the character want from the other character? Why does he/she want it? In *Django* Unchained, Tarantino had to remind Jamie Foxx that Django was a slave; Foxx had forgotten about that and was acting about like a Hollywood star until Tarantino reminded him of this during the first two days of shooting. Tarantino understood the purpose of every Django-scene “before” he spoke to Foxx. He reminded Foxx about Django’s wants and needs. Actors yearn to be directed properly and want to deliver great performances. So, to prepare properly and understand the purpose of each scene and character before the director speaks to the actors, will provide comfort to the actors and they’ll be in a better position to deliver the required performance.

**Question 7: What is the purpose of Uta Hagen’s "six questions a director must be able to answer"?**

**Answer:** The six questions are, “Who am I?”, “Where am I coming from?”, “Where am I?” “Who am I with and how do I feel about him/her?”, “What do I want from this person?” “ What am I doing to get what I want?”. According to Uta Hagen, actors must ask themselves this question, and the director should ask themselves these questions, before the actors do. The director has to help the actor answer these questions for the primary purpose of motivation, the background. All of this is necessary for the actor (and eventually, the viewer) to experience the emotional moment of the scene.

**Question 8: Why is it important that you as the director, as well as the actor, understand a character’s background when playing a scene, even if that background is not explicitly stated in the script?**

**Answer:** When I wrote a story outline about a gay man who married for all the wrong reasons (this was in Fall 2015; the entire country was talking about gay marriage), my screenwriting mentor shut me down because I am not gay; I can never, ever truthfully tell the story of a gay man because I can never have the same experiences. According to her (a multiple Oscar-winning producer/director/writer), the essence of the character comes from the household in which he/she grew in: what were their parents like? What were their fears? How did they eat breakfast? What is their weakness? What is their strength? What do they get by falling in love by a certain someone? These and so many questions give boundaries for our characters for their behavior traits. All of this comes in handy, when the character finally arrives at a dilemma -- a make-it or break-it decision, a truly character-defining moment: will he squeeze that trigger and take a life? No, because he’s a Quaker: he was taught to be a pacifist and nothing in his life ever warranted him to have ill-feelings towards another human being due to this upbringing. But will he squeeze the tripper and take a human life if his daughter’s life is being threatened? Yes. Because he is human. So, by knowing the character’s background, the director and the actor will know the true motivation and the “direction” in which the character will go, during a true dilemma in the story. These character-defining moments make or break movies, and therefore, it is critical for the director and the actor to understand the background thoroughly.

**Question 9: How do you keep actors from getting bored of doing the same thing over and over again?**

**Answer:** Give the actors several breaks, as often as possible and as early as possible. It means that as soon as we realize we don’t need the actors (during a change in camera and lighting setup, for example), let them leave the set and mentally refresh, even if it is during the same scene. The actors cannot get bored and if they do, it’ll show in their performance. It’ll be a drag on everyone.

**Question 10: Write 500 words on your own philosophy of working with actors. How do you plan to handle them? What will be your process?**

**Answer:** For a feature and a TV series that my mentor is currently developing, I have contacted several casting directors. I sell the story to them. Once I get their buy-in, I am introduced to actors. I sell the characters and story to them. During audition, I do not give any direction and wait to see what the actor brings to the table. Once the actor is hired by the head of the studio (my mentor), the real work begins. I notice a lot of difference between an actor who is looking for work and an actor who is already hired. To properly work with actors and to get the best out them, my process will be broken in to three phases. My initial process would be to make the actors comfortable around me: they will be given a lot of freedom to be expressive and bring their own sensibilities towards creating the character on the screen. I will take care to keep it completely professional and not personal. Not once. Once the rapport is established and the actors trust me, I’d be able to set limits on their creative freedom during the project. We’ll then start my second phase: the limits on creative freedom doesn’t come from me; it comes from the script and the character on the page and most importantly, from his/her background. The way the character walks, eats, mingles with people, makes love, seeks power and control, is weak, is strong are all portrayed through that background. After researching and applying those principles of background, we can start rehearsing. By this phase, we would have figured out “why” the character is, the way he/she is. Then, we’ll do my third phase: during rehearsals, we’ll come up with specific situations that will further define the character. What will the character definitely not do? What will the character definitely do? And then, how? At this stage, the actor should be able to control his/her breathing patterns, based on the character he/she is playing. The actor will no longer play a character, but will be the character. Daniel Day Lewis asked Spielberg for a year, to prepare for the role of Lincoln. During production, the crew and the director were positive that they were around Lincoln – not around Daniel Day Lewis playing Lincoln. Whenever I am asked by my mentor or actors or the crew about spending extra time with actors *become* the character, I remind them that the primary interface of our story with the audience, is the actor. The actor is the most tangible thing the audience perceives. Without the proper character portrayal, we’ll end up with a visual spectacle. That’ll be the beginning of the end of Hollywood. To let them get mentally refreshed, they should break character (while cameras roll) to release all the frustration from their mind. If the actors cannot find the catharsis (in character) while the cameras are rolling, how will the audience find the catharsis, while watching them on the big screen?