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SCRIPTWRITING 101

SCRIPT STARTERS FOR ADULTS

At the dinner table
between and OLD person and someone
in a bar
at the hairdressers
wedding reception
hospital
funeral
board room
with Father
on the farm
on the phone
locker room
by the lake
at the Angry Trout (restaurant)
PTA meeting-whispered
with a policeman
at the laundromat
30 years ago at a soda fountain
with an older brother or sister
with a person of authority
in a strange place
on a canoe trip

1. Take a few minutes to write a line-the first one that comes to mind-that you might hear in that setting.

**THE MAIN THING:
DON'T THINK!**

2. Choose three of these lines that you like, and jot them down somewhere else.

3. Exchange your sheet with someone, and mark the three that you find the most intriguing.

4. From these, choose one that you want to pursue, and take 15 minutes to write a scene starting with that line. Let the scene write itself, allowing characters to step in where your imagination places them. **DON'T PLAN, DON'T REWRITE, DON'T REVISE--JUST WRITE!** You'll be surprised at how the scene will "write itself." Don't bother with stage directions, just do dialogue.

"We all have a GEIGER COUNTER in our heads, and when we hear a lot of "clicks," we're headed in the right direction" -John Fenn

5. After writing, get into groups of 3 to read your scenes. The writer becomes the director, and the two other people will act out the scene to the best of their abilities.

After the initial read-through, the writer should direct the actors to play the same characters with an 'opposite' approach, i.e., a character played as shy should be replayed as aggressive. Do a second "opposite personality" read-through,

6. After each scene, group members should discuss where it might go.

"I want to see the scene where..."

"I want to know..."

Look for possibilities, strengths, etc. How can this piece be stretched?

7. After all the groups have finished, come back to the large group to discuss the process, perhaps encouraging the reading of one of the pieces, but by new actors this time.

Note: One of the most dramatic realizations here is that the acting has a huge impact on a scene. Scriptwriters must take acting into account, allowing space for the actors to interpret the characters, hence influencing the impact of a scene.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Continue with similar exercises until everyone has 3 or 4, then revise.

Write a dialogue between yourself and your inner critic.

Spend a lengthy period of time viewing and discussing scenes.

Develop one of your scenes to be performed for the classroom audience,

Invite interested people to attend a reading of scenes.

Build a play out of combined scenes.

Take a dialogue and develop it into a short story. How are these genres different?