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So Therefore...: A Practical Guide For Actors

Al Ruscio

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‘Every scene or action or speech has a *so therefore*. It is the goal, the ultimate statement of the character. You should know the *so therefore* as you begin your scene ... The climax and the payoff is the *so therefore*.’ *– from Al Ruscio’s Preface*

When working through a scene with a student, renowned actor and acting teacher Al Ruscio will ask, ‘so therefore, what?’ to urge them to capture the specific actions and desires that define their character at that moment. *So Therefore…* interweaves tried-and-tested practical exercises with sound advice, and illustrative tales from Ruscio’s remarkable career, to form a training handbook as uniquely pragmatic as his favourite phrase. Breaking down his method into three broad focuses, Ruscio considers:

- *Warming Up* – including relaxation, going ‘beneath the words’ and emotional recall;
- *Scene Work* – ranging from character analysis to an exploration of action;
- *The Play* – discovering its spine, progressing through rehearsals and sustaining a performance.

But *So Therefore…* also reflects wisely on such diverse subjects as Stage versus Film, and Stamina, Luck and Chutzpah. Enriching and generous, it is the culmination of a career that has taken in dozens of major motion pictures, and spans the entire history of television – as well as half a century spent training actors.

Al Ruscio graduated from the famed Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre and has been teaching acting for five decades. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Screen Actors Guild and is a current voting member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

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