

## Side Coaching the TEAM

Using a side coach is an excellent process for bringing a score to life, or embodying your TEAM elements, in rehearsal. I use side coaches all the time in my acting classes and at some point in the rehearsal process of a play. The side coach is someone who stands closely on the side lines of your rehearsal space with your score in hand. This person acts as your personal coach, watching your performance while referring to your scene score. Your coach calls out choices you have made in writing to remind you, in the moment of your acting, to embody them.

This is similar to the immediate feedback given by a basketball coach standing on the sidelines of a practice session, calling out reminders to team members. The TEAM side coach serves a similar purpose in a rehearsal. However, the TEAM coach works with one actor and reinforces only one aspect of the TEAM at a time, like Emotion Tactics, so you do not become overwhelmed with too many layers to focus on at once. If the coach does not see you embody these choices, he will continue to call out the Emotion Tactic until he sees evidence of it in your performance. Your coach can also remind you of your Scene Objective by calling it out whenever he believes you have lost sight of your desired victory. This coaching process helps you recognize if your choices are manifesting clearly in the performance and not getting stuck “in your head.”

### *Side Coaches for the Tennessee Williams’ Play Festival*

*While directing a Tennessee Williams’ one-act play festival, I decided to use side coaches in the rehearsal process for six short plays. The festival provided the perfect opportunity for the student actors to experience what it is like to utilize side coaches as a technique for bringing their scene scores into immediate action. Each short play had small casts of two or three characters, and side coaches could be actors from one of the other short plays.*

*In the play Hello from Bertha, the protagonist, Bertha, is an aging and deathly ill prostitute who will not leave her room at the brothel, much to her fellow housemates’ frustration. Two other prostitutes keep entering Bertha’s room and try to convince her to leave, so they can make her room more profitable to the brothel.*

*The actor playing Bertha made the decision that her character*

*was dying of syphilis. After researching the symptoms of the disease and first applying a physical approach to the role, incorporating the specific pains and behaviors of people in states of delirium, she was ready to add the layer of Emotion Tactics. The actor realized that since her character was confined to a bed through the majority of the play, most of the tactics would be emotional. She also realized that the play was written with extremely quick shifts in emotional tone, climaxing to a point in the play where the character escapes into her delirious nostalgic memories of her long lost beau, Charlie.*

*In order to embody these Emotional Colors and Tactics, she scored her script using the basic emotions. She supported this choice by stating that a character in such an extreme stage of decline and desperation would probably express much of her emotional life in high levels of primary emotional states.*

*The side coaching of the basic emotions worked perfectly for this role. Her coach crouched down near the bed she was lying in and quietly yet insistently called out each emotion quickly as she shifted from one extreme to the next.*

***The story and the chapter continue with side coaching examples and techniques....***