

## Interpreting the Senses

There are 10 conservatively accepted, 21 accepted, and 33 radically accepted senses.

The 21 accepted are:

Light, color, hearing, smell (2000 or more receptor types) taste(sweet, salt, sour, bitter, umami) touch, pain, balance, proprioception, kinesthesia (the sensation of movement or strain in muscles, tendons, and joints; muscle sense), heat, cold, blood pressure, blood oxygen content cerebrospinal fluid pH, thirst and hunger.

Senses can be fooled and misdirected (as in a magic trick.)

### **Senses are:**

#### **Relative**

They tend to report change. They are comparative, not absolute.

We might label the familiar as RIGHT, and the unfamiliar as WRONG.

#### **Capricious**

They tell us what they want when they want. The kinesthetic sense will usually spotlight the loudest thing, and can be mitigated by introducing something else.

Our nervous system is constantly processing sensory input. When we “feel” something, it’s just a minuscule piece of the puzzle. There is a constant conversation between planning and sensing.

When you are performing you may or may not get sensory reports that you’re used to. It is likely your senses will be occupied with new stimuli- the audience, the excitement of performance, etc. If you have a well-practiced process that you can trust, you can rely on that process to access your skills, whether or not you get a particular kind of sensory report or not.

Performing is about thinking in order to do. We cannot monitor our actions as we do them in performance. You can't listen back to what you just did, you're too busy doing the next right thing. It's very helpful to analyze later and see where you did what you wanted to do, but in the moment you ask to coordinate and GO.

### **A report of the immediate past**

Like all sense perception, kinesthetic perception is a picture of the past. A feeling is an historical record of something that happened because of a movement. We think, we move and THEN we "feel" it. Trying to recreate a past experience is futile, as we are always changing. It will also create a cycle of failure, wherein we may do something excessive in attempt to produce what we think we're supposed to "feel." Asking for a feeling in order to start a movement, is asking for the report before you've done anything.

### **Highly useful**

When we are doing an action, we cannot observe ourselves from the outside. We have to do the action fully, and learn from feedback from coaches, colleagues, recording etc. how it went, and how we might change our process if we want a different result. That gives us a highly useful way to use sensory information and planning to have a close feedback loop for making improvements and innovation.

AT helps us understand and interpret sensory information so we can learn more quickly and accurately in ways that cooperate with our design and reality.

*\* A note about how you think about yourself and prioritize sensory feedback*

We are whole.

Thinking of yourself as separate parts, or using language that suggests that you are will cause mis-coordination.

Generating a particular or familiar sensation can cause you to mis-coordinate, as it is taking you out of your movement plan, and attempting to create a report of something that has not happened yet.

Good singing doesn't necessarily feel like anything, as you don't have sensory feedback from the main mechanisms involved. Coordinated, effective movement often just feels like wholeness.

Sometimes we cross senses in an unhelpful way; if something "feels" intense or tight, we may think it sounds intense or "strong". Sound is not a feeling. You can use some of the feedback you get for tuning, but know that it is limited, and can be distorted by the subjective nature of sound, and limitations of sound reinforcement or the room.

What you can do, is ask to coordinate so that you can use the well- rehearsed skills of your art, and your performance skills to do what you are doing, and see what happens. The feedback about that can be in the ease with which you do what you're doing, as well as feedback from colleagues, directors and the audience.

Artists must be able to trust themselves. That means having a tested process that is flexible and scalable. According to the criteria of constructive thinking, we must do that which is possible- and that's the process.

Performance is training the ask, and creating the conditions for emergent acoustical and other properties.

## **EXPERIMENTS**

1 Mixing board exercise/ recalibrating your ears

In a cafe, at home, in nature- play with what you ask for a report on, what can you hear? Can you emphasize different aural elements?

2 Play with a piece of music where you ask to coordinate relentlessly and do not ask for any sensory reports- see what happens experientially.

Record yourself doing this.

Jot down your expectations about how it went, then listen back.

**"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are."  
Anais Nin**