

THEATRE CODE OF ETHICS

Part of the great tradition of the theatre is a code of ethics which belongs to every worker on the legitimate stage. This code, while tacit, has been observed throughout the centuries and will continue long after us. It is neither superstition, nor dogma, nor a statute enforced by law. It is an attitude towards craftsmanship, a respect for associates, and a dedication toward the audience. This code outlines a self-discipline which, far from robbing one of individuality, increases personal esteem and dignity through cooperation and common purpose. The result is perfection which encompasses all that is meant by "Good Theatre."

- The Show Must Go On! I will never miss a performance.
- I shall play every performance to the best of my ability, regardless of how small my role or large my personal problems.
- I will respect my audience regardless of size or station.
- I shall never miss an entrance or cause a curtain to be late by my failure to be ready.
- I shall forego all social activities, which interfere with rehearsals and will always be on time.
- I shall never leave the theatre building or stage area until I have completed my performance.
- I shall remember that my aim is to create illusion, therefore, I will not destroy that illusion by appearing in costume and make-up off stage or outside the theatre.
- I will not allow the comments of friends, relatives or critics to change any phase of my work without proper authorization.
- I will not alter lines, business, lights, properties, settings, costumes, or any phase of the production without consultation with and permission from the director.
- I shall accept the director's advice in the spirit in which it is given for the director sees the production as a whole and my role as a portion thereof.
- I shall look upon the production as a collective effort demanding my utmost cooperation, hence I will forego the gratification of ego for the demands of the play.
- I will be patient and avoid temperamental outbursts, for they create tension and serve no useful purpose.
- I shall respect the play and the playwright, remembering that "A work of art is not a work of art until it is finished."
- I shall never blame my coworkers for my own failure.
- I will never engage in caustic criticism of another artist's work from jealousy or an urge to increase my own prestige.
- I shall inspire the public to respect me and my craft through graciousness in accepting both praise and constructive criticism.
- I will use stage properties and costumes with care, knowing they are tools of my craft and a vital part of the production.
- I will observe backstage courtesy and shall comport myself in strict compliance with rules of the theatre in which I work.
- I shall never lose my enthusiasm for the theatre because of disappointment or failure for they are the lessons by which I learn.
- I shall direct my efforts in such a manner that when I leave the theatre, it will stand as a greater institution.

(from the C.W. Post/Long Island University Department of Theatre and Film Handbook for Theatre Students, pg. 33)