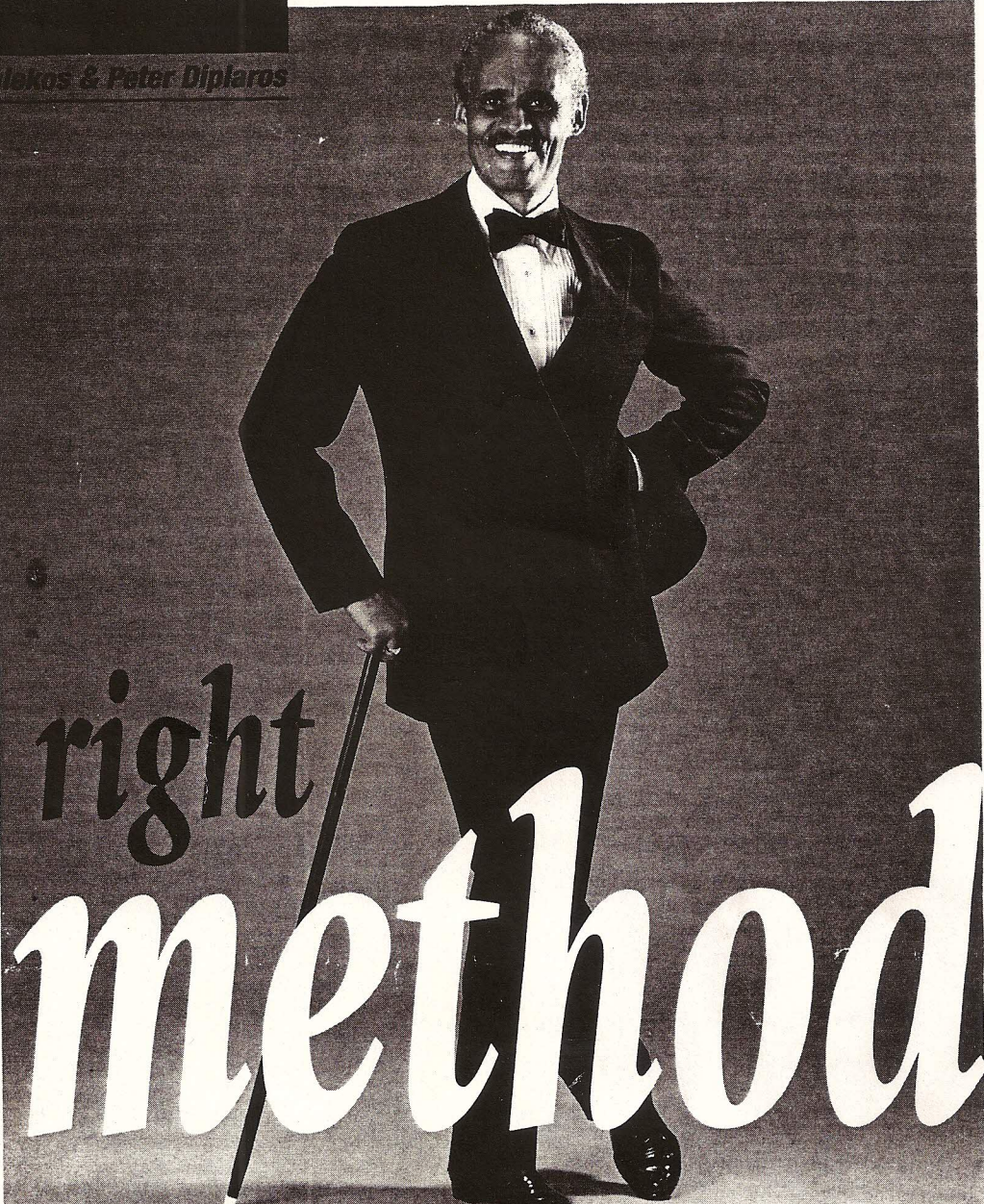


Psychology

by *Maria Dalekos & Peter Diplaros*

**There is a method
to this madness.
Ancient Greek
wisdom and
contemporary
theatre training
may hold the
keys to personal
development
excellence.**

The right
method



*Life doesn't come with
an owner's manual.
But it does come with
a script - your own.*

ARE YOU LOOKING for excellence? Of course you are. But this simple concept always seems to elude us. In a practical sense, excellence in life means fulfilling our promise and reaching our potential in whatever we do. Think for a minute what this means. To be excellent at work means to have a professional attitude, the ability to always produce results, meet challenges head-on and succeed. Excellence also means maintaining healthy and nurturing relationships with family, friends and lovers, and feeling fulfilled every day. Inner excellence means being free of stress and negativity and being able to harness your creativity and imagination. Sound too good to be true?

Perhaps not. Unlike perfection, excellence is easy to achieve and well within reach of everybody who wants to achieve it. That's what E. Jim G. Ross, founder of the Canadian Academy of Method Acting and noted filmmaker, actor, author and lecturer believes. Ross has been teaching the Stanislavsky Method, or "Method Acting," to actors for over 30 years, and claims that he's in the business of teaching excellence and anyone can do it.

Before you say, "But I'm not an actor!" let us explain why we think that the Method, as it is colloquially known, may be a diamond in the rough, an undiscovered tool in the search for self development and empowerment.

Believe What You See

Oscar-winning actress Meryl Streep, recently portrayed a violin teacher, in *Music of the Heart*, and learned to play the violin. Anyone who has ever put their hands on one knows just how hard it is to make a note come out, much less learn how to play it. And that's not an isolated case. Gary Oldman learned to play the piano for his role as Ludwig Van Beethoven, in *Immortal Beloved*. Sir Anthony Hopkins can switch from the Queen's English to mid-western American, in a heartbeat. What is it that makes actors such as Meryl Streep, Gary Oldman or Sir Anthony Hopkins capable of such feats? Where do they get the ability to develop new skills quickly, to cry real tears on stage, to fully experience their performance and deliver it with true emotion and passion? They are disciples of the Method. They don't just act out their role; they live it. We recognize outstanding performances just as we recognize a loving, supportive partner or an amazing job. The difference between being in it, and being at it, smacks us in the face.

Theatre provides an excellent window through which we can view reality and examine it from a new perspective. One of theatre's most memorable moments is Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "To be, or not to be. That is the question." That phrase contains much meaning but also reveals a key concept that carries enormous significance. The question really is: Do you want to live, or simply exist?

Method acting compels you to square off with reality and helps to unlock truths. By digging deep inside your gut and laying down your armor, you are urged to confront your demons, open your senses, create an awareness and discover yourself. Method acting teaches actors to live the role, not simply occupy the body that utters the words and goes through the motions. It also teaches you to live your life, instead of just experiencing it and letting life happen to you.

Knowledge is Power

Konstantin Stanislavsky invented the Method in Russia during the last part of the 19th century and has since generated a revolution in the arts. For a long time, the Method was not respected or used in North America

