

## Defining Your Terms

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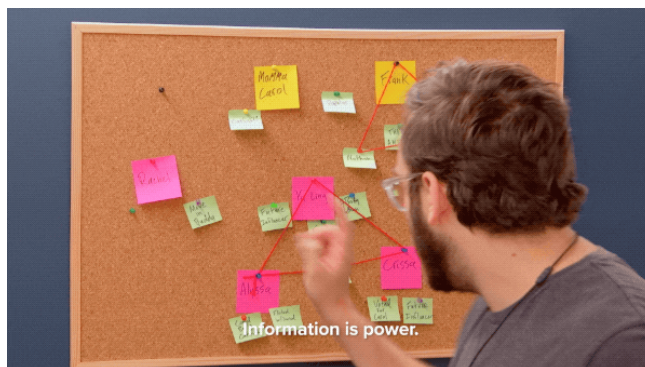
# THE THEATERMAKERS STUDIO

Hello, TheaterMakers!

One of the biggest pieces of advice I give to my clients is one that applies in such a wide variety of situations. That piece of advice?

### **Be. Specific.**

You can't be a Producer if you don't know what production you want to bring to life. You can't be a Director if you don't know what you want to say with your work. You can't be a Writer if you don't know what story to tell. And frankly, you can't do much of anything if you don't get specific with defining what you want.



I find that a lot of my clients have wildly visionary ideas with all the confidence in the world to get there. And I love this! Because why not dream as big as you can? Other shows have done it, so why can't yours? And if nobody else has done it before, why not be the first! All this said, big ideas can sometimes feel impossible because they're not grounded in tangible steps and therefore feel as though there's no clear way to move forward. In order to start thinking practically, I encourage my clients to start defining their terms. These are common theatre words that might seem easily definable, but really contain so many possibilities. A few of these important terms are:

- **“Production”**. What does it mean for your show to be in production? Does this mean a full staging on a major stage with all design elements? Or does this mean a smaller developmental staging to test out the show with an audience? Does this mean Broadway? Regional? Cruise ship? Site specific? Fringe? Is this a large-scale or small scale production? Multiple sets or one? How many people are in the cast? How long of a run?
- **“Money”**. When you say your show needs money, what does this mean? Is this donation money to get a few early elements started, like recording a cast album? Is it investments from multiple parties that plan to eventually see a return of profit from future productions? How much money do you need to get to the next stage? How much do you think you will need to get to the final stage?
- **“Development”**. What sort of development work does your show need? Do you need to see it in front of an audience to know if it works? Do you need to experiment with choreography and staging in a workshop or lab before going to production? Do you need to test it out with multiple actors through various readings? Do you need to showcase the show in multiple places to start garnering investor attention? What aspects of your show specifically are you developing?
- **“Producer”**. What do you want from a Producer? Are you looking for a Lead Producer who can take over the business side of your project, or do you want someone like a Co-Producer who focuses more on raising money while you oversee the major production decisions? Do you want a Producer who is involved in creative feedback, or one who stays out of it? Do you want a Producer who aims to take you to Broadway right away, or one who sees the long game as a better option for your show's development? What values do you want from a Producer if they're going to produce your show?

And most importantly, there's one word that can at times be the easiest and hardest word to define:

- **“Why”**. Why did you write this show? Why should it be produced? Why do you care about it? Why will others care about it? Why should your creative team care about it? Why is this a theatrical production and not a movie / book / poem / album / any other artistic medium? Why bring this show into the world now? Why do you create theatre?

If you haven't already, I encourage you to take some time and really define these terms for yourself, as well as any other terms that you find yourself frequently using. In fact, write your answers down. You might find yourself surprised by the things you realize through this, as you might discover core values and big dreams you never knew you had. You might find yourself suddenly re-inspired to create because you started remembering the purpose behind your work. But these written answers somewhere where you can easily look back on them, and continue to

Put these written answers somewhere where you can easily look back on them, and continue to refer to them every few days or weeks. And of course, feel free to continue to add to them!

Some answers you write down might change or evolve, and some you might realize you don't have a clue how to answer. That's okay! Let this be a challenge to start defining those terms as you see fit. Because the more definition you start placing on your goals, the clearer your path ahead will become.

The world of producing your own work can feel daunting and scary... and sure, it is! But what separates most people from seeing their words on stage is not just luck or privilege, but determination. It's all about defining what you want, and going for it.

Time to get specific!

See you next week,



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