


# Addie Barnhart

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## Teaching Philosophy

Every artist I know suffers, to some degree, from impostor's syndrome. Perhaps this has to do with the cultural treatment of art as extracurricular, artists are seen as dreamers and idealists who will, upon entering the "real world" be forced into a romanticized life of struggle and under-appreciation. I don't think I am any exception, although my experience as an artist has been relatively easy and privileged. I started college as a musical theatre performer looking forward to a Broadway career, I had been exposed to a limited view of theatre. I came from a fairly homogenous city and went to a school with similarly lacking diversity, but the arts community I found there allowed me to go on a journey of self-discovery that continues to this day. The consistency I saw in the theatre surrounding me gave me a stronger understanding of what I was looking for in community. I found meaning in the craft and exploration of myself through the acting studio and in working with a teacher who encouraged the class to actively participate in coaching and feedback was enlightening; I was introduced to a world of possibility and encouraged to seek out material that I found igniting and purposeful. I felt called to share my work through coaching, finding deep meaning in working with my peers to enhance their scenes and working together to make something beautiful. This studio of artists became a second home, so I switched my focus from Musical Theatre to Acting in order to support this drive to direct and act with the intention to pursue a role in higher education.

Since that year, I have continued my journey of deliberately seeking out experiences that will enhance my own skills in order to be a better teacher and director for my students. Because of my own transformation, I am keenly aware of the process involved in creating theatre and molding people; being attuned to the fluidity necessary to creating the best educational environment while pursuing unified learning objectives in meaningful curriculum. I believe in treating my students as equals and collaborators in their education and providing pedagogical reasons for approaching our work together as humans. I acknowledge the power of teaching life skills through theatre. I support a kinesthetic exploration of the methods we have at our fingertips, collaborative ways to explore storytelling, and a collective unlearning of our colonized classrooms through communication, empathy, and support. There should be no more masters. My goals are teaching my students how to cultivate a toolkit that evolves with them and support the interests of the individual while achieving the learning objectives of the whole. I am in pursuit of uncovering the truth of our creative journeys with my students, learning with them and through them as well as assisting them in their own discoveries of truthful storytelling and authentic representations of the world at large.



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As James Baldwin says, “The point is to get your work done, and your work is to change the world.” My goal in all of my work with students - in production and in the classroom - is to validate their experiences and identities by exposing them to work written for people like them, by people like them. I have high expectations that they will approach the art with respect and openness, using various methods and styles to guide their understanding of the theatrical world as they develop their aesthetic understanding of this ephemeral art. By encouraging an inclusive and collaborative room, I create a space of exploration and fearlessness which might hopefully translate to making a more empathetic environment outside of those four walls. I construct a classroom that is not focused on star-power, but on the symbiotic nature of theatre and the importance of ensemble, to instill in my students the reality that creating art requires a compassion and commitment to others as much as to yourself - a lesson that extends far beyond the reaches of theatre alone.

I work with brilliant young creatives every day as their primary and often times only acting teacher, and strive to continue honing my skillset as a bridge into continuing their craft. It is no secret that our industry has historically practiced a lot of gatekeeping in how we present, pass down, and make stories accessible. I continue my practice as an educator by pursuing as diverse training as I can in order to share all my resources with the next generation of theatre makers. We have an obligation as change makers to do better for those who come behind us. I am the product of a midwestern upbringing and educated in the heart of the bible belt, but the theories, ideas, methods, and conversations broached in the acting studio allowed me to form who I am by expanding my horizons, empathy, and cultural understanding of art and community. I seek professional development in order to learn from other artists and educators in our industry. It often gives me the tingling sensation of impostor’s syndrome, but my most rewarding and fulfilling education has begun with this fear and it’s always good reminder to be a vulnerable student again; it makes me a better teacher.

