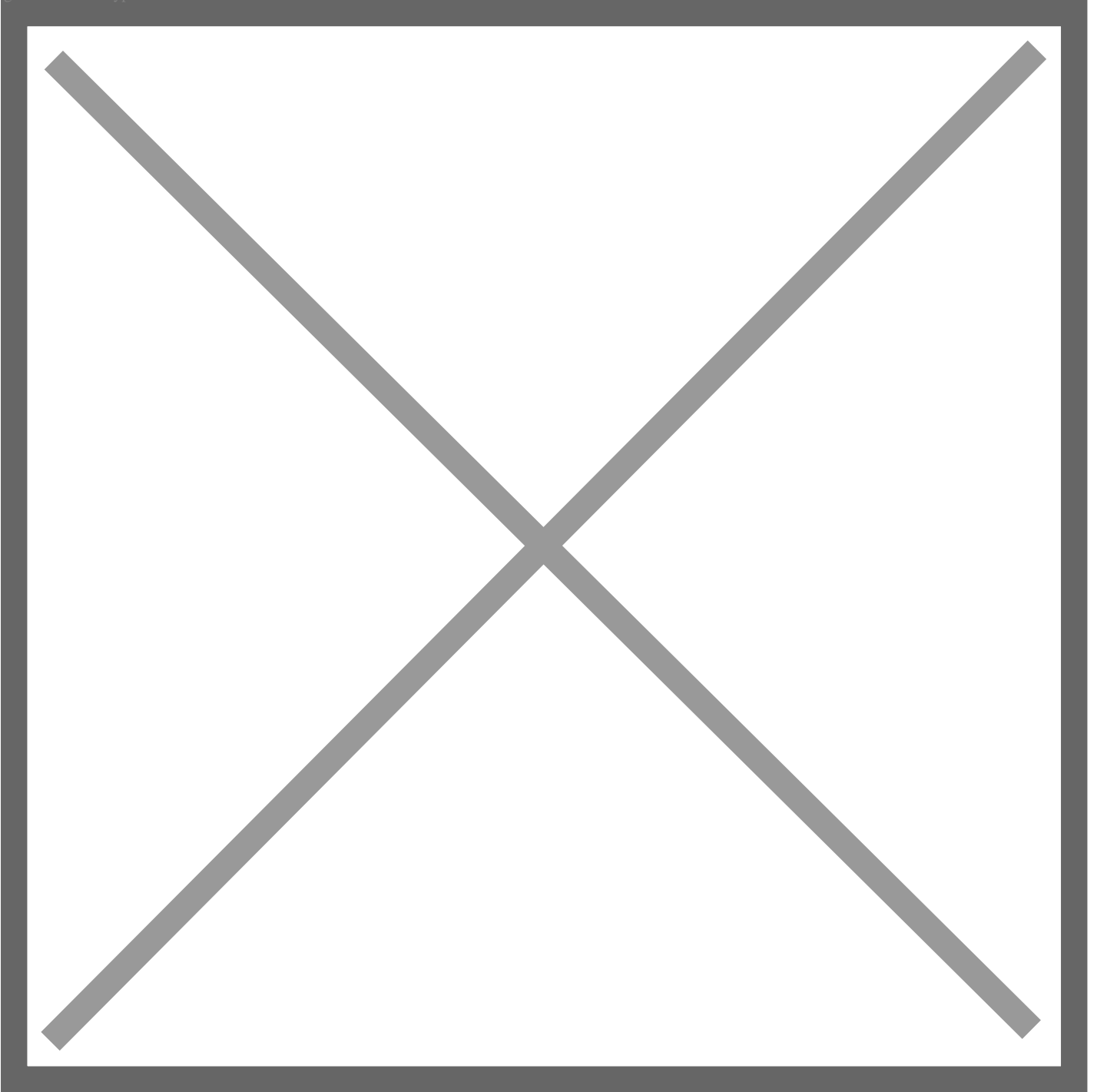


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# Acting Out

## Description

## Acting Out

Stop acting out! I heard this a lot growing up and did not realize until long after childhood that this admonition is tough to observe. Acting means motion. To stop acting out I lose all my kinetic energy.

I just read a memoir with insights on acting out for a full career. It is Paul Newman's book, [The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man](#). Here is what sticks with me, from three book passages.

### 1. The Core and the Periphery.

*The damage for me has come when I've realized what people were clamoring for was not me. It was characters invented by writers. It was the wit and ability of the authors, the wit and ability of the people who did the exploitation and the selling, that had the appeal... Do people think that I'm William Faulkner's Ben Quick? Or Hud? Or Butch Cassidy? Or Frank Galvin in The Verdict? Or any of the other parts I've played? It's a shell that's photographed onscreen, chased by the fans and garnering all the glory. While whoever is really inside me, the core, stays unexplored, uncomfortable, and unknown.*

As I watch people acting out—whether on a screen or in person sitting next to me— I will pay more attention to the difference between the prompts from the script and those coming from the actor as a person.

### 2. Acting and Philanthropy

*The easiest thing I can do, frankly, is to give away money. It does not represent the kind of sacrifice that, it seems to me, might enhance the magnificence of the gift. Am I actually a philanthropist, the way so many in the media have come to describe me? As far as I'm concerned, a philanthropist is someone who gives up an entirely comfortable way of life, goes out into the populace, gets his hands dirty, and dedicates himself to whatever keeps them dirty. The grace of that person is formidable.*

Paul, as you probably know, gave millions of dollars from his Newman's Own food products to such groups as the Hole in the Wall Gang Camps he founded for kids with often terminal illnesses. I like his view of authenticity much more than I do the crafted words of mission and values I see on foundation websites. The actor did more than give

money. He created and sustained a solution. I will be more alert to this distinction.

### 3. A Theology Lesson

Paul relates meeting a young boy at this camp who was talking about God with a counsellor.

*The boy said that he understood that you couldn't get more energy out of anything than had been put in to create it. Well," the counselor said, "I think I get back more energy from the camp than I put into it." The eight-year-old looked back at the counselor and said: "Well, you see, maybe that's what God is".*

What an extra ordinary definition and a great reminder that energy can surpass the physics on which it is based. Newman goes on to say:

*I think about the fact that I have been privileged to stay alive so long that anything I accomplish after this is gravy, and it seems to me that kids who don't even get the beginning of privilege before it's threatened, deserve something. Whatever you do to give them an experience they can treasure, you should, if you have the capacity to, do it. What could be more meaningful.*

Paul Newman's stories are less about the impacts on viewers of his movies than impacts on individuals he has met. The extraordinary life of Paul Newman came from his basics, not his refinements. This book is far more reflective than most of autobiographies I read that seem to have revised histories to fit the image to be portrayed. I heartily recommend it.

I will sign off on blog entries until January 4. Have wonderful holidays. Do act out...by going inward.

#### **Date Created**

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