The 12 Guideposts

From the book Audition by Michael Shurtleff

1. Relationships
   a. What is my relationship to other characters in the scene?
   b. Where is the love?
   c. Love comes in many forms.
   d. “The desire for love, to give it or receive it, and preferably both simultaneously, is the chief propellant in human beings.”

2. Conflict
   a. What are you fighting for?
   b. What tactics can you use to reach your goals?
   c. Never settle for anything less than your biggest dream!!!

3. The Moment Before
   a. Every selection starts in the middle. You must provide what comes before.
   b. Use your imagination and fill in the blanks. The more interesting your Moment Before, the more interesting your performance from the very beginning.

4. Humor
   a. Humor is not just for comedic selections.
   b. In life, we seek humor even in the most serious situations. It helps us cope.
   c. Look for the Humor. If it’s not there, put it there!

5. Opposites
   a. “Whatever you decide is your motivation in the scene, the opposite of that is also true and should be in it.”
   b. In all humans opposites exist. In all of us there is love & hate, creativity & self-destructive tendencies, etc.
   c. Play the opposites & you will keep your audience intrigued.

6. Discoveries
   a. Every scene should contain discoveries, things that happen for the first time.
   b. Make discoveries about: yourself, other characters, the situation, etc.

7. Communication & Competition
   a. Understand the Communication Process: The Sender sends a Message to the Receiver. The Receiver sends Feedback to the Sender. Anything that disrupts this process is Noise.
   b. The goal of Communication is Duplication.
   c. “I am right and you are wrong. You should change from being the way you are to be what I think you should be.”
   d. Compete for EVERYTHING! Life is competition!

8. Importance
   a. Find the most important thing to your character in every scene.
   b. Example: Catching a bus.
9. Find the Events
   a. Mark your script for Events.
   b. Events can be any of the following: a change, a confrontation, the result of a confrontation, a turning point, an exchange of power.
   c. Events can be obvious or obscure. Look deeper to find as many events as possible.

10. Place
    a. Use your imagination and SEE a real place with which you are familiar.
    b. How do you feel about this place? You can feel different about the same place after Events have taken place.
    c. Where you are changes the tone of the selection entirely.

11. Game Playing & Role Playing
    a. What is the game I am playing in this situation?
    b. What role do I assume in order to best play this game?
    c. This doesn’t mean you are being insincere. We use role playing in our everyday lives: with parents, teachers, friends, etc.

12. Mystery & Secret
    a. Don’t play an Event before it happens.
    b. We can never completely know others. We never completely know ourselves.
    c. Johari’s Window