I have worked with actors whose foreheads hit the table at the very mention of an action. I have worked with actors who energetically resist the idea that rational thought might be part of their creative process. But I have helped transform some young actors by converting them to a belief in Actioning. More instructively, I have worked with many actors (and I include in this all the best ones) for whom actions are a second language. Not a foreign language or an exotic one, but a technical articulation of the elusively human. A good actor talks about actions like a builder-decorator talks about the nature of nails or the colour of paint. Actions can lead an actor from confusion to clarity, from muddle to magnificence, from the clichéd to the complex.

This thesaurus of riches can help the actor develop that language. The final section is a genuine tool, using which the actor can analyse any one moment of his character’s journey, define instinctively the basic polarities of feeling towards another character, then select the intensity of that feeling, and thus arrive at a choice selection of appropriate transitive verbs.

It sounds complex, but so is dancing the salsa, and that only takes an hour or so to get into the musculature. If you want to act, or act better, actions will take you a long way on the journey to excellence.

Terry Johnson

Actions - The Actors’ Thesaurus aims to clarify a widely used rehearsal and performance technique, known by different names, but here called Actioning.

Actioning provides the stimulation for the actor to directly play each line of the text and develop alternative ways of bringing their character to life. The technique encourages performances with accurate and dramatic communication between characters.

Actioning heightens the actor’s spontaneity, discouraging him or her from monotonously and automatically replicating a tone. Everyone has seen productions - particularly of Shakespeare’s plays - where, if they were completely honest, both audience and players alike don’t have a clue about what’s going on; it’s all ‘sound and fury signifying nothing.’ Actioning should keep the actors ‘in the moment’ and deter what Peter Brook calls ‘deadly’ acting, where nothing is going on, just words being spoken.

If the actor plays a real and specific action on each sentence then, even though the audience are unlikely to be able to identify the technique or the individual action, the work will be interesting and absolutely watchable because of its precision. Actioning enforces a specificity which can liberate the actor’s performance and ensure a cohesive integrated character with each moment leading naturally onto the next.
Actioning is a starting point for use in the rehearsal room and for private textual analysis. It really comes to fruition in performance, affording actors the self-confidence to develop and refine their choices continuously. Actioning keeps the text alive by ensuring the drama is active and subject to constant redefinition.

If a whole company takes an hour to explore the principle at the start of rehearsals, a shared dramaturgical language is established. This synchronisation can save rehearsal time and facilitate more efficient communication.

Stimulation – Spontaneity – Specificity
Self-confidence – Synchronisation

Actioning is primarily for actors – for established professionals and beginners alike, for students or amateur actors, for those with training and those without. Actioning can also be useful for music theatre performers, for actors wrestling with audition speeches, for those who have to breathe life into a one-dimensional television or radio commercial, or for those who have been performing a play for months and need to re-invigorate their performance.

This book can also be used by academic students of drama to deconstruct a script for its sub-textual dynamic.

The Origins of Actioning

Actioning comes from Stanislavski (1863-1938), the Russian actor/director/theorist who formulated a revolutionary acting methodology which seeks to enhance psychological depth and emotional truth in performance. His system, still studied and practised widely around the world, acted as a catalyst for other approaches to acting, including the American Method.

In his work (primarily at the Moscow Art Theatre), Stanislavski pioneered a series of exercises and rules which would allow actors to access their emotions more freely and maintain the essential but elusive creative state.

Concentrating on Actioning may be many actors' way of short-circuiting all elements of the rather more complex and more psychologically demanding system. Nonetheless, knowledge of key elements of Stanislavski's system is vital before being able to begin your work on Actioning.

Units and Objectives

Finding an action for a particular moment or line of text is dependent upon understanding the Stanislavskian concept of units and objectives (sometimes called episodes and tasks). In each unit of the text, you must decide on your objective (what your character wants) before defining the action (how your character sets out to get it).

Begin by breaking the scene up into units, each containing a single defined objective. Stanislavski makes a useful analogy in An Actor Prepares. For him, the process of dividing a play into its component units is like breaking up a cooked chicken so that it can be eaten. If eaten portion by portion, then the whole chicken can ultimately be devoured. Similarly, the scene is broken into its separate 'portions' or units in order to be investigated. Each unit has its own title, which describes what that unit is about, and each character has his or her own objective at the heart of that unit. Like units, which can be major (whole sections of text) or minor (a single word or short sentence), so the characters' objectives are major or minor according to how the second-to-second minutiae of the scene develops.

Stanislavski warns: 'You should not try to express the meaning of your objectives in terms of a noun. That can be used for a unit but the objective must always be a verb.' Take the word 'power', for example. Turn it into an objective:
‘I want power.’ On its own, this is too general and, therefore, unplayable. Introduce something more definitely active and the objective is better defined: ‘I want to do something to obtain power.’ The ‘something’ element of the equation helps you find your action for the unit. The actions are what you do to obtain what you want; they are the tactics you employ.

Actioning Today

The widespread use of Actioning in the professional theatre seems to have developed in Europe and the US over the last fifty years, a theory handed down by word of mouth through generations of actors and directors. The principles of Actioning are now taught at many drama schools and conservatoires and, whilst it cannot be assumed that all actors share the same dramatic language and practise the same rehearsal techniques, it is safe to say that increasing numbers of performers are aware of and use the process.

Certainly with many directors using Actioning as a fundamental rehearsal technique (the eminent British director, Max Stafford-Clark, famously spends the first few weeks of rehearsals Actioning the text), it is a process that every actor should recognise and feel comfortable with.

Although the theory of Actioning has been laid down before, this is the first time a thesaurus of transitive verbs has been specifically compiled to facilitate the actor’s work and to support this theory.

How to Action the Text

What we say and what we think or mean don’t always correspond. Take the most straightforward non sequitur: ‘Would you like a coffee?’ You could say that the speaker’s objective is simply ‘I want to offer you a drink’ but, more likely, there are a whole host of deeper impulses between the two individuals operating underneath the surface. The objective is more likely to be along the lines of ‘I want you to be relaxed’, ‘I want to show you I’m a caring person’, ‘I want you to stay the night’ and so on.

Actioning offers an immediate way of achieving this objective. The action word is a succinct and specific transitive verb which describes what your character is actually doing to another character. As the old saying goes, actions really can speak louder than words.

‘Would you like a coffee?’ could be played in many ways, according to the context of the scene and the character’s objective. Different action words might be seduce, welcome, dominate, befriend, admire, fear, disgrace, manipulate… The choice is virtually limitless – but must always be determined by the character’s objective.

Identifying Action Words

Transitive Verbs

An action word must always be a transitive verb.

A transitive or active verb is a verb (‘a doing word’) that you can actively do to someone else. It is always in the present tense and transitional, expressing an action that carries over from you (the subject) to the person you’re speaking to (the object).

A useful way to identify if a verb is transitive or not is to place it between the words ‘I’ and ‘you’ and see if the sentence makes sense.
So, in the case of *charm*, *encourage* and *cherish*, ‘I charm you’, ‘I encourage you’, ‘I cherish you’ all make sense and so those three verbs must be transitive. They each express an action between characters and can define the impulse under each sentence.

**Transitive Verb ‘Wannabes’**

Some verbs feel and sound as though they ought to be active, but in fact are not and cannot be used as actions. They will not adhere to the ‘I do something to you’ principle.

For example, ‘I interfere with you’ is not active since ‘with’ disrupts the principle. This may seem purist, but it will force you to be more specific, as there are many ways one can ‘interfere with’ someone. So, you might choose to play *I disorientate you*, *disrupt you*, *muddle you*, *upset you*, *interrupt you*, *impede you*, *hamper you*; all of which are transitive.

When the verb requires a noun, it is not transitive. For example, *abate* needs a noun – ‘I abate your fears’ – for the sentence to work. Similarly, *allocate*, *concede* and *assign* (‘I allocate you a place’, ‘I concede the argument to you’ or ‘I assign you the task’) cannot be action words.

**Choosing the Action**

Look at the text offered to you. Start by clarifying what your character wants: their objective. Then choose a transitive verb for each sentence which helps the character achieve that objective.

So if A says ‘Would you like a coffee?’ and the objective is to make B so comfortable he stays a bit longer, then A might choose to play ‘I befriend you’ or she could be more seductive and play ‘I beguile you’ as her tactic for achieving the objective.

Every action has a different flavour in the mouth, however similar the word looks on the page or synonymous you might think it is. It is your job to locate exactly the right word for the moment and then to play it.

An action is not necessarily right or wrong – instead, it is helpful or unhelpful in fulfilling the objective, enlivening the performance and telling the story. An action may or perhaps should change throughout rehearsal and performance. At the early stage of rehearsals, it is better to be instinctive in your choice and then finalise and hone the action later.

**Playing the Action**

Try the action out. Put the words of the text into your mouth. Drop your action in, speak your line now invested with your action. Speak the action out loud before continuing with the sentence. This can be done in the first person (“I tease you: ‘Are you the lady of the house?’”) or the third person (“Viola teases Olivia: ‘Are you the lady of the house?’”).

How does it feel? Try some other verbs, play around a little. Find the verb that feels perfect, the one that makes sense in your heart as well as in your head for that moment in the scene and to achieve that objective.

Another way to play around with getting used to the system is to speak your line to a couple of friends or colleagues, neutrally, with nothing invested in it. Then drop your action in, keeping it to yourself. Speak the sentence again, now invested with the action. Can your friends locate what action you are playing? How close are they? Try again. Can you do anything to make your playing more precise and the action clearer? The results of this exercise should not be considered a judgement on whether you can act! Rather, it is a fun way of experimenting with how many
ways you can play an action, and how effective those versions are.

Actioning is designed to help your imagination, not replace it. Stay instinctive, stay open, surprise yourself by playing something that you wouldn’t normally play, have fun. When something doesn’t work, try another option until the alchemy is right. The ways in which you achieve your objective could be as many as the imagination is infinite.

You could work in reverse and decide to identify your objective only after having actioned each sentence thoroughly and found the most appropriate action word. It’s up to you.

The Actioning Mantra

One thought. One sentence. One breath. One action . . .

- We choose an action for each whole thought.
- A whole thought is comprised within a whole sentence.
- This sentence should be spoken with one breath.
- And each breath should contain one action.

. . . One thought. One sentence. One breath. One action.

Actions in the Rehearsal Room

Some companies sit around a table for a large proportion of rehearsals deciding together what each action for each sentence should be, before putting any of the play onto its feet. They are mapping out the play’s journey, exploring all the characters’ journeys en route to the desired destination. They are building up a common interpretation and language, so that during the production run, changes can be made by the cast to enliven and invigorate what could become staid.

Other companies might touch on the language of Actioning early on, but not explore the play exhaustively by this method, only asking what actions are at play when things become stale.

The individual actor might choose to locate their character’s actions for themselves when investigating the script: an emotional limbering-up before meeting the other characters in the rehearsal room. They might not mention to anyone else what their process is; after all, there are as many rehearsal processes as actors in the company.

Whilst Actioning can be applied by the solo actor in their preparation for playing a role, it works best when employed by a whole company. The text is re-active and works with (or against) text spoken by other characters. When a company works together to define their actions, there is the opportunity to play with and explore different actions, pick up ideas from one another and bounce off the actions of other characters. Intentions, meanings, possible actions and avenues for your character that might otherwise have been missed are revealed when Actioning together.

Whilst in life we do not generally know or understand people’s true actions, objectives and intentions towards us, Actioning affords us this unique privilege and paves the way to a more inspired and dynamic performance by all actors in the company.

Actioning a Soliloquy

But what happens if the actor is not speaking to anyone? What if the actor is working on an audition speech or soliloquy and needs to enliven and motivate it?

Let’s look at the first part of probably the most famous soliloquy of all time.
Hamlet
by Shakespeare (Act 3 Scene 1)

To be, or not to be – that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consumption
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub.
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause.

Internalising the Actions

Divide the character into his or her own lower and higher self, each having a very different identity. Then, address the text and the objective to these different aspects of oneself, as if talking to a separate person.

4) 'Tis a consumption
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
5) To sleep, perchance to dream. 6) Ay, there's the rub.
7) For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause.

For example:

4) Directed at his lowest self – the scared, childlike boy inside Hamlet – and he might use the action: to awaken.

5) Directed at his higher self and he might play: to comfort or to console.

6) Directed to his own collapsed self-esteem and he might play: to entertain.

7) Directed to the moralising philosopher within, so he might play: to elevate.

Even if the audience doesn't fully understand every word or thought of a complex speech, the tonal variety and textural depth provided by these actions conveys acting which is truthful and specific, rather than phoney and generalised.

Externalising the Actions

Try imagining the space inhabited with people from the character's life and direct each complete thought to those people. This is not literal, it is imaginative. One imagines directing each sentence to X so that there is a concrete and specific impetus and objective on each line.

1) To be, or not to be – that is the question;
2) Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. 3) To die, to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to.

For example:

1) Addressed to his father (alive or dead) and he might play the action: to defy.

2) Addressed to Claudius and he might play the action: to challenge.

3) Addressed to Ophelia and he might play the action: to comfort.
How to Use The Actors' Thesaurus

This thesaurus is designed to extend the actor’s vocabulary when Actioning the text. It is not totally comprehensive, nor will it choose actions for you, but it should be used to open up your imagination and help you to refine your choices. It is intended that the actor navigates his or her way through the word list by making simple choices which logically lead to a final, specific, accurately defined transitive verb.

Each individual actor (and director) will have differing personal approaches to how they use Actioning as a rehearsal and performance technique. Some will want to follow the system extensively and use this thesaurus for each individual line of the text. Others will dip in and out of the process, using it when they want to revitalise a specific objective or when they are rehearsing a particularly problematic scene.

The thesaurus can be used in two ways:

Alphabetical Thesaurus

If you know what action you are playing to achieve your objective in a given circumstance but want to try something else, then simply look up the verb you are playing in the main alphabetical thesaurus. You will be offered other choices of verbs which are all related. You can then begin a journey of cross-referencing that takes you through hundreds of potential choices.

Emotional Groups

If you have not decided what action you are playing, then turn to the Emotional Groups which follow the alphabetical thesaurus.
Your first navigational choice is to decide what your character is trying to do to the other in the simplest terms. There is a choice of three directions. Is your character NURTURING, USING, or DAMAGING the other character/s? Make an instinctive choice, choose one category and turn to the page indicated.

- Each of the original choices will have led you to three more groups of words. For example, if you’ve chosen NURTURING words, you now have to decide whether this nurturing is LOVING, ENCOURAGING or SUPPORTING. Stay instinctive. Then once again turn to the appropriate page. If you’ve chosen a USING word, this will lead you to three other umbrella choices belonging to that word, i.e. one can ‘use’ someone, broadly speaking, in three different ways: by employing DISTURBING words, DECEIVING words, or MANIPULATING words. And finally, if you’ve decided you are using a DAMAGING word, then the options are subdivided into DISCOURAGING words, HARMING words, and DESTROYING words.

- If, for example, you choose LOVING, you will now be looking at a list of ‘loving’ verbs. The list is in simple alphabetical order. Choose your word, allow yourself a little poetry. Each word has its own place in the main alphabetical thesaurus. Look the word up. The list of alternatives alongside each word offers further creative options for investigation.

Most verbs vary in meaning according to their context. Some of the verbs from the thesaurus will not feature at all amongst the Emotional Groups, others will repeat themselves in more than one section. Compiling a definitive list is impossible. The emotional grouping is a subjective starting point designed for instant access to the subtext and a shortcut into the thesaurus. You can create your own emotional groupings according to your taste and definition.

Sample Scenes

In the following examples, the text is offered ‘clean’ followed by three alternative playings of that scene, with the different actions offered in brackets before each line of text. Try to ascertain for yourself what the objective for each character is, working directly from the specific choices made.

You may, of course, come up with a completely different set of choices from those suggested here. The variety of examples should illustrate how Actioning is applicable to texts from all dramatic genres.

SHAKESPEARE/CLASSICAL DRAMA

Twelfth Night

by Shakespeare (Act 1 Scene 5)

OLIVIA Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA I can say little more than I have studied, and that question’s out of my part. Good gentle one, give me modest assurance, if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA Are you a comedian?

VIOLA No, my profound heart. And yet by the very fangs of malice, I swear I am not that I play. Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA If I do not usurp myself, I am.

So, according to the actors’ objectives, one interpretation could be:

OLIVIA (Analyse) Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA (Tantalise) I can say little more than I have studied, and that question’s out of
my part. (Hearten) Good gentle one, give me modest assurance, if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA (Subjugate) Are you a comedian?

VIOLA (Sweeten) No, my profound heart.
(Stimulate) And yet by the very fangs of malice, I swear I am not that I play. (Tease) Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA (Humiliate) If I do not usurp myself, I am.

Another interpretation:

OLIVIA (Captivate) Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA (Quieten) I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part. (Reproach) Good gentle one, give me modest assurance, if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA (Mystify) Are you a comedian?

VIOLA (Reject) No, my profound heart. (Estrange) And yet by the very fangs of malice, I swear I am not that I play. (Reprimand) Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA (Stimulate) If I do not usurp myself, I am.

Or:

OLIVIA (Examine) Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA (Appease) I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part. (Caution) Good gentle one, give me modest assurance, if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA (Malign) Are you a comedian?

VIOLA (Rebuff) No, my profound heart.
(Mellow) And yet by the very fangs of malice,

I swear I am not that I play. (Praise) Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA (Unbalance) If I do not usurp myself, I am.

PANTOMIME/COMEDY

Actioning works with any text, even with the simplest and most formulaic form of writing, like pantomime. Indeed, the technique is especially useful for the actor performing a play without, on first appearance, depth or subtext. Actioning can bring precision and truth to even the most apparently banal role.

The technique also helps to revitalise an actor in a long run of a show — like a pantomime — that might be playing three times a day and might otherwise grow stale. The actor can consciously play around with choices made in the rehearsal room all those months ago.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
by Julian Woolford and Marina Caldarone

RED QUEEN Muddles! Where have you been?

MUDDLES Have we met somewhere before?

RED QUEEN You've worked for me for eight years.

MUDDLES I thought your face looked familiar. Where have you been?

RED QUEEN What do you mean where have I been? I sent you out two days ago to buy me some nail varnish. Anyone would think you'd been to Glasgow and back. Where've you been?

MUDDLES Glasgow and back.

RED QUEEN What?

MUDDLES I can explain . . .
One version of choices might read:

RED QUEEN (Attack) Muddles! (Reprove) Where have you been?

MUDLES (Avoid) Have we met somewhere before?

RED QUEEN (Challenge) You’ve worked for me for eight years.

MUDLES (Reduce) I thought your face looked familiar. (Consider) Where have you been?

RED QUEEN (Accost) What do you mean, where have I been? (Remind) I sent you out two days ago to buy me some nail varnish. (Abuse) Anyone would think you’d been to Glasgow and back. (Assault) Where’ve you been?

MUDLES (Battle) Glasgow and back.

RED QUEEN (Demoralise) What?

MUDLES (Engage) I can explain . . .

Or:

RED QUEEN (Judge) Muddles! (Challenge) Where have you been?

MUDLES (Congratulate) Have we met somewhere before?

RED QUEEN (Favour) You’ve worked for me for eight years.

MUDLES (Applaud) I thought your face looked familiar. (Please) Where have you been?

RED QUEEN (Flatten) What do you mean, where have I been? (Coax) I sent you out two days ago to buy me some nail varnish. (Flatter) Anyone would think you’d been to Glasgow and back. (Pet) Where’ve you been?

MUDLES (Trump) Glasgow and back.

RED QUEEN (Strike) What?

MUDLES (Delight) I can explain . . .

xxx

Or:

RED QUEEN (Revere) Muddles! (Test) Where have you been?

MUDLES (Dismiss) Have we met somewhere before?

RED QUEEN (Confront) You’ve worked for me for eight years.

MUDLES (Befuddle) I thought your face looked familiar. (Patronise) Where have you been?

RED QUEEN (Hypnotise) What do you mean, where have I been? (Beguile) I sent you out two days ago to buy me some nail varnish. (Fascinate) Anyone would think you’d been to Glasgow and back. (Inflame) Where’ve you been?

MUDLES (Obliterate) Glasgow and back.

RED QUEEN (Control) What?

MUDLES (Agitate) I can explain . . .

CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

Dead Funny

by Terry Johnson (the opening scene of the play)

Eleanor sits motionless. On the floor scattered toys and the torso, its organs spilled. Richard, her husband, enters.


ELEANOR Lucky Wimbledon.

RICHARD One night only.

ELEANOR Might have been a whole week.

RICHARD Mr Grimsdale!

ELEANOR You got a ticket?

RICHARD I got twelve.
ELEANOR  Handy. When you fall asleep you can stretch out.

RICHARD  Don’t laugh at me, cause I’m a fool.

One interpretation:

RICHARD  (Caution) One night only. (Warn) Wimbledon Theatre. (Discourage) Sunday night. (Dampen) Norman Wisdom. (Discourage) Norman Wisdom.

ELEANOR  (Enliven) Lucky Wimbledon.

RICHARD  (Dismiss) One night only.

ELEANOR  (Delight) Might have been a whole week.

RICHARD  (Demotivate) Mr Grimsdale!

ELEANOR  (Probe) You got a ticket?

RICHARD  (Amuse) I got twelve.

ELEANOR  (Top) Handy. (Poke) When you fall asleep you can stretch out.

RICHARD  (Entertain) Don’t laugh at me cause I’m a fool.

Or:

RICHARD  (Awaken) One night only. (Arouse) Wimbledon Theatre. (Stimulate) Sunday night. (Surprise) Norman Wisdom. (Excite) Norman Wisdom.

ELEANOR  (Flick) Lucky Wimbledon.

RICHARD  (Accuse) One night only.

ELEANOR  (Knock) Might have been a whole week.

RICHARD  (Shock) Mr Grimsdale!

ELEANOR  (Applaud) You got a ticket?

RICHARD  (Impress) I got twelve.

ELEANOR  (Stroke) Handy. (Belittle) When you fall asleep you can stretch out.

RICHARD  (Shame) Don’t laugh at me cause I’m a fool.

Or:

RICHARD  (Beseech) One night only. (Bewitch) Wimbledon Theatre. (Seduce) Sunday night. (Engross) Norman Wisdom. (Fascinate) Norman Wisdom.

ELEANOR  (Deflect) Lucky Wimbledon.

RICHARD  (Arouse) One night only.

ELEANOR  (Tease) Might have been a whole week.

RICHARD  (Pity) Mr Grimsdale!

ELEANOR  (Torment) You got a ticket?

RICHARD  (Block) I got twelve.

ELEANOR  (Patronise) Handy. (Wound) When you fall asleep you can stretch out.

RICHARD  (Shame) Don’t laugh at me cause I’m a fool.

Radio/TV Commercial Voice-overs

As any actor knows, commercials and voice-overs form an expanding sector of the job market, and a very satisfying, and at times lucrative, sector at that. The casting process for this work is difficult to define and can be a hit-and-miss business; often, for example, the casting director is looking for a ‘sound’ to sell the product. Since you can’t act a ‘sound’, it is important to ascertain what is required from the script you will have been given to read. You can then action the text to bring what can be very artificial to life.

Take this text advertising a shopping centre. It can be read a number of ways according to choices made. Always have a very concrete idea
of the audience you are talking to - and let it always be an audience of one.

'You’ve never seen anything like this before. That’s because nothing like this has ever been built before. So whatever you think shopping centres are like, you’d better think again. Silverwater. It’s an experience to savour.'

You might be given some direction; you might not. Get as much information as you can and then play around. So, if you’re asked to convey a seductive quality and your objective is to seduce the listener, you can play:

'1) You’ve never seen anything like this before. 2) That’s because nothing like this has ever been built before. 3) So whatever you think shopping centres are like, you’d better think again. 4) Silverwater. 5) It’s an experience to savour.'

1) Entice
2) Lure
3) Tempt
4) Delight
5) Bribe

All these actions are listed in the thesaurus under the word seduce. So, without coming out of that word, there are many ways to play these sentences without being repetitive or boring. You might equally go to another related word and find other alternatives that are less obviously seductive. The choice is there for you.
Note
For guidelines on how to use these Emotional Groups to kick-start choosing your actions, refer to page p.xv of the introduction.

The Emotional Groups and their subgroups are:

- **NURTURING**
  - Loving
  - Encouraging
  - Supporting
  - P. 147

- **USING**
  - Manipulating
  - Disturbing
  - Deceiving
  - P. 151

- **DAMAGING**
  - Discouraging
  - Harming
  - Destroying
  - P. 155
A Loving Words

Accept, Accommodate, Admire, Adore, Adorn, Adulate, Assuage
Baptise, Beautify, Betroth, Bless
Calm, Caress, Centre, Civilise, Clasp, Cleanse, Clinch, Coddle, Comfort, Compliment, Compose, Condone, Consecrate, Conserve, Console, Cosset, Court, Cradle, Credit, Cuddle, Cup, Cushion
Defrost, Deify, Delight
Fan, Father, Felicitate, Forgive, Foster
Gladden, Glorify, Grace, Gratify
Hallow, Harmonise, Hold, Honour, Hug
Idolise, Inflame, Infuse, Insure
Jolly
Kindle, Kiss
Level, Liberate, Lick, Lull, Lure
Massage, Meet, Melt, Mend, Mollify, Mollycoddle, Mother
Name, Nibble, Nourish, Nurse, Nuzzle
Ornament
Pacify, Pamper, Pardon, Parent, Pat, Paw, Peck, Perfect, Pet, Placate, Please, Pleasure, Praise, Prize, Propitiate, Protect, Purify
Ravish, Rear, Receive, Reconcile, Redeem, Refine, Reform, Regain, Regale, Rehabilitate, Rekindle,
Relax, Release, Relieve, Relinquish, Relish, Remedy, Renew, Replenish, Rescue, Respect, Restore, Resuscitate, Retrieve, Revere, Revitalise, Revive, Rock, Romance, Rouse

Safeguard, Salvage, Sanctify, Satiate, Satisfy, Saturate, Save, Savour, School, Secure, Seduce, Select, Serve, Settle, Shepherd, Shield, Shroud, Smoothe, Sober, Soothe, Spellbind, Squeeze, Still, Stroke, Suffuse, Sustain, Swathe

Tease, Temper, Thank, Thaw, Titillate, Titivate, Toast, Touch, Transfix, Transform, Transport, Treasure, Treat

Unburden, Unchain, Unfasten, Unfetter, Unify, Unite, Unravel, Unshackle, Untie

Validate, Value, Venerate, Vindicate, Vitalise

Waken, Warm, Wash, Wean, Wed, Welcome, Win, Woo, Worship

B Encouraging words

Absolve, Accelerate, Accustom, Acknowledge, Activate, Aggrandise, Amend, Animate, Applaud, Approve, Arouse, Assist, Augment

Befriend, Bestir, Blazon, Bolster, Boost, Brighten

Cajole, Certify, Champion, Coach, Coax, Compel, Compensate, Condition, Congratulate, Conjure, Convert, Correct, Cue, Cultivate

Decorate, Delegate, Designate, Develop, Distinguish, Drill, Drive


Familiarise, Feed, Fire, Focus, Forward, Fortify, Free, Freshen, Fuel, Further

Greet, Groom, Guide

Habituade, Harden, Hasten, Heal, Heighten, Help


Join

Kindle

Launch, Lead, Lecture, Lift, Light, Lighten

Magnetise, Mobilise, Motivate, Move

Nudge

Organise, Orientate, Overhaul

 Permit, Persuade, Polish, Press, Pressure, Prod, Promote, Prompt, Propel, Pull, Pursue, Push

Quicken

Rally, Reassemble, Reassure, Recommend, Recondition, Reconstitute, Recruit, Refresh, Regenerate, Reinvigorate, Rejuvenate, Repair, Revolutionise, Reward, Rush

Second, Shape, Sharpen, Sophisticate, Spare, Spark, Spur, Steer, Stiffen, Stimulate, Stir, Stoke, Strengthen, Stretch, Sweeten, Swell

Tantalise, Teach, Thrill, Thrust, Toughen, Train, Trigger, Tug, Tutor

Urge, Usher

Warrant

C Supporting Words

Abet, Acclaim, Accommodate, Accompany, Adopt, Advise, Aid, Alert, Allay, Allign, Anchor, Appoint, Approve, Arm, Assure, Attend, Authorise, Aver, Award

Back, Balance, Bear, Behold, Bind, Bolster, Brief

Carry, Catch, Cement, Champion, Choose, Commend, Confirm, Contain, Corroborate, Counsel, Crown
Defend, Direct, Disburden, Discipline

Embed, Emend, Endorse, Ennoble, Entrust, Equip, Esteem

Fix, Follow, Fortify, Furnish

Generate, Govern, Grasp, Guard, Guide

Hail, Heal, Help, Host, House

Inoculate, Insulate, Inure

Keep, Knight

Legitimise, Lift, Lighten, Lodge

Maintain, Manage, Master, Match, Meet

Navigate, Nominate

Obey, Ordain

Pardon, Pay, Pick, Plant, Police, Proclaim

Qualify

Ratify, Rebuild, Receive, Recompense, Reinforce, Remunerate, Retain, Root, Rule

Safeguard, Sponsor, Stabilise Steady, Stoke, Stress

Toast, Trumpet

Uphold, Uplift

Will

A Manipulating words

Allure, Amaze, Amuse, Appease, Arrest, Attract

Bait, Beg, Beguile, Beseech, Besiege, Bewitch, Bind, Blackmail, Brainwash, Bribe, Browbeat, Buff, Butter

Change, Charm, Churn, Coerce, Corner, Corrupt

Dazzle, Deactivate, Deconstruct

Engineer, Ensnare, Entice, Entrap, Exploit

Fascinate, Flatter, Fondle, Force, Fragment

Hog, Hoodwink, Hook, Humble, Hurry, Hush, Hustle, Hypnotise

Judge, Jumble

Load, Lobby, Lower, Lull

Manipulate, Manoeuvre, Mesmerise, Milk, Monopolise, Mould

Negate

Operate, Outwit, Overcome, Overhaul, Overmaster, Own

Preoccupy, Pressurise, Probe, Programme

Ration, Rush

Sabotage, Seduce, Shake, Solicit, Stump, Subjugate, Suspend

Tempt, Test, Tie, Tighten, Trump

Undermine, Use

Vet, Vilify

B Deceiving Words

Adulterate

Bamboozle, Betray, Blind, Bluff
C Cheat, Con, Corrupt
Deceive, Delude, Diddle, Dupe
Entrap
Flatter, Fleece, Foil, Fool
Hoax, Hoodwink, Humour
Kid
Lampoon
Malign, Manoeuvre, Misdirect, Misguide, Mislead, Muddle, Mystify
Pilfer, Pinch, Pluck, Procure, Purloin, Puzzle
Rag
Snare, Steal, Swindle
Throw, Trick, Trip, Trump
Undercut, Undermine

C Disturbing Words
Abandon, Accost, Addle, Affright, Aggravate, Agitate, Alarm, Alert, Annoy, Antagonise, Badger, Baffle, Bedevil, Benumb, Bewilder, Bother, Bug
Concern, Confine, Confound, Confront, Confuse, Constrain, Contest
Daze, Decline, Deny, Derail, Derange, Deride, Destabilise, Discomfort, Disconcert, Disengage, Dislodge, Displace, Disrupt, Distract, Distress, Disturb, Dominate, Domineer
Elude, Embroil, Encumber, Engulf, Enmesh
Floor, Flummox, Fluster, Freeze, Frighten, Frustrate
Goad, Grab, Grill
Harangue, Haunt, Heckle, Hector, Horrify
Incense, Infect, Infuriate, Interrogate, Interrupt, Irritate

Jolt
Menace, Mortify
Nag, Nauseate
Outrage
Panic, Paw, Peeve, Perplex, Perturb, Pester, Plague, Poke, Provoke, Puzzle
Query, Question, Quiz
Rattle, Reproach, Reprove, Repulse, Revile, Ridicule, Rile, Rock, Ruffle
Segregate, Shame, Shock, Sicken, Slight, Snub, Soil, Spook, Stagger, Stalk, Startle, Stifle, Stultify, Stump, Stun, Stupefy, Surprise, Surround, Swamp
Taint, Tarnish, Terrify, Terrorise, Thwart, Traumatise, Twist
Uncover, Undermine, Undo, Unhinge, Unhook, Unnerve, Unsettle, Unsteady, Upset
Vex
Wobble, Wrench, Wrest, Wring
A Discouraging Words

Abandon, Admonish, Alieenate, Appal, Apprehend, Arraign, Avert, Avoid
Ban, Bar, Belittle, Blight, Block
Cage, Castigate, Censor, Chastise, Chide, Chill, Chop, Chuck, Clutch, Convict, Cool, Cramp, Criticise, Curb
Dampen, Dash, Deactivate, Debilitate, Deflate, Deflect, Deject, Demoralise, Demote, Denigrate, Denounce, Deplete, Depreciate, Depress, Detain, Deter, Dim, Disappoint, Disarm, Discard, Disclaim, Discourage, Disenchant, Disenthrall, Disillusion, Dismay, Dispirit, Disregard, Divert, Dodge, Dull, Dump
Enervate, Enfeeble, Evade, Exclude
Gag
Halt, Hamper, Handicap, Hassle, Henpeck, Hinder, Hound
Ignore, Impeach, Impede, Imperil, Inconvenience, Inhibit, Insult, Intercept, Irk, Irritate, Isolate
Jeopardise, Jibe, Jilt
Leave, Limit
Manacle, Mock, Muffle, Mute, Muzzle
Nettle, Neutralise, Niggle, Nip
Obscure, Obstruct, Offend, Oppose, Ostracise, Overlook
Pan, Parry, Police, Postpone, Prohibit, Prosecute, Punish
Rebuff, Rebuke, Refuse, Reject, Renounce, Repel, Repress, Repudiate, Resist, Restrain, Restrict, Retard, Revoke
Sadden, Saddle, Sap, Scorn, Shirk, Shoulder, Shove, Shun, Sidestep, Silence, Sop, Sour, Stall, Stop, Straddle, Suppress
Thwart, Tolerate

B Harming words
Abduct, Abuse, Accuse, Afflict, Aggrieve, Assail, Assault, Attack
Bang, Bash, Batter, Battle, Beat, Befoul, Belittle, Belt, Berate, Besmear, Bind, Birch, Bite, Blacken, Blame, Blemish, Blight, Block, Boot, Bowdlerise, Box, Brand, Broach, Browbeat, Bruise, Brutalise, Bully, Bump, Burden, Burst
Castigate, Castrate, Chain, Chasten, Chastise, Cheapen, Chide, Chip, Cleave, Clip, Confute, Crack, Craze, Criticise, Crumple, Cudgel, Curse, Cuss, Cut
Damage, Dash, Deaden, Debauch, Debilitate, Deceive, Decry, Defame, Degrade, Demean, Denigrate, Denounce, Deprave, Deprecate, Desecrate, Desert, Devaile, Devitalise, Dilute, Diminish, Disable, Discredit, Disempower, Dismember, Disgrace, Disown, Dissolve, Drain, Drown
Eject, Elbow, Embarrass, Embitter, Endanger, Enfeebles, Enrage, Enslave, Envenom, Expose, Expropriate
Fatigue, Fetter, Fight, Flail, Fling, Flog, Foul, Fracture
Gash, Gouge
Harass, Harm, Harry, Hijack, Hit, Humiliate, Hurt
Jade, Jeer, Job, Jostle
Kick, Kidnap, Knock
Madden, Maim, Malign, Maltreat, Manacle, Mangle, Manhandle, Mar, Mark, Mimic, Misjudge, Mishandle, Mistreat, Misuse, Moles, Mug
Nab, Nail, Nark, Needle, Neglect, Net, Nick, Notch, Numb
Offend, Oppress, Outlaw, Overload, Overthrow, Overturn, Overwhelm
Paralyse, Patronise, Penetrate, Perforate, Pervert, Pester, Petrify, Pierce, Pillage, Pinch, Pinion, Plunge, Poison, Pollute, Pound, Prick, Prod, Profane, Pummel, Punch, Puncture, Punish
Raid, Ram, Rap, Ravage, Reduce, Repress, Rival, Rob, Ruin
Tackle, Taunt, Thrash, Throttle, Thump, Thwack, Tire, Trample, Trash
Violate, Vitiate
Warn

C Destroying words
Abolish, Annihilate, Avenge
Banish, Blast, Bludgeon, Break, Bulldoze, Burn, Bury, Bust, Butcher
Conquer, Crucify, Crumble, Crush
Deck, Deflower, Deform, Dehumanise, Desolate, Destroy, Dethrone, Devastate, Devour
Efface, Eliminate, Exterminate, Extinguish, Exterminate
Exterminate, Extirpate
Finish, Flail
Hack, Hawk, Hunt
Immolate, Impale, Incinerate
Kill, Knife
Lacerate, Lash, Lynch
Mash, Massacre, Mince, Murder, Mutilate
Nullify
Obliterate, Oust
Peel, Persecute, Plague, Plunder, Prostrate,
Pulverise
Quash, Quell
Ransack, Rape, Ravage, Raze, Ruin, Rule
Sabotage, Sack, Sacrifice, Savage, Scour, Sever,
Shatter, Silence, Sink, Skewer, Skin, Slaughter,
Smash, Snap, Stab, Stone, Storm, Stuff, Sunder,
Suppress, Surrender
Terminate, Topple, Torment, Torture
Vanquish
Wreck