

SECTION TWO: MUSICAL THEATRE AS CAREER CHOICE

Still with me? I felt it was important to try to do as much dissuading as possible to weed out the fence-riders. Performing in musical theatre and making a living at it are two entirely different things. The performance aspect can be glorious, euphoric and fantastic while the reality of making a living in musical theatre is something else entirely. Trying to piece together enough work to make a career in the business can be very trying and discouraging. Deciding whether or not you want to pursue this career is something that should not be taken lightly, and arming yourself with as much information as you can will help determine the right path.

Now it's time to answer your questions. The following are FAQ's regarding career choice I have been charged with in the twelve years I have been a teacher. I hope my answers may be of use to you.

The "T" word and the "P" word. "Do I have the talent?" versus "Do I have the passion it takes?"

Talent is an important component to possess and you won't find untalented people working professionally in theatre. But talent alone is not enough. This is where the "P" word comes into play. You must have complete passion for the art. The following is a series of responses taken directly from the survey given to working actors.

Rate each of the following qualities on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest) that you believe to be crucial in getting a job on Broadway and continuing to work on Broadway.

Persistence	4.7
Confidence	4.8
Desire/Passion	4.75
Education	3.5
Talent	3.8
Connections	4.0

I think this makes my point and puts it all into perspective while sighting other necessary qualities crucial to success in the profession. The most telling response here is that Talent ended up being second to last on the list of critical qualities.

This was reiterated time and again in the survey, with people making comment that talent is often secondary to getting work. Although Education and Talent are rated the lowest they are still thought of as important. The following are additional responses to the prompt:

Other qualities: Luck, loyalty, good teachers, gymnastics, know yourself, professionalism and the ability to observe and learn from others, business sense, looks/body type (four people made mention of this. One said "*Hate to be cynical but a less talented pretty person often gets hired over pure talent*"), spiritual life, type, prayer, being kind and patient, attitude (as in don't give any), knowing what makes you special and different.

*"I think the most important qualities one can have are good teachers, **passion** and discipline. Without a good leader/instructor one can be misguided. Without **passion** one can be dissuaded and discouraged. Without discipline one cannot grow or continue to be competitive. It also helps to have wealthy parents. Seriously."*

*"It's not the easiest life but can be a very freeing and fulfilling one. If you have the **passion** and desire don't let anyone tell you not to try for it."*

*"You must have a **passion** for the business and a strong will to keep going in the face of much rejection. You will do a lot of work for not a lot of jobs. Auditioning is part of your life and finding a way to enjoy it will be the best gift to yourself. Every audition is your own mini-play and your chance to show the directors and producers that you are the one they want for the part. They want to like you. Show them they should."*