

## SOAKING (REFERENT)

A referent is a word in the text that refers to something not present. For instance, if I say to you, "Yesterday I went to the beach," I'm referring to something in the past. One of the referents in my quote is beach. In order to understand me you create an image of the referent in your mind. As you read the word beach, what kind of an image do you make? Do you *see* the water, sand, and sun? Do you *hear* the waves roll in and out. Do you *smell* the salty, slightly fishy air? Do you *taste* the salt water in your mouth? Do you *feel* the sun on your face. All these are sensory images your mind makes to make a meaning out of a word, a referent.

When you soak the referents in the text, you pull from your own imagination and memory sensory images that are peculiar to you. This makes the text your own. George Morrison named the exercise "soaking," because he imagined the text as a white cloth laid over the actors being. As the actor soaked the text his or her own unique colors soaked into the text, making that actors rendition of the character uniquely theirs.

1. Lie down or sit in a comfortable position.
2. Go through the entire text one phrase (that contains a referent) at a time.
3. Focus your mind on the phrase. Allow any sensory image to float into your waiting mind. Some images may be literal, some figurative, and some may seem completely unrelated. Entertain them all.
4. When one of the images stands out, seems interesting to you, affects you in some way, let the words of the phrase fall out of your mouth, with **no effort to communicate**. Be sure you use your voice without whispering. You do not have to speak loudly at all, just loud enough so that you can hear it.

From "The Scene Study Workbook"

by Sherry Landrum and George Morrison