

# YOUR *SMFA* TYPE AND BRAND GUIDE

*A Self-  
Management for  
Actors* bonus for  
your type  
survey!

BY BONNIE GILLESPIE

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# YOUR SMFA TYPE AND BRAND GUIDE

A SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR ACTORS BONUS

Hi! And thanks for grabbing the **SMFA Type and Brand Guide**! With my help, you're on your way to having a much clearer understanding of all the types you play \*and\* how they fit under your brand umbrella. Yay!

Head over to pages 76 and 119 of the 4th edition of **Self-Management for Actors** for two deeper dives on the goodies in this workbook. (Don't have the book? Hit [smfa4.com](http://smfa4.com) for your very own copy!) If you're more of a vid type, Google "Bonnie Gillespie Type Survey" for a tour through this process on YouTube.

What follows is a type list you can use when you survey people in person (print it off and let them circle all the words that relate to you) or you can put all these words into your Google survey to gather data online. Or both!

After the master list of essences, adjectives, and jobs (AKA all words you're used to seeing in casting notices), I've got a seriously comprehensive guide to building a Google survey. Use it as a checklist for making sure you don't leave anything out before charging out into the world to learn so much more about your most castable type and brand!

For the truly ninja: Ask your respondents to include perceived ethnicity and age, plus possible nationalities, any specific shows that would be a good fit for your type, genres of films that would best suit your vibe as a performer, brands and products for which you might be a good commercial storyteller, all of it! The more specific information you gather through this process, the better. But be sure to stay out of your own way as you do this! (More on that in the pages that follow.)

As you analyze your data, remember, we're looking for patterns here, not some single, authoritative declaration of your most castable type. The more people you survey, the better. The less intimately they know you, the better.

Have fun with this process, and be sure to let me know how this is going for you. Use the #SMFAninjas hashtag (it's like the Bat Signal, but cooler) so we can celebrate your tier jumps along the way!

BONNIE GILLESPIE, author  
*Self-Management for Actors*

# SMFA MASTER TYPE LIST



SO! MUCH! DATA!

|                    |                  |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| addicted           | chatty           | douchebag          | handsome         |
| adventurous        | cheerful         | druggie            | happy            |
| advocate           | childlike        | dumb               | hard-boiled      |
| aggressive         | chubby           | eager              | healthy          |
| all-American       | cis-het          | eccentric          | heartthrob       |
| aloof              | clever           | educated           | helpful          |
| amoral             | close-minded     | efficient          | hero             |
| analytical         | comical          | elderly            | hippy            |
| angry              | commanding       | elegant            | hipster          |
| anonymous          | community leader | embodiment of evil | homebody         |
| anxious            | complex          | enabler            | honest           |
| articulate         | concerned        | enchanted          | hooker           |
| artistic           | condescending    | enthusiastic       | hottie           |
| assertive          | conservative     | entitled           | humble           |
| athletic           | cool             | ethical            | hunky            |
| attractive         | cougar           | excitable          | husky            |
| awkward            | cowboy           | excited            | hyper            |
| bad                | crazy            | exotic             | ill              |
| badass             | creative         | fearful            | ingénue          |
| bastard            | cunning          | feisty             | innocent         |
| beautiful          | curious          | forthright         | insecure         |
| best friend        | curvy            | fragile            | integrity-filled |
| big-city           | cute             | frat boy           | intelligent      |
| bisexual           | cynical          | frustrated         | intense          |
| bitch              | dangerous        | fun-loving         | intuitive        |
| blue-collar worker | dedicated        | funky              | jerk             |
| bold               | defiant          | funny              | jock             |
| boomer             | desperate        | gay                | judge            |
| bootylicious       | detective        | geeky              | judgmental       |
| boss               | determined       | gender nonbinary   | keeping a secret |
| bouncer            | direct           | girl-next-door     | know-it-all      |
| boy-next-door      | disgruntled      | good ol' gal       | laid-back        |
| busy-body          | distant          | good-natured       | law enforcer     |
| butt-kisser        | doctor           | goofball           | lawyer           |
| caring             | dogmatic         | gorgeous           | leader           |
| charming           | doofus           | grounded           | leading lady/man |

# SMFA MASTER TYPE LIST



SO! MUCH! DATA!

|                |              |                  |                 |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|
| lecherous      | poser        | selfish          | terrorist       |
| liar           | positive     | sensible         | thrifty         |
| lighthearted   | powerful     | sensitive        | thug            |
| loose          | pragmatic    | sensual          | tolerant        |
| lovable        | precious     | sentimental      | tormented       |
| loyal          | predator     | sexual           | tough           |
| menacing       | pretty       | sexy             | tourist         |
| metrosexual    | princess     | shameless        | transgender     |
| middle-class   | privileged   | shocking         | transitioning   |
| MILF           | professor    | shy              | troubled        |
| military       | proper       | sidekick         | trust-fund baby |
| misunderstood  | provocative  | slacker          | trustworthy     |
| moody          | psycho       | sleazy           | uneducated      |
| murderous      | punky        | slimy            | unemployed      |
| musician       | pushy        | small-town       | upper-crust     |
| mysterious     | quirky       | smarmy           | uptight         |
| nerdy          | relatable    | smart            | vapid           |
| newbie         | relaxed      | smarty-pants     | victim          |
| nosy           | religious    | smooth           | villain         |
| nurse          | reserved     | socialite        | violent         |
| nurturer       | resilient    | soft             | vivacious       |
| open-minded    | responsible  | solid            | voluptuous      |
| optimistic     | rich         | sophisticated    | waiter          |
| pansexual      | rockstar     | sporty           | weak            |
| parental       | romantic     | stripper         | wealthy         |
| partier        | rugged       | strong           | white-collar    |
| passionate     | sad          | stuck-up         | wicked          |
| patient        | sarcastic    | stylish          | wild child      |
| perfectionist  | sassy        | suave            | wimpy           |
| perky          | scientist    | suspicious       | wise            |
| perplexed      | searching    | sweet            | witty           |
| philosophical  | secretary    | tabloid reporter | world traveler  |
| police officer | seducer      | talkative        | young           |
| political      | seductive    | teacher          | yuppie          |
| poor           | self-assured | tech-savvy       | zany            |
| popular        | self-made    | technophobic     | zealous         |

# SMFA BRAND SURVEY

BY BONNIE GILLESPIE

## YOUR TYPE AND BRAND REVEALED!

One of the number-one most popular functions of our badass ***Self-Management for Actors*** Facebook group is the crowdsourcing that happens so freakin' easily when you've got an audience of thousands of people who've gathered with the express goal of working out the **SMFA** principles together.

It's really powerful when you think about it.

Pretty much every day in Facebook groups around the world, someone will toss up a photo or ten (\*groan\* Please, never ten. More on that in a moment) and ask for typing words, adjectives, age ranges, target shows, etc., and while that's all well and good, it's those who've truly mastered the process of surveying who get not only the best data and the most data, but also the most accurate data.

And I don't know about you, but I love accuracy. **Especially when it comes to how I'm gonna make bank.**

If you have the option of getting a general idea of what might work or of getting a super specific picture of exactly what's gonna pave the road with pennies, wouldn't you choose to put a little extra care into your surveying method to get it right and START making that moolah?

Yeah, I thought so.

With that in mind, here is **the ultimate guide to how to stay the eff out of your own way and get the most bankable data possible when it comes to nailing down your most castable type and brand.**

# SMFA BRAND SURVEY

SO! MUCH! DATA!



## 1. Create a Google Survey.

Sure, you could just slap up a photo and ask for comments at Facebook or in a series of tweets or at your blog but the second you get an answer in front of others, you contaminate your data. Every person who sees another person's answer will have the temptation to agree—or disagree—not because it's how they actually feel about your photo but due to some other motive. Doesn't matter what that motive is; once you're getting data based off feedback you've already received, you're screwed.

## 2. Make your Google Survey stupid easy to participate with.

Don't require an email address for participation. Don't make us click elsewhere to see your password-protected video or to download a gallery of photos. Make sure embedded playback is enabled if you're including a silent typing vid. Create a simple, straightforward survey using the Google Form function in your Google Drive. Select question types that provide the best answers (multiple checkbox options for adjectives if you're providing a list; short answer if you're allowing write-ins) and grab the shareable link from the survey's "send" option when you're done to reduce barriers to participation.

## 3. Keep the questions simple and straightforward, and survey only one tool at a time.

First off, NEVER survey multiple headshots at once. Never. NEVER ever. When you ask for feedback on multiple photos at once, you're serving a delightful five-course meal and then asking diners to describe what they ate. The responses are going to be generic enough to cover everything from the appetizer to the salad to the dessert and that generic info isn't going to serve you as you attempt to work the **Self-Management for Actors** principles and get clear on your brand, your targets, and the direct connection between those things (and the MONEY, honey). You want to get deliciously detailed words for ONE tool at a time and then find out which of the tools you have does the best job of representing exactly what you present in the room and on screen/on stage. So, do a survey for one photo. Then another for your silent vid. Still another for each clip in your demo reel. Yet another for you, live, in the room with respondents. And spread them out over time and over audiences. You're trying to track which tools do the best job of selling what you deliver in the room, not figure out how you can CHANGE into what it is your headshots might be selling.

# SMFA BRAND SURVEY

SO! MUCH! DATA!



## 4. Do not restrict respondents' options.

If you've provided a list of adjectives and essences—like the one in this handy guide—allow respondents to check multiple boxes. Don't tell them to pick their top three. If \*you\* want to get down to YOUR top three, you accept **all** the responses in the world, sort your data, see which three words have the most frequency, and BOOM, there's your top three. When you force others to limit their thoughts, you run the risk of having 20 people who would've chosen the same word as their #4 item leave that out... blowing your data into the wrong direction by a lot.

## 5. NEVER restrict age range.

This is listed separately from the above because OMG everyone misses this. No matter how much I say it. Everyone freakin' misses this and it makes me crazy. Batty. Insane. Off the hook coccoo. For the same reason as the above, you accept **alllllllllll** the ages people believe you could play and then YOU narrow it down to your most castable four-year age range. Period.

## 6. Know that your photo's pose could be responsible for your feedback.

If your photo has the ever-popular peeking-over-your-shoulder pose, you'll get words like sneaky, mischievous, dishonest, and possibly vixen, mistress, liar, cheater, and such. If you're in that fun one-eyebrow-up, shrugged shoulders, fingerguns pose, you can expect a lot of words like quirky (a completely useless word, as character breakdowns go), comedic, funny, wacky, silly... and while that may be great for that photo, unless it's true for YOU at your idling speed, it's not helping you get cast. If you ARE sexy, you'll get the word sexy even if the pose is as dry as a passport photo. If you ARE hilarious, that'll come through in a silent vid in which you seriously don't even crack a smile. Let the words come from YOU, not the "business" you're doing.

[Want a vid walk-thru of all this brand survey goodness? Click me!](#)



# SMFA BRAND SURVEY

SO! MUCH! DATA!



## 7. Survey a silent vid when you want to get as close to the "first impression, walking in the casting room vibe" feedback as possible.

If you're able to do the **Self-Management for Actors** typing work in a group of people, that's best because you can get feedback on both your in-room essence before you speak \*and\* on your primary headshot to be sure they're aligned. Further, as you speak and as your humor and personality start to come through, you can get more feedback on how much of that shows up in your photo or upon first impression vs. what needs time to be revealed (and there are ways to adjust for all of this in your headshot, BTW, same as it's possible to adjust for your super high-pitched or oddly low voice... yes, in your photo! **We teach you how to do this in our membership**). But one survey for a headshot, another for a silent vid, yet another for a speaking vid, and another for footage or a candid photo or whatever else needs aligning is all fair game!

## 8. Remember you can survey LOTS of things, but not all at once.

Yes, your type and brand are the most popular things—especially when getting clear on your brand umbrella—but age range is right up there, as is testing out a logline, trying out a stage name (one of my favorite surveys was one I had a client put up at the sample size sub of Reddit—where strangers love to weigh in on things—asking "What is my name?" to see if the stage name she was considering might naturally \*feel\* like her, in the eyes of others), identifying target shows, even nailing down where it feels like you're FROM. Just don't try to do all of this in a single survey. It's overly ambitious; it makes all data weaker due to respondent fatigue. C'mon. Don't go overboard.

## 9. Always add a final prompt of, "Anything else I need to know?" in your survey.

This allows for all sorts of rich information you'd cheat yourself of receiving otherwise. :) Let folks surprise you with what you might have never thought to ask about yourself and how you're coming across!

**Join us in the SMFA Ninjas**  
**Facebook group to share how**  
**this work is working for you!**

# SMFA BRAND SURVEY

SO! MUCH! DATA!



## 10. Remember that every survey is a sales tool.

Yup. Casting directors, agents, managers, publicists, writers, showrunners, producers, directors, we all take surveys from time to time. No, not often, but often enough, and even your peers are "buyers" if they're creating content and potentially casting you in something someday. The thoughtfulness with which you pull together your survey IS teaching people how to cast you! Treat it casually? Be prepared for casual responses, and opinions of you as a casual person. And that may be just fine! But if you're usually meticulous (especially in your roles) but throw your survey together as if you couldn't be bothered to show attention to detail, you risk brand confusion. And as the saying goes: A confused mind says NO.

## 11. Stay out of your own damn way while data-gathering.

Y'all, I know I've already covered this but I'm totally saying this one last time because OMG—especially if you forego the Google Survey version of things and just slap up a headshot in a Facebook group and ask for feedback—you may think you're being polite by saying, "Oh, you're so sweet. Thank you!" after each person offers their thoughts, but what you've actually done is muddy the waters by being friendly right there in the thread. You'll get friendlier-skewing words from the very next person who responds. Further, when you say, "OMG, I get that comparison all the time," about a celeb you look like or a show you should be on, you've just contaminated the data coming from the next respondent with that "yes, and..." action. **Stay out of the way.** Come back and say thank you AFTER you've collected all the data. You "lead the witness" by being helpful or friendly or even a casual participant in your own stats-gathering and that's a recipe for bad data. We want you to have the most accurate, badass, leading-to-the-dollars info possible in this, and following your **SMFA Type and Brand Guide** is just the ticket!

Follow these tips and you are SET with some of the cleanest, most accurate, most \*bankable\* information you've ever received about your most castable brand.

# SMFA TYPE SURVEY RESULTS



SO! MUCH! DATA!

**INSTRUCTIONS:** For each category on this page, list the surveyed words that got the MOST responses.

JOBS, CAREERS, OCCUPATIONS, SOCIETAL ROLES

ADJECTIVES, ESSENCES, QUALITIES, HERITAGES

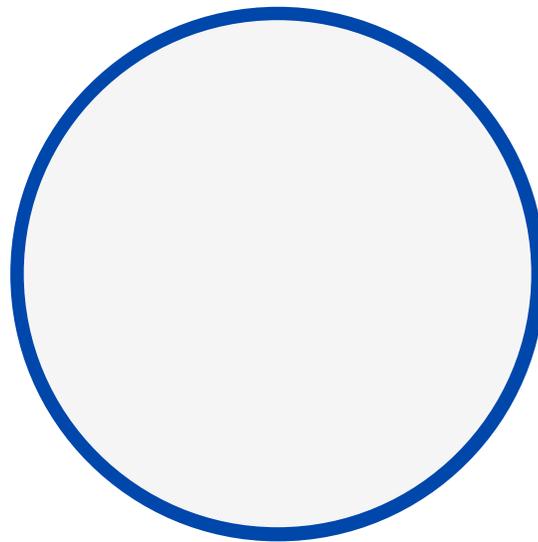
AGES

# SMFA BRAND UMBRELLA

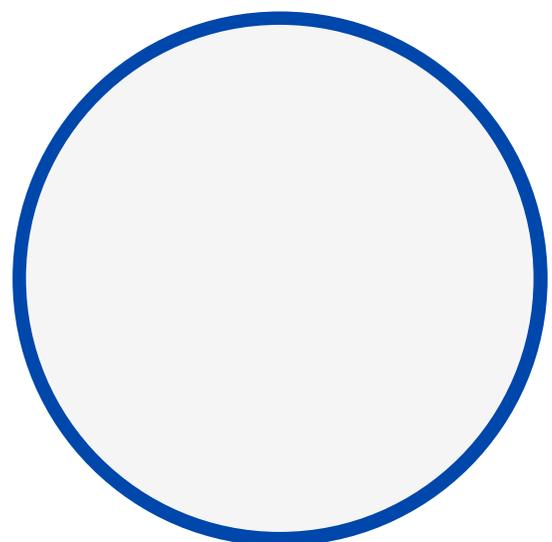
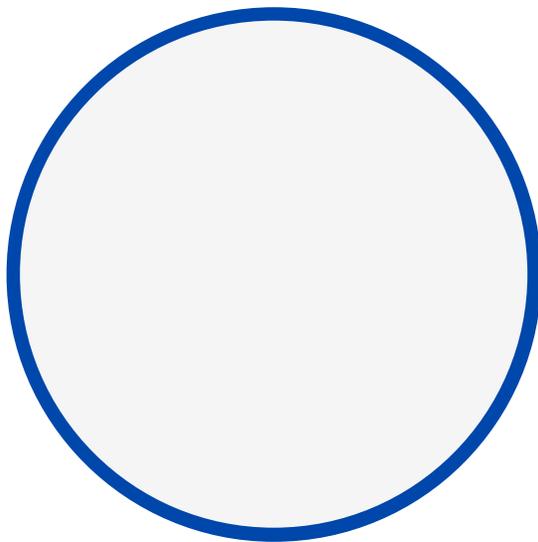
SO! MUCH! DATA!



**INSTRUCTIONS:** Now place the most resonant, gut-connected, and thanks to this work \*data-backed\* words in each circle below. Use your brand umbrella to develop your logline, your personal pitch, your "about me" blurb on social media, your bio in playbills, and so much more! (**Psst!** For a WAY deeper dive than in this free guide, join us in the dojo! [bonniegillespie.com/offer](https://bonniegillespie.com/offer) We've got you!)



BRAND UMBRELLA



ESSENCES

PROFESSIONS



## ABOUT BON...

SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR ACTORS

**Bonnie Gillespie is living her dreams by helping others figure out how to live theirs.** As a weekly columnist, she began demystifying the casting process for actors in 1999. Her most popular book is ***Self-Management for Actors***, the curriculum upon which her teaching is based.

As a producer and casting director, Bonnie specializes in indie darlings, such as the Emmy-winning Twitch series ***Artificial***. Whether casting, coaching, or exploring the woo as ***The Astrologer's Daughter***, she is passionate about leaving the entertainment industry (and the world) better than she found it.

Bonnie uses she/her pronouns and lives by the beach (on the unceded ancestral land of the Tongva peoples) with her partner Keith Johnson... the luckiest man in the world.

*Enoughness is an inside job... and sometimes you need a guide to find your way there.*



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