

The Mindful Musician

Presented by Dr. Jaclyn Normandie

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Opening Relaxation & Focusing

Leave it outside

Focus of the bowl

Breath in (puraka), retain (kumbaka), exhale (kumbaka), suspension (sunyaka)

Unison/octave/5th oo, oh, ah, eh, ee

In this opening exercise, we have:

Focused & relaxed the mind

Opened the ears for subtle listening

Brought attention to the breath

Unified vowels

Worked intonation

My Story: Why do we need balance?

Image Teaching = uses words and ideas to communicate

Substance Teaching = communicates by the way you LIVE

You can tell people what to do all day long, but until they LIVE it, the knowledge will only be an empty shadow.

You can tell people to relax, but until they experience it, they will never understand.

As teachers, we must LIVE what we tell our students and facilitate them living it as well

Music is an incredibly stressful career. It is imperative for a musician to have a healthy mind and body for sustainability and optimal performance.

We revere stress and overwork in music here in the United States. It creates an unhealthy balance in the mind and body.

What is mindfulness?

1. the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.
2. a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Six Areas of Focus

1. Healthy Body
2. Healthy Mind
3. Relaxation outside music
4. Energetic Movement
5. Stage Fright Management
6. Finding Balance

Healthy Body

What if you treated your body with as much dedication as your music?

- What would that look like? `
- Without your health, you have NOTHING. When you are sick, hungry, tired, or out of shape, your brain cannot focus or retain information long-term.
- Your voice and dexterity are weakened.

Without your health, you have nothing

- Daily exercise, eat well
- Sleep
 - o 7-9 hours
 - o Non-rem sleep, long slow waves, turns new info to long term memory
 - (30-50% memory retention loss)
 - o must have REM sleep for emotional wellness
 - (One study one night sleep had 30% reduction of aptitude)
 - o Buildup of plaques (beta amyloid) causing mental disorders & Alzheimer's
 - o Not ONE mental illness does not coincide w poor sleep
 - o Blue light reduction, no alcohol close to bedtime, no tablets tv phone, melatonin
- Drink less alcohol
 - o Sedation not sleep
 - o Stops REM sleep so we do not process emotions or retain information
 - Study 3 groups (no alcohol, drink first night, drink fourth night)
 - Both drinking groups had 30-50% less memory retention

Schedule cooking, grocery shopping, exercise, & sleep into calendar

- We schedule everything as musicians down to the minute. You have to include grocery shopping, cooking, exercise, and sleep into that schedule.
- If you write it down, it will help keep it on track.

Meal prepping is key

- Cook for the entire week or the next day. You need to eat so you don't binge on the vending machine for lunch.
- Depending on your budget, you can have pre-made meals delivered. Think you can't afford it? How much did you spend out at the bars or restaurants this past month? Add it up.

Don't have time? Get the app that tracks how long you were browsing social media. There's your extra two hours for shopping, food prep, & gym

Healthy Mind

Become the observer to your emotions

- Get out ahead of the stress first thing before you check social med or email

DAILY morning meditation

- Guided meditations while waking up bed, in the shower, or brushing teeth

Journaling

- Slow down, process, gratitude list, daily/weekly/quarterly goals

Gratitude

- Study had 3 groups (wrote weekly gratitude list, annoyances, general events). 10 weeks later, gratitude group more happy, exercised more, fewer doctor visits

Affirmations

- "A goal without a plan is just a wish" *The Little Prince* Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- People who write daily affirmations are more likely to achieve the goal
- "I Am" statements as if it's already happened

Relaxation Outside of Music

Relaxation and energy rejuvenation is key to longevity in any career.

Energy is not an ever-sustaining resource.

- It needs to be replenished from an external source.
- Important to leave time to think of other topics besides work. When your brain is constantly stimulated by the same thing, you do not allow space for new ideas to enter.

You can't think about the same topic all day because you don't allow for new ideas to enter.

There needs to be FREE SPACE.

- Albert Einstein rode his bicycle or walked to work to allow time to think. He thought of the theory of Relativity while riding his bicycle.

Find a place of respite.

- A place that becomes routine and habitual. When you enter that area, chair, room, etc. your mind knows it is time to switch gears.

Meditation

- Not clearing the mind
- Reduction of vritti (monkey-mind) thoughts
- To be in the PRESENT moment without think the future or past
 - o Fear/anxiety is living in the future
 - o Depression is living in the past
 - o Present is contentment
- Single focal point: breath, a word, image, candle gaze, let gaze soften
- Moving meditation (surfing/making music)

Pranayama: Breathing exercises

- Exhale is the key – slows heart rate (parasympathetic nervous system/Vagus nerve)
- Inhale 4/exhale 6
- Humming Bee (plug ears & hum)
- Alternate Nostril Breathing (Plug one nostril, breathe in & out, alternate)
- Box Breathing (in 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4)

Qigong – Chinese Energy Healing

- Tai Chi is martial application of moving energy
- Tapping
- Open 9 gates
- Ringing the Temple Gong

Yoga in the Classroom

Incorporate traditional yoga postures and that have energetic significance

- Chakras

Head/shoulder rolls & jaw massage

- Throat Chakra: allows communication to flow freely

Seated Cat-Cows/Standing back bend

- Heart Chakra: Performers live with emotional pain, discomfort, and rejection

Side bends & twists

- Solar Plexus Chakra: Center of our personal power in the world. When we get nervous, where do you feel it? Stomach. Helps with anxiety and fear

Tree Pose & Standing Balances

- Root Chakra: Grounding position, calming, focus on our foundations

Stage Fright Management

- Tree pose, twists, Super Hero pose

Finding Balance

Emotions are our guidance systems

- They show when we are out of alignment with OURSELVES
- We observe them, find the root of the problem, and we can choose how to react

Examples:

- Jealousy of colleagues
- Frustration with students
- Fear over concerts

Extreme emotions are not sustainable. The goal is to remain calm & serene. This is balance.

What are the positives/negatives I am not seeing in the situation?

Situation?.....Student late? Piece not ready?

Tableau de Beck: STEAR

- Situation:
- Thought:
- Emotion:
- Action:
- Result: (result feeds back into the thought, creating a loop)

Use same technique & start with how you WANT to feel

- Situation:
- Thought:
- Emotion:
- Action:
- Result: (result feeds back into the thought, creating a loop)

Closing: Balance is an ACTION, not a theory. It takes constant attention because of external influences of the world.

Resource

All exercises are detailed and expanded in the following book. Available on Amazon and Kindle

The Mindful Musician: Finding a Healthy Balance by Dr. Jaclyn Normandie