

BETTER PRACTICING

I. THE PRACTICNG EQUATION

PRACTICE = Growth, Discovery, Good Feelings

THE PRACTICE REALITY: Practice is necessary.

II. SETTING THE STAGE

- A. Establish the habit first. Gradually increase time and complexity.
- B. Remove obstacles through preparation. Comfortable chair, sharpened pencils, create a "practice space".
- C. Importance of mood. Delight and enthusiasm are contagious
- D. Tools and Aids.
PRIMARY: The lesson notebook. Instructions in the teacher's words often carry more weight than parent's memory
SECONDARY: Charts, calendars, stickers, lottery games, etc. (Rotate for variety.)

III. PRACTICE HYGIENE

- Work on one thing at a time.
- Vary material and sequence.
- Segment sessions to maintain interest.
- Start with a framework but encourage spontaneity.
- Include creativity and free work.
- Know when to overlook and move on.

IV. ELIMINATING COMMON CAUSES OF BAD PRACTICING

1. GUILT: Everyday is a chance for a new beginning. Music requires constant re-creation and practicing can be eternally regenerated.
2. TOO MUCH, TOO SOON: Add new information in small quantities. Be conservative and enjoy each small success.
3. SPORADIC WORK: Regular work creates perceivable progress, the strongest engine of motivation.
4. FATIGUE: Admit fatigue and work in a different way. Shorter segments. Take special credit for persevering.
5. OVER INVESTMENT IN RESULTS: Process is important. Results will happen.

V. ROLES

Create a good parent/teacher partnership through clearly defined roles bound together by mutual respect.

Teacher: Introduces the new information, sets pace.

Parent: Praises progress, aids memory.

VI. THE POWER OF ATTENTION

When in doubt, listen without preconception or judgment. Focused attention sparks work and progress.

VII. EXTRA-MUSICAL BENEFITS

Musical goals are reached by incremental steps. One goes from not knowing to knowing, from not being able to being able. This is a powerful model for self-education and self-realization.

Good practicers know how to achieve their goals whether it be in homework, sports, hobbies, social interaction or any other pursuit.

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Music is the universal language of the emotions and the spirit. With enlightened practicing every child can speak it fluently.