

# HOW TO APPROACH YOUR INSTRUMENT AS A MUSICIAN

## PHASE I

### **We need to practice**

Like Two Set Violin, practicing is key to making progress. Set a time and location that is reasonable and free from distractions. Though practice is very important, it is not the first step.

### **Lock into a healthy routine**

Daily practice will far exceed cramming at the last moment. A routine would assume that there is a process which is consistent. If one practices one day and do not for the rest of the week, that would be a (unhealthy) routine. Set durations and days that you know are attainable. Like a diet, it is way of life – not a fad. Practice healthy like eating healthy.

### **Accept and believe there are no shortcuts to success – Create action and stick with it**

This is a very hard lesson in this day and age. We have become programmed to think everything is quick, now, and self-deserving. Accountability is thrown towards the other anomalies in our lives instead of finding the need to be active observers of our personal accountabilities.

The mind plays a HUGE part of our success. If we are internally ruled by dreams of being or doing something with the absence of action, then it is only a dream and never a reality.

This is the first step to success.

## PHASE II

Once a healthy routine of intelligent practicing has been determined, the next steps will help with key factors that make practicing and progressing more successful.

### **Posture**

Posture is the foundation to all playing. The first thing you learn is how to hold the violin and later the bow. As we progress, we learn how to be more detailed with every motion we make with our arms, fingers, etc.

Use your bowing and fingering technique methods (books) to help guide you with your correct way of playing.

Posture can be static or in motion. Another way of looking at it, posture can be a slice of time. Think of it like freeze framing a TV show going one frame at a time.

The question is how detailed do you want to get with your playing? The shorter the slice of time, the more detail you are putting into your posture and technique.

### **'Posture in motion' is creating muscle memory**

Repetition is part of the practice process. That, by itself, doesn't give you intelligent practicing. Finding the trouble spots and breaking it down into pieces is key.

1. Listen to recordings of the piece. What you see on the page can be very deceiving – especially if the style is not understood. Listening to the recordings will help with tempo, articulations, and dynamics.
2. If you miss a fingering, practice that particular passage in the music. It may be only two notes. It could be a rhythm. Practice it and then add a little before the passage to connect the trouble spot. After that, add the continuing passage to the section. It may only be one measure total or a few measures. Start small and work out from there.
3. Use a metronome. Metronomes can help you stay steady in fast passages when practicing slowly first and gradually increasing the speed. It can also help with understanding a confusing rhythm. Start by using a subdivision of the beat something like eighth notes equal 60. Start small and work your way up to a larger denominator.

This is not the only way to practice but is a start in the right direction. Let me know if you have any questions. Happy Practicing!