

Module 2



The Art of Practice

Transcript & Resources

MODULE 2: INTRODUCTION

I told you whenever we started this whole course that there would be five different phases of this whole practice routine, or this practice ritual. And we just went through the first one. We kind of discussed what the biggest issues with our drumming are. We discussed time of day, scheduling, and all of that stuff. How to communicate that to your spouse, or significant other. We discussed all of those things, so hopefully you are getting your schedule in place.

If you want to go ahead and put it in the comments below this. If you got your schedule in place, how it's working out, problems you found. Put some practice skills that you found that you are working on in there, become a part of this community. I read every one of those comments and questions, and I promise, I'll be responding to them.

Ok, so this is the second step, and I like to call this pre-practice. A lot of people miss this. They schedule, they put it on their schedule, but then they jump right in to their warm up and then they'll miss the pre-practice ritual that I go through. Mainly they'll miss it, because I don't talk about it much. But this is the key to dealing with the number one practice killer. Not just my number one practice killer, but the practice killer that you guys and ladies put in the survey that I actually put out to you. I had this whole course put together, and then I went back and actually revised some of it because of the answers to that. The number one practice killer by double, was focus.

So, how do we? We already like picked apart that focus is like this multi-headed beast that we have to chop off the different heads in different areas. How do we do that? Well, the pre-practice routine that you put in place, or as I like to call it, the calm before the storm. That's going to have a big part to do with learning how to get into your space, as I call it, so that you can go into flow. And we'll talk more about flow later. But flow is talked about in almost all the literature that I read whenever a professional gets to a certain level, they begin to flow.

So this specific part of the course is about that. It's about putting in place triggers. It's about putting in place routines. It's breathing techniques. And if any of these sections go into a little bit of, oh, this isn't drumming. This is more like psychological, this is it. But we have to deal with this stuff, and I have found a way that works for me. And not just for me. I have read literature and studies that a lot of professionals do this. Josh Waitskin, you've heard me refer to him, in *The Art of Learning*. *Effortless Mastery*, by Kenny Werner, he talks about it. Dr



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Herbert Benson, in his book *The Relaxation Response*, talks about how you need to get into the space.

Okay, so how do we do that? How do we use that space to maintain our focus? We are going to talk about all of that. We are going to get you a program together. We are going to get you your creative triggers. We are going to learn how to have a creativity treasure box, an inspirational treasure box, that you can go back to whenever you need to be inspired. All of that is in this section. How to learn to love your playing. We are going to talk about that in this section.

Be sure to get active, get involved. If you have questions, please ask. Put them in the comments here. Hopefully you are putting this stuff into use. Hopefully you are applying it, because I guarantee you if you do, it is going to transform not only your practice time, but everything surrounding your practice time. This is going to make your whole life begin to. You're going to begin to be happy, not just with your practice time, but the fact that you are able to solidify that. And being happy with that is going to allow you to gain motivation. It's going to allow you to enjoy your free time. It's going to allow you to go on vacation and not feel bad. It's going to allow you to feel good about the practice time you are putting in there. Even if it's just one or two hours, you're going to feel awesome about that. That's what doing this will do. It's going to completely transform your practice time, and then have that practice ripple effect that I talked about. It's really going to affect the other parts of your life. I know you're thinking Stephen that a little...seriously, it's going to affect the other parts of your life.



THREE COMPONENTS OF A PRE-PRACTICE RITUAL

So, let's go over the three component that I consider to be vital in a pre-practice ritual. We are going to talk about triggers, we are going to talk about visualizations, we are going to talk about breathing, and we are going to break all of those down. But what are the three that are necessary? They are the ones that I just mentioned. They are necessary to be able to put all the rest of the day aside and, for a very set amount of time focus. Like hard core focus, and work on the task at hand. And squeeze the most out of this time, so that when you leave your practice time you can go and enjoy life, and you can enjoy time with your kids, or your boyfriend or girlfriend, or you can just go on a walk. You can begin to enjoy the rest of your life and not carry this practice guilt that we carry with us, like oh, I haven't practiced enough, or oh, I didn't get what I needed done in practicing. It's all this guilt, and we just like pile it all on ourselves and there's no need to. This is an important part of elongating that in your life and learning how to get this space that you can practice from, and learning how to appreciate your playing. All of that is going to lead into that practice ripple effect that I talked about, where it really starts to affect the other areas of your life. So, the three things that I think every pre-practice routine needs, or the calm before the storm as I like to call it. It needs triggers or trigger, and we'll talk about those in the next coming videos. It needs breathing, so I'm going to talk about that. We are not getting freaky, just some definite breathing brings all of this work together to get your mind focused. There is no magic in it, besides it just works. Why does it work? I mean we've known that breathing is an integral part of maintaining, and don't get thrown off by this word, meditation, or prayer, or going to a yoga class. They are going to be focusing on controlling your breath. What has a lot to do with controlling your breathing, has a lot to do with controlling some internal functions. And it really helps you to get steady and find that space. Once we find that space, then we can practice from that space and begin to get into that flow that we talked about earlier.

So we have triggers, we have breathing, and then we have visualization. We are actually going to visualize what a successful practice session looks like before we even get in there. We are going to start to really get a picture in our mind. And whenever we think about our practice time, even driving home from work, I want you to start that visualization process. That's going to really help you to get in here, to get in, and really get to work.



So, those are the three components. Now, why does this work? Why is this important? The reason this works. I made reference this to. I mentioned this earlier. It's Dr. Herbert Benson. He's got a great book called, *The Relaxation Response*. His deal and what he believes, and I believe, I believe it to be true; we have this fight or flight response that happens. And it's very natural and human. It's supposed to happen in anytime you encounter a stressful situation. Anytime you encounter a confrontational situation at work, or with your spouse, or your kids, or even in your car when somebody is honking at you; that invokes this fight or flight. So, in other words, our blood pressure goes up, our muscles tense up, and we are either get ready to fight or to run away. That on a natural level is what happens, is happening. Just because we are in this super sophisticated modern world, our body still works the same as whenever we were like out eating berries off of trees and wearing fig leaves. It still works the same way, so we have to accept that. Now, on the other side of this, there is this fight or flight. And Dr Benson thinks, or he theorizes, that there is something called the relaxation response. And what that is, is that there is the peaceful centered place, and it can kind of counteract the fight or flight response. And we can actually invoke that, we can make that happen. The same way we can get stressed out, and make that fight or flight happen, and get ourselves stressed out, our muscles start aching, our back tenses up, our neck tenses up. All that stuff that happens, and we can actually make the opposite happen. And his whole thing is, the four components that he thinks you need to have, is he believes you need to have a trigger, or a repetitive phrase, or form to think about, to focus on. He believes that you need a quite space. You need a comfortable position. And then the fourth thing is, what is the fourth thing? I knew I was going to forget the fourth thing, I'm sitting here, and I'm like I'm going to get through his whole thing. I've got my notes here, so let me just make sure I don't forget it, I don't want to lead you astray, but you can go read it. A quiet environment, an object to dwell upon, I view those as triggers, a passive attitude, and a comfortable position. I knew I was going to forget passive attitude. Now, the passive attitude is the space that we want to practice from. So, those are the things that he believes you need. And I believe we can incorporate all those into our pre-practice routine. So, the things I want you to get from this, I want you to develop your triggers. They are going to be small routines. They are going to be things you do the same way every day before your practice time. They are going to be songs. We are going to develop those triggers. Then, I want you to focus on breathing. Breathing is going to help you define that quiet place. That place of peace that you can work from, and visualization. We are going to really work on what a good playing session looks like. How does it feel? How does it



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really feel to play great? We are going to work on that. Of course we are going to work on other things, like how to love your playing, how to accept who you are as a player, how to find your own voice. We are going to get to all of those things. And as well, we are going to get down to the nitty gritty. And the next of those things. And the next course, or step in this course, we are going to get into these warm ups. And I'm going to give you different warm ups. We are going to pick from them, and we are going to get into really organizing this. But once we have developed a schedule, when we are going to show up, we have developed when we are going to work on our next thing, to maintain our focus. And then cut the head off that practice killer, is we need to find that space we can practice from. And using triggers, visualization and breathing we can totally do that.

Be sure to leave a comment below this, get involved with the conversation if you have any questions please ask those. I'm reading all these comments. I'm trying to respond to as many as I can. If you want to put down below in the comment, what your biggest stressor is whenever you are going into practice time. The thing that keeps you from focusing the most. Put that down there, I'll try to respond to as many as I can. And if you don't want to do that just say, hey Stephen I'm here. I'm trucking along. I'm still going through the program.



PICKING YOUR TRIGGERS

Ok let's talk about triggers I've referenced them enough. Let's talk about exactly what a trigger is how we can use it in our practice time how you can use it to get it to a very thorough focus practice a mind frame and how we can use it to do that repeatedly ok so what we're going to be doing is creating little a little ritual that we're going to be doing now I told you that you need triggers me breathing and visualization so this is going to be the first part of that now a trigger does not have to be one thing it can be a series of things ok for instance let's say that you there's really three types of triggers that I found to be very helpful

One is making a small routine before i come into the practice room ok now that would that would look something like this ok before i came on the practice room I come in from maybe I'm coming in from work let's just say that I grabbed this the glass of water and this is all going to sound like Stephen why am i having to do the same thing just trust me on this we're making a routine whenever you go to bed think about this when you go to bed you have a routine have you ever like consciously thought about that routine why do you do the things you do why do you place the tooth brush in the same spot every night why do you floss your teeth at the same time why do you sleep on the same side of the bed if I came to bed and was on my wife's side of the bed one night she would be like you can jump over why do we do that why do i have to sleep in the same pillow why if I lay my head down on my pillow as her pillow I'm switching cause I am the all I does is a way it is it's my routine it gets me ready to go to bed I have the same I turn the lights off and lock up the house the same way every night why do i do that i didn't like plan it out it's just routine what it's doing is it's telling my body it's triggering things in my body to begin the shutdown process like we're going to go ahead and ease into bed ok we can do the same thing with our practice time we can use triggers so you can you may want to create a little routine for instance a routine would be made and it doesn't have to be five or six minutes you come in from work you grab the same coffee mug you fill that coffee mug with water or your favorite drink you know drive try not to try to make it something like not eight gallons of coffee or alcohol or anything like that or want to do is get to practice we want to focus they were saying water or maybe you know a coke or whatever you may need to pep you a bit make it the same thing every day we're making this into a routine or ritual maybe you get the same snack every day in case that we have are we come in we set



our stuff down we have the same glass that we're drinking from we get the same plate but the same thing to eat on it we get the same drink and we sit there for and when you can time yourself for five minutes and we just take time to kind of de-stress and make that our little routine before really a ritual our routine trigger before we go into the practice time ok that's one way to do this the other way or do it in the way that i prefer to do it is to get a musical trigger the reason i like a musical trigger is because I can replicate that it gigs very easily I can replicate that in stressful situations very easily so it doesn't take much for me to pull my phone out and start playing a song ok so I want you to pick one two three songs and we're going to call those your creative trigger songs I would prefer you pick just one I've been listening to the same song for over a year it's by Gretchen Parlato and it's called Butterflies it is live recording from new york I just I love the song I don't know why I picked it as my creative trigger it's just when i listen to that song i was just inspired had nothing to do with drumming I was just my creativity was inspired ok and so what we want to do is we want to pick that song and I'm going to listen to that same song every time I go to practice and the other thing i couple with that is a comfortable position you remember me talking about that with the relaxation response and i know some drummers that sit at their drum set for a few minutes and kind of take a couple deep breaths that's their trigger routine there are several positions you can do this and I prefer to do like a kneeling position think of a yoga pose or they've been doing this for thousands of years for how they eat in the orient this pose where you're on your knees and you're just it's a very relaxed pose it's also very supportive to your back and your spine and all that so i take this time to get away from the actual drum set so i get in that comfortable position i turn of my trigger song i simply close my eyes and i just sit there for a couple minutes I just let that soak in this doesn't take very long but i really want to let it soak in now I'm not the only one that does this ok you like Steve this is a little bit weird I'm not the only one that does this there's a ton of creatives out there that used triggers they talk about them in the book practice perfect forty two rules for practicing perfect Josh Waitzkin wrote the Art Of Learning he talked about triggers the reason he wanted to use them was he would get called for a fight whenever he went into the Tou Chi Quan competitive Tou Chi Quan the push hands division he would get called to fight and literally he'd have thirty seconds and he had to go out of competition well that wasn't the time to do anything or get warmed up or ready so what he found was he had these songs that were triggers for him and as soon as he just got to where as soon as he heard a couple of seconds of that song he was in the zone and got to where he could just hum it to himself and he was all the sudden in this



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is zone and i know i can tell you for a fact i can simply sit there close my eyes and begin to hum that song and all of a sudden i'm in that space so it's all about getting focus and getting in that space i want you to listen to the same thing every time every time you sit down to practice without fail don't make it a different song the same one you want this to be a routine you want to if this isn't boring this is all a part of your creative process ok so we're going to get that trigger set in place another way we can get triggers is you can you can read the same thing every day maybe you have a passage that you like to read maybe there's some literature that really inspires you whatever it may be put that into you or pre-practice ritual or the calm before the storm so what we're going to be doing is creating that trigger so we have it we come in we have a sequence of events that we do and then we're ready to begin some breathing techniques that takes no time at all but all that does is help facilitate that so pick your triggers put below this in the comments what triggers are you going to use would you rather use a small little ritual would you would you rather use a song i prefer to do it a song just because i can replicate that wherever i go but i guarantee you if you will commit to this trigger you'll be amazed at how you find your zone through this whole process and then you're going to be able to go back to that so whenever you're practicing you're frustrated you're literally be able to put your sticks down step back for a second sing through that song and go i got it i'm back and then you get back to so it's a way to maintain your focus and keep your focus help you keep coming back to that place where you're able to practice from a very open space and a very receptive space and get the most out of this deliberate time that we're putting in



DON'T WORRY, JUST BREATHE

Okay hopefully you're sticking to this hopefully you're working through this. If you are you're better than most because most are not going to commit to do what they need to do to improve their practice time. I promise you if you're putting this stuff to work you're going to see rewards far outside of just your playing. It's going to be that practice Ripple effect I can't emphasize that enough. So we've talked about why the pre-practice routine is important, we've talked about the three elements that trigger the breathing and visualization. We talked about how to develop triggers. Now I would encourage you to develop your triggers. It's funny we use triggers in our life but we don't think about them as being integral. For instance there are still songs that I can't listen to and albums I can't listen to because it triggers me to get pumped up and get angry and go lift weights. I've been in the gym for, since I was in high school I just do it consistently it's another routine I have during my week. And I have certain songs that I listen to when I work out because they get me like amped up. So I listen to those before a game or before I'm like before I'm needing to get just really pumped up, when I lift weights. Okay so we use triggers for that, for instance if you're in a relationship how many of you are in a relationship and your girlfriend or boyfriend you'll have your song and every time it comes on 'you're like aww that's so sweet aww that's our song [mumbles]'. You see like we have triggers, that's an emotional trigger for your relationship.

It carries over to be the same here, you can take those triggers and use them wherever you want in your life. Have these little routines that you can begin to get into that creative space. It's not just me, creative's across many fields use these routines. Look up Michael Phelps pre-race routine he's got this crazy routine that he goes through he does the same thing every time. He uses visualization in that too.

Now we are going to be talking about breathing and I've told you before I don't talk about my pre-practice ritual very much because people are like "okay yeah so you get by yourself and you play this song and you get focused in your right mind frame and you breathe and visualize". It's all this stuff that we don't talk about but all of it directly affects how we interact with our practice space.



So now I'm going to talk about breathing. I'll skip all the boring stuff about all the great things that oxygen does for our body. I will go ahead and tell you just in the same way and we will talk more about nutrition and those kinds of things that will help with your practice time.

The same way that we walk around mostly in a dehydrated state and we do...we walk around in his dehydrated state, you should drink more water. We do the same with oxygen we walk around in this oxygen-depleted state because we're always in these tense situations and really people don't know how to breathe anymore.

So we'll talk about that for a second. Then I'm going to give you just a very short simple series of breathing activities that you can do in literally about a minute to 2 minutes okay.

So when you breathe, proper breathing is not in your chest, proper breathing is actually through your diaphragm which sits right below your rib cage. If you breathe out through your gut you can see the top of my like you can see the top of my stomach. That's diaphragm that's not just gut that's my diaphragm. And all the girls are like 'I'm not going to do that' no seriously you need to do that. All too often we take shallow short breaths and that comes from that fight or flight, that real stressed out state that we put ourselves in. That's when you begin to breathe and hyperventilate from here and many of us we breathe from here all the time for instance watch, if you want to look at breathing, watch Mark Guiliana play sometime. When he's playing you'll see him go and he breathes out and he'll take this long breath and I began to notice. I'm like 'I like how he does that'. Notice how he approaches that, that's just one example of breath in a live situation.

So what we want to do is we don't want to breathe from here we have the top and the bottom of our lungs, the bottom of our lungs is our diaphragm. Now the reason that this is important is because at the top of our lungs we get about a tenth of a liter of blood I believe if my memory is correct, we get a tenth of the amount of blood let's just say that, that we get at the bottom of our lungs. Okay every minute we're getting a tenth of the amount of blood up here whereas down here we're getting 10 times the amount of blood flowing in the bottom of our lungs. Why is that important? What takes oxygen, and I'm going to give you a quick science lesson, what takes oxygen to the muscles? The blood, right? The blood takes oxygen to our muscles. The heart's a muscle. What happens when you have a heart attack? It's because of the lack of blood but it's really on a deeper level. The reason you have a myocardial infarction



or a heart attack is because it's a lack of oxygen to that muscle. So when we don't get oxygen to our muscles they become depleted, we get tense and we tighten up and you start feeling the strain and pain. So what we want to do is whenever we breathe we want our stomach to go out and watch my hand. Okay and again I'll skip all of the boring details of why we should breathe through our nose. There are all kinds of filtering systems that are naturally built in. That's the reason why the statement mouth-breather is an insult. It's not because they just made that up literally breathing through our mouths is an inferior way to breathe.

Okay so what I want you to do is breath in through your nose. Make your gut go out not your chest. You don't want your chest going out. You don't want that happening. You want and that tells you that you're getting a good breath in your diaphragm you want to push your gut out really the top of your gut. And then when you breathe out, breathe out through your mouth. Now this routine that I do. I take 30 breaths in slow and in control and 30 breaths out. So I breathe in through my nose, out through my mouth and I do it 30 times. And you are like 'Stephen why do you do it 30 times?' I don't know, why do I sleep on the same pillow every night?

It's just the routine I've come up with. It allows me to do it efficiently. If you want to do it 15 times that's fine but what I do is I breathe in through my nose and then I breathe out through my mouth. So and I'm doing that listening to my trigger song, in a comfortable position, in a quiet environment and I'm going to do it 30 times.

Now this is something that I like doing on the 30th time. I breathe all of the air out and I simply hold my breath and if you do this you'll find out something kind of neat because you hyper oxygenated. your body. You'll actually be able to hold your breath longer. What do we do when we want to hold our breath? We breathe in as far as we can.

Actually once you've done all these breaths in a row you've hyper oxygenated your body, you'll find that you can actually hold your breath for longer. But I hold my breath after I push all of the wind out and I don't do that until I pass out. I just do it till I get that urge like 'okay I need to breathe now'. Don't do this to where it gives you strain. If you have breathing problems people I'm not telling you to stop breathing. I'm just telling you to hold your breath for 30/40 seconds and then slowly breathe in through your mouth. And what I noticed is the



thing that we never notice and that's the breath which like gives us life. I can feel the breath, the cool air go all the way down my lungs, and that helps me to find that practice space just noticing and getting centered. Focusing on nothing but the breath. So we are in a comfortable position, a quiet environment, we are listening to our trigger song and we are doing this breathing exercise to begin to help center and calm us.

This is not like super freaked-out Steve has decided to do this. You find breathing exercises in Yoga. You find it in, if you're Christian they'll tell you to focus on your breath while you are praying. They do this in other religions. So this isn't just something I made up. This is a very definite way to elicit what we talked about before, that relaxation response.

We're looking to get into that space where we can center and calm and practice from that space okay. So again where we were running through this we know why it's important. We had the three steps...the trigger, the breathing, the visualization. We've gone through the trigger, we picked a little routine if you want to before you going to your practice space or you've picked your song that you can use for trigger which is my favorite way to do it and now we're sitting in that comfortable position listening to that song, eyes closed, quiet environment. And we do that breathing and I promise you that it's like 'Stephen, how long does it take?'. Literally like 3 or 4 minutes. This is not a big part of your practice time but this is going to help you kill that number 1 practice killer. It is going to chop the head off of it. You are going to be so focused when you get done with this and get done with your warm up. It's not even going to be funny. What you'll find is once you learn to keep that space you're going to learn whenever it's time to stop practicing because that space goes away. You become a little frustrated. You're going to learn how to have more patience. You are going to learn how to create a, you are going to learn how to avoid burnout. So learning where this space is and using this routine is going to help you to realize these different things. I am always getting asked how do I know when to just stop practicing, how to this, how to that. This is going to help you know that because anytime I become agitated in my practicing session I get out of that headspace and I stop focusing on what I need to be focusing on, I know it's time to put the sticks down and go do something else. Time to recover from that.

So get to it, say hey in the comment section even if nothing else, even if you're just like 'hey I made it this far you know, this has helped me or I got a question about this, I'm trying to read



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through all of those, I want to answer those questions. I want to address them as much as I can because I want you to be successful with this. Literally doing this has helped me in other situations. It's helped me learn how to calm myself in other situations. Maybe I'm having a confrontational scenario between me and even my kids and all I do is I say aside 'ok, let me get into that space, maybe I can hum a few bars of my trigger song and I do like five or six breaths' and I'm okay, I'm cool. I've got my head space. And then you go back to it and approach it in a different way. It's helped in situations where we're having discussions in my marriage. This is that practice ripple effect. Putting these in place, this will help you calm down to go to sleep at night like it's not just for practice this is just a practical way to use breath in your life to begin to center you and maintain that focus.



VISUALIZATION IS THE KEY

Before we get into some of the other topics of this particular part of the course, like how to stay motivated, how to avoid burnout, how to control social media, how to begin to love you're playing. We are talk about that in this section, and trust me, the next sections we're going to hit the ground running. You're like, this is all real theory. And you know we have to get this in place. I know it's a kindof out there theory, but we're going to begin applying this to our practice time. We're going to get a warm up in place. We're going to get through the learning time. I'm going to show you different warm-ups. I'm going to show you different systems that I put my practice time through. So I can make a creativity warehouse, make this creativity factory, where I always can come for ideas. We're going to talk about all that. We're going to practice through all that. I'm going to show you specifically what I do, but we have to get this first ok. We've got to learn to love our playing. We have to learn how to stay motivated. We've got to have this creativity treasure chest. All of these different things go together to help kill that number one practice killer that all of you told me was your issue, and it's my issue to focus.

So, we've got our triggers. We've got our breathing techniques. Now we need visualization. So if you've gone through this, and you've made this very calm way to enter into your practice routine, this literally will take me about three or four minutes to go through once you get it down. You've made this kind of unplugging process. You turn your phone on airplane mode, you're turning on your trigger song, or you are going through your trigger routine. You're sitting in a comfortable position, or kneeling, or whatever that may be. You're sitting there. You're trying to focus yourself. You're breathing now. It's the lead up to the visualization stage. So while I'm going through breathing, while I'm listening to this song, before I get into my practice space, when I'm driving there, or whatever that may be, I'm visualizing what a good practice session looks like. And I won't take a long time to talk about this, but visualization is huge. Let's look at Michael Phelps. In the book Essentialism there is a good section where it breaks down Michael Phelps' pre-race routine. He's been doing the same routine for like, I don't know, twelve or fifteen years. He's the most decorated Olympic athlete ever, and that's saying something. Like he's got, he's on to something. What Michael Phelps has done is he and his coach developed this pre-race routine that he goes through. And it's almost this two hour routine, if I remember correctly. He does the same exercise, the same way, the same time, the same number, the same songs, every time. The same number stretches in the



same place. He touches this, like that. He does this. Everything is down to the wire to what he's doing. Now part of this, what this helps to do, and I'll begin talking about this now more, is as we're going into our practice time, doing all of these things successfully engrains success. So we scheduled that. We're going to show up at a certain time, where you did that. You cleared your schedule. You said, I'm going to listen to this song at this time. I'm going to do these breathings. You've done that. By the time you get done with this, you're going to go on to your warm-up. Once you get through your warm up, you will have done that successfully. So all through this, you've done everything successful. So by the time you get to your working time, you've ingrained this series of successes and this love for what you're doing. So to have a successful practice routine, or practice time, a deliberate practice session. That's just going to be a byproduct of everything else that you've ingrained. You ingrained, I did this one hundred percent. I did this one hundred percent. I succeeded at this. So by the time you get that, of course you're going to succeed at your practice time. Because it's just another thing in the string of things that you've planned to do successfully.

So Michael Phelps and his coach said you know, I'm paraphrasing, but he said you know, if you ask Michael what's going through his mind before a race, he'll tell you not much. You know I'm doing this and doing that, he said. But that's the beauty of it. The routine is taking over at that point, and he's completely immersed in doing this thing, the same way we've done it for twelve, fifteen years. It's this same song, exactly the same time. Not only did they plan out this routine, or write it out for him, his coach also told him every night before you go to bed I want you to visualize the perfect race. What you're doing every stretch, every lap, right before you go to bed. And the first thing when you wake up, I want to do it again. I want you to visualize the perfect race. Go through your whole routine in your mind and make sure that you hit it all. So he's visualizing a perfect process. By the time he gets to practice he's already been thinking about this so much, that he's actually going to now enact that visualization thing. The thing that helped.

Now there are several ways to visualize. You know, I don't want to, I always hesitate to go towards meditation and all this, because people get all weird about it. If you have a Christian faith, if you have another faith, meditation is prayer. Let's just say, you can replace meditation with prayer. You can replace meditation with deep thinking and focusing. Whatever you would like to, whatever floats your boat in that area. I don't want to get hung up on a word. Ok, all we're doing is centering ourselves and focusing. When I sit there and visualize, I like to



visualize what it's going to feel like to play the drums. What it's going to feel like to be successful in the and the exercises I'm doing. I like to visualize the song I'm listening to. I actually like to visualize myself playing those notes. Sometimes I even visualizing, this sounds strange, but begin to work through some of these things. Find out what your visualization... it's hard word to say... what you're visualization strategy is.

I had another saxophone player that used to play with us, and I said, when you're soloing what are you thinking of? And he said, I just see shapes, and I see colors, and I see these things, and I try to make those. So, to him he's visualizing these lines as these shapes and colors. Maybe you visualize in shapes. Maybe you're doing the age old, you know, thing where you sit there and you actually watch yourself listening and breathing. And then, you know, watch yourself. Watch yourself, and then you're slowly backing out of the room. That's another way to kind of get into that relaxation response, to really focus yourself. But what I want you to understand is that it's really important to visualize and think about a successful practice session that's going to lead you into, and all of this is about keeping that space. By now you might be like, Stephen is a total fruit loop. I'm going to email him and tell you. And if you think I'm a fruit loop man, put that in the comments. I'm happy for you to tell me I'm a fruit loop. The thing is, I know it works. The thing is I know that after reading all of these daily routines and rituals of famous creatives, they do the same things. Whether it be a bath, or whether it be just sitting alone with a cup of coffee. They do the same thing. Stephen King talks about it whenever he sits down to write, he always sits down to write between eight and eight thirty. He says and my coffee cups in the same place, and my water cup, and my papers are in the same place. And he's like, I don't know why. He said it all has to be there. And doing that is almost like telling my mind, ok, now it's time to play, now it's time to create. And you'll find that by doing this routine in a certain way every day. I want you to commit to it, by doing that. Even if it's just two or three minutes, you're going to get to your practice time in your warm-up, and you're going to be ready to play. Your mind is knowing, this is our time to play. And you're going to be so focused, you're going to be able to get that deliberate practice time that you want.

So what are we going to be talking about the rest of this module, or this part of this course? We are going to be talking about how to stay motivated. We're going to be talking about how to get a creativity treasure chest. So, we're going to get some things that we can put in our treasure chest, so that when our creativity, you know levels, gets low, we can go to those



Module 2

things and kind of glean from them. We're going to talk about how to love you're playing. Something that is not talked a lot about. You hate the way your drum sound, you hate the way this sounds, we're always negative about ourselves. And we never take the time to go hey, when I play that note, I love the way that note sounds. We're going to learn to accept our sound, and by doing that, we begin to we begin to find our voice. We're going to talk about how to know when to stop practicing, by recognizing where your space is. And when you come out of that space, and that concentrated area, how, you know, ok if I can't put myself back in there it's time to stop. How to avoid burnout. We're going to talk about social media. How to avoid issues with that. It's a blessing and a curse in life.

And so, we're going to talk about all that. But please put your questions, comments in the comments section. Just say hey if you want to. Be sure and print out the resources that are coming with this. The worksheets, the reading, and read this stuff. You know, try to really ingest it. I know you're going to skip around this course and take it at your own pace and that's what I want to do. That's why I've laid it out the way I have, but I want you to understand the importance of getting these five key components into your practice room. So deciding, you know, deliberately deciding when you're going to show up. Scheduling, getting this pre-practice routine, or this calm before the storm, getting a warm-up series in place, setting your triggers, getting the deliberate practicing working time, and then your cool down phase and your review phase. All five of those areas are super important to you having a successful, focused, deliberate practice time. Where you come out, and you are so solid, and so sure that you are learning what you need to, going where you need to. So much so that it's going to affect like relationships. Like your relationship with your kids and your wife is going to be more natural. Your leisure time. You're going to be accepting of your leisure time and enjoy it more. Promise, it's called the practice. I call it the practice ripple effect, and the more I focus on making my practice time predictable and getting these processes that I go to, the processes will allow your creativity to flow out. I promise you that, if you'll just commit to it all. Right, leave your comments, say hey in the comments section, I'll catch you in the next video.



FINDING & MAINTAINING YOUR SPACE

I have talked about scheduling practice, how important that is. I discussed links of practice that they found by doing studies on professionals, how much they practice at certain ages and how we can have too much practice. And some practice is good practice, some practice is bad practice.

But what I haven't talked about is how to extend your practice sessions. Okay Stephen, I found I can only practice for a focused twenty minutes. Is that all I'm ever going to be able to do? And the answer is no. As I mentioned before, the studies found that they started at one level, and they were able to extend how long they could practice. And the studies to be specific, the studies found that the amount of practice that we are able to put in in a given day, deliberate practice, focused practice, was not limited by the number of available hours that they had to practice. It was limited by their ability to recover from that practice session. Whether that be sports, or typing, or chess, or music, or writing, whatever that may be.

So it wasn't limited by how much time they had. They had more time to practice, but they couldn't because they couldn't focus. So they needed recovery time. So how do we extend those practice times? Now this goes back to what I've been talking about. By now you may be like Stephen, you are a fruit loop, you're talking about breathing and visualizing and all this stuff. Call me a fruit loop, it works and I've found that other professionals do this.

The way to extend that practice time is to extend the amount of time that you can stay in your practice space, or your practice zone. I don't mean a physical space. I mean a mental head space, and not you're physical, like how long you can stay in a room. It's how long you can stay in that centered focused space. I'll refer back to Josh Waitzkin. I refer to him several times, and he's an amazing person. He wrote a book called, *The Art of Learning*. And he is a world champion in chess, but he's also a world champion, later in life, in Tai Chi Kwan. The fighting portion of Tai Chi Kwan. What he found was that there are these things called hard zones and soft zones, and he started looking at this whenever he went to talk to a sports psychologist. I listened to him for a couple of hours, and he was trying to relate the intensity of sports to chess. And his daily routines and all that, and after he got done talking the sports psychologist looked at him and said, and I'm paraphrasing, but he said, let me ask you a question. "Do you think that the intensity, the craziness of a chess tournament, or a chess match, is better handled if it's preceded by a time of relaxation and calm?" And he sat there,



and said that completely blew my mind open. Because I had never thought about putting a time of quietness, a time of relaxation, and that being related to me being able to handle the madness and the craziness that is a chess practice session or a chess tournament or whatever that is. And it changed the way he looked at things and the way he approached learning.

He came up with these things called hard zones and soft zones. So in a hard zone, that's like the fight or flight. We are all tensed up, and we've got our hands in our ears, and we are trying to jam out all the world and forget about that. We are not going to deal with it. That's the hard zone. He relates that to being like a twig. You are very brittle. You can snap. If the wind blows and you're brittle it's going to snap you.

Whereas the soft zone is you're able to find your space, and you're able to keep that space. And whenever the wind blows, you're able to go with it. So, whenever you have difficulty in your practice time, instead of getting frustrated and jamming your fingers and really trying to muscle it out, instead of doing that, you take a deep breath, and you back up, and you just go with the session. You go, okay cool. We are having trouble with that. Let's just slow that down. And you're not offended. You're not attached to your playing. You're simply, it's simply an observation. It's almost like you're sitting outside yourself and going okay, that needs to be slowed down. Let's go ahead and do that. So you slow that down.

It's almost like you're teaching someone. When you're teaching someone, when you're teaching goes out the window, or your child, or whatever that may be, is when you're frustrated right? Like, oh my God, you can't do that. I thought I told you not to do that. If I do that with my students, they won't learn anything. They shut off, and they go to their hard zone. But if I'm like, okay cool. You're having trouble with that. Let's just slow that down. I know you don't want to slow it down, but it's going to be better. I promise you, you're going to get this before you leave. I'm going to make sure you get this before you leave. If I do that, that puts them in a very soft zone. We need to approach our own selves like that. Don't just approach other people. And have some respect for yourself. Approach yourself in a way that you can learn and you can facilitate that learning environment.

You're like Stephen, what does this have to do with extending how long I can practice? Okay, so it goes back to they found it's not available hours. So I don't care if you have more hours during the day. It's how much they can recover from that session, and being in that session.



The ability to withstand the tenseness that's in that session, the madness that's of a practice session, is how long you can stay in that soft zone, how long you can stay in that centered space, in that practice mind set. So that directly relates to your time coming into your practice time.

So, we're talking about that pre-practice ritual that we made up. We are talking about your warm up time. How long can you stay in a centered space? The amount of time that you can extend being able to stay in that centered space is the amount of time that you're going to be able to continue practicing. Because once we start to feel ourselves come out of that space, we need to put the sticks down. We need to go take a break and come back, do some breathing exercises, or leave. We need to just be done for the day.

There's a lot of writers, that I'm reading their daily rituals, and it's a great book, it's called Daily Rituals. And they talk about that. They are like, I left myself wanting more, or I got frustrated and I just put my pen down. That's when I knew, when they got into that zone. So the longer we can extend that zone the better.

Be sure to check out the bonus section, because I got a video in there and, you didn't know you were going to get this, but it's my top three tips for avoiding burnout. And they are not what you think. They are not, oh, do this exercise. They are actually nothing to do with drums. Burn out comes from keeping yourself in a practice situation well passed the time you need to be there. In other words, you're just burning into your reserves. You're not feeding that fire with coal, you're just pouring water on it. You're putting it out, and you're burning out.

Okay, so extending practicing time directly relates to how long you can stay in that zone. And I got some tips for you. Whenever you're practicing, and you become frustrated, and in Effortless Mastery, Kenny Werner talks a lot about taking your hands off the instrument. Whenever you go into practice time, how often do you put your sticks down? You don't, do you? You just go practicing and practicing, and it's all that old adage. I remember I had a basketball coach. And I remember, I was in a baseball team. And I put my glove on, as if that was going to make me a better player, like sleeping. I get it, be with the item that you're going to be. But at some point we have to release that. So if this is the source of anger and angst and tension, put it down. During your practice session, just practice this. Whenever you find yourself coming across, and you're not loving the sound. You're like that sounds horrible. That sounds this. Because I talked about that in learning to love your playing. If you haven't



watched that, please go watch it. It's so important. When you find yourself playing, and you're playing...[drums], When you find yourself making the oops, I farted face. And you're just mad. You're all stanced up like a prune. Put the sticks down. Lay them there, and simply sit back, correct your posture, take a couple of deep breaths. Don't touch your sticks. Don't touch the drums. I always have my iPhone hooked up, because it's got my click and all that stuff. Play along. Maybe go look up your trigger song. You don't have to play the whole thing, just play a couple of seconds of it. Aww Stephen, that's wasted time. It's wasted time! No, wasted time is sitting there practicing in a hard zone. You need to get yourself back to a soft zone where you are able to be pliable and learning. And you can do that. You can pull back, and go okay, I'm not going to touch it. Some deep breathes, and then what I want you to do is don't jump directly back into playing. Just pick the sticks up, and I talk about this in learning to love your playing. Kenny Werner does an excellent job of explaining this in his book, Effortless Mastery. What I want you to do is, I want you to hit a couple of your drums and cymbals. And when you hit them, I want you to hit them musically. And I want you to say when you hit it, that's a great sound. Like, that's the best sound I've ever heard.

So, after I breathe deep and kind of, okay, I know what that space feels like. So I'm back there. Okay I got it. So you pick the sticks back up, and then... I'm just going to turn my mic off, and then I'm just going to go though and do something like this...[breathing] [drums]

Now, you're like Stephen, alright, pause. I'm done. You're in outer space bro, and you're in astronaut territory. What I'm doing is, I'm not focusing on time. I'm not focusing on techniques. I'm just focusing on getting back to the reason I started playing the drums. It's because I love them. and if you love something, you need to accept it for what it is. You need to learn to deal with it. You need to have patience. And so, by listening to the sounds of the drums that I fell in love with, the whole reason that I'm playing, by doing that, and by using some dynamics by drawing the sounds and not paying attention to, oh, that's not in perfect time with [chatter] ignore all that. We'll get back to that.

We are trying to get you back into a head space so that you can extend your practice time. So you will do this. You may have to your first practice session when you're trying to do this, you may have to put your sticks down fifty times. And if you get nothing else done besides putting the stick down, okay cool. Chill out, and you go back to it. And once you feel like you've got that space, and you have that appreciation again for the sound of the drums, then you go okay, now I'm going to start my practice again.



Now what I don't want you to do is go, arrgh, that top tom is just not tuned... [Chatter] And you start griping. These cymbals aren't top of the line. And I wish I had a... blah blah blah. You can always come up with excuses. I can always come up with excuses. You can always come up with excuses when you don't like a person. But have you ever taken a person that just really rubs you the wrong way, and have you ever sat there and just made a list of the things you could like about them? Do that. Because you know what you'll find out? That person is not so bad. There are some things I can get along with. And if you do that repeatedly, you can start to like them. You may even take that person to lunch. You may even marry that person. My brother married someone that we used to roll and salt her yard. How did that happen? He found good in her. And it's a good thing. They've been married for a long time.

We have to learn to accept our playing, love our playing, and to be able to extend our practice time. It's not what you think. It's not having more time. It's being able to recover from that time and your ability to stay in that practice mindset, that soft zone, to accept your playing. And to accept the change, and to accept the schooling that you're going to get by just going through and learning through these exercises that you set in your scheduling times, and what happened.

Be sure to stop by the bonus section and look at my top three tips for avoiding burnout, and how your playing is related to the rest of your life. It's such an important message that I wish all my students would get it. Be sure to put down in the comment section how long you were able to practice right now. Are you able to maintain that soft space and being in there? Or are you having trouble with that? Put that down in the comment section. Ask me questions. I'm reading through all those. I really do want to interact with you and help you out as much as I can. And be sure to be charting your progress. Print out all these things, download these videos. I want you to get as much out of this course, and if I can help you in any way, you just let me know. That's what I'm here for.



LEARNING TO LOVE YOUR PLAYING

All right so that was a bit of a strange way or different way, a different way to start this video off. And just so you know that was completely a first take. I just took a couple seconds trying to get in my space wasn't warmed up at all. Just sat down I said 'you know let's just see what comes out'. It's kind of what I want to talk about you know. And there were mistakes. I didn't hit the right sound and there were other things that happened there but you know what overall I'm really happy with that because that was what I was feeling at the time and was what came out. There was a time in my life when I would never recorded something like that. I mean I had all this pressure that I had to be good and I was practicing and playing from this space of fear . I don't like doing that anymore. It's not what I'm about and you know the YouTube generation, and God bless you, but there needs to be a protection. Josh Waitzkin talks about it. I refer to him a lot but he's just a, he's an excellent resource if you're looking to get some information on learning and those kinds of things. He's an excellent resource and he talks about protecting the practice time. Protecting your ideas as you're developing them. What we need to learn to do, and it's hard because we're so accustomed to being in a performance driven society, we need to learn to love our playing. So there was a time in my life when I would have told you, I would never done something like that. Ever. Just sit down un-warmed up and just start playing? Oh my goodness what if i make a mistake? What if it's not in time?

You know what? These days I'm so much and in the way of just the way to improve is to keep yourself in that zone. In that soft zone. And you have to accept yourself as a player. You have to accept who you are. The thing that holds a lot of our practice time back is we practice from a place of fear we practice from this place that we're never going to be good enough. Our playing is never going to improve enough. There's way too much and not enough time so we move on from these things that we have half learned. We move on to something else because there's too much material out there and we have this fear of not being good enough. Good enough for what? What when you were learning to speak did you have this fear of not being good enough? No. You were just learning a language. When you were learning to read did you have a fear of not being as good as the others? Not until somebody put that there. Not until a teacher started saying you're not keeping up, you're not good. You know they made my son, he didn't get a really good start in reading. Now he reads great. But he went in testing at the bottom of his class. He was a very smart bright kid but he just didn't have a teacher that gave him a good foundation to start from and we missed it. We didn't know. We



don't miss those mistakes anymore. He went in and he thought his reading was fine. It wasn't until somebody told him 'oh no, you're reading is bad' that he had this complex. They start getting freaked out and I noticed it in him. He was having the same thing that was happening with me with my practice. It's like I was scared I wasn't good enough. I thought I was not learning fast enough. Where does that come from?

What we need to learn to do is we need to learn to accept who we are and we need to surrender our need to always sound good. Because when you're practicing I'm telling you if you sound good when you're practicing you're not practicing. You're just playing. You need to sound bad and you need to accept that you're sounding bad. It's just a work in progress. You need to accept the sounds that are coming out you need to not let your whole life, you know we tie our self-esteem to our playing as musicians so I'm only as good as the last time i sat down and played. And I did this in college. Guys this was a constant struggle for me I wish I would have begun doing this before now. You're only as good as your last gig. You're only as good as your last practice session. So I left that practice session we want to talk about the practice ripple effect and how getting your practice time in order and getting some of these things understood will change the rest of your life. I would go home and I would start having fights with Kelli as my wife or with other people. Because I'm unhappy. Because I attached my self worth to this inanimate thing of playing which is completely crazy because when we got into playing in the first place it was because we loved it. We wanted to do that. We wanted to create a sound. The first musician wasn't worrying about how many albums he could sell or what, you know, the caveman down the way thought about his playing. All they were worried about was communicating their view of the world through their instrument. That's what they were concerned about. So we have this need to always sound good. And social media doesn't help it, doesn't help at all. That's why I tell you stay away from it as much as you can. Go to the bonus section and watch the video why social media is killing your mojo.

It doesn't help because you can get on Instagram and you have this guy or this girl. They made this fifteen second clip and it's perfect. They're amazing for fifteen seconds but you don't see how long they practiced for that one stupid fifteen second clip I want to tell you something else the people that are running these fifteen second clip accounts or whatever it is, and I'm not gosh I'm not downing anyone, but if your practice time is spent every day trying to practice a new lick just to get it clean enough to put it on social media your playing will never grow beyond infancy. Ever. Because all you're doing is growing a spur of grass and



then cutting it. Growing and cutting it and you're never going to get this plant into a full grown plant. You know that's like a having a tree and 'oh, i got to cut that, cut that'. We're never going to get a full grown tree if we do that.

Ok so we need to surrender our need to always sound good. We need to not play from a place of fear. We need to play from a place of loving our playing and ourselves enough to say 'you know what? I am not my playing. I'm separate from my playing. My playing is a work in progress and you know what? Where I am right now, I'm ok with that. I'm ok that i can't do that I'm ok that that person's playing that and i can't play that'.

You need to focus on the things that you practice and loving those thing as in digging deep into those things and staying in your practice space. That is what's going to bring your voice out. The only way you'll bring your voice out is by loving your voice.

Listen to Coltrane. Listen to Miles. Listen to Elvin Jones. Listen Art Blakey. They play the same lines. Transcribe them. That's why I encourage my students to transcribe stuff. You'll find that they play the same stuff. It's just how they juxtapose it against itself. It's how they put those things together. But they had the same ideas. But they are considered these geniuses. It's how you play it.

Miles Davis every time he played a note he thought that was the baddest note he had ever played and if you didn't think so he would put you in your place. He was serious about it. That's the baddest thing that's ever been played. Eve. Bad in the sense of good. He really believed that and it comes through in his playing. Watch Miles Davis step up to a microphone. He takes a second it's almost like he's composing...what we talked about, that inner space. Getting in that soft zone.

He sits there for a second and then he puts his trumpet to his lips and then he'll play. It's just two notes and then he'll put the horn down. We talk about putting your sticks down. Now watch these professionals do this. They'll sit there for a second and then they play something and then they'll stop and then they'll go back into the space and let the band play for a second. They're not just doing that for effect. I mean it does affect the music, but they're doing that because they need to get back to that space and figure out what needs to be said next. They need to let that come through.



Ok we need to get in our head there are no wrong notes. I had a teacher that told me this in college and I thought it was crazy at the time. He said there are no wrong notes there are just wrong resolutions. So if you view that there are no wrong notes for instance and that intro clip i hit a rim like maybe a couple times. I might go to hit a rim, I heard that. You know I didn't think those were wrong notes. Sometimes I've gne through solos and I've hit a rim and I brought that back and I would do a run back up the drums and I come back and hit another rim. I go I guess that's just what wanted to come out. Let's make that sound good. Let's make that sound intentional. Let's use the rims now. Let's just say that was just a part of me bringing the rims into the solo, ok?

But we can't do that if we're playing from a place of fear. 'Oh my gosh that wasn't good! I hit a rim!'. If you're playing from that place you're never going to be able to recover from that because you're always be thinking about that rim that you hit.

I was watching buddy Rich play a solo the other day. He's just a master. But he's going through it and he did something I didn't like. It's the first time Buddy Rich did something I didn't like. He hit a rim and he stopped the solo and he yelled a curse word and then went back into it. And I thought, he just lost me there. Why would you do that? Why would you be so...why would you be...and I'm not, gosh Buddy Rich is a legend guys. But that's just one instance. They're not even perfect. They're not perfect...and in that second he was tied to that and that messed him up and he was mad about it. We have got to get past that. Why not instead use the rims? That was just part of the solo.

If you're loving your sound you're not going to do that. You're not going to scream at yourself. You're going to accept 'ok that happened let's deal with it let's roll with it'. It's how you recover from that wrong note. When Thelonius Monk said...it's funny because we look at twentieth century music now and if you look at twentieth century music based upon, you know music from the seventeenth century and it's...there's so many wrong notes! It's so bad but it's not. It's not. It has to do with that the composer wrote those notes and then handed the orchestra that and said 'this is a piece of music'. And they may be saying like 'that's weird' but then they look back and they go 'well he wrote it that way so it must be right'. When Thelonius Monk sat down at the piano and played and you're like wow those are some out there notes. Monk didn't think so. What did the audience do? 'Oh Monk doesn't think they're out there'. That's music and that's how we move forward.



It's not that all of the sudden it's right. It's the person playing that song who was so confident about it being right that they convince the listeners it's a right. You know I could sit down and play out of time and play all this and as long as I felt that was right and I was playing confidently you would go 'you know I don't care I see some things'. You can convince the listener that what you are doing is right and by doing that that's your voice.

Now obviously there's bad and good and you need to know certain things. You need to have good timing and rhythm and melody but if you're doing all those things there comes a time when you have to accept your playing.

I'll kind of wind this up with, you know it's like when we're, it's like when we're talking. I'll wind up with this topic of surrendering your need to sound good.

When we're speaking you're not always thinking about how good you are sounding, are you? if you did that...my son said, he said the other day, I hate the sound of my own voice. I hate the sound. And I'm like, yeah you know who else used to hate the sound of their own voice? He's like who? I'm like your dad.

I had to record my voice all the time. I hated it. I hated the sound of it. But one day I said you know, this is ridiculous. I started having people come on videos and go 'you know what your voice is pretty good. You should do radio work'. I'm like ok. I sound stupid. Then I go you know what, that's your voice. Why am i sounding stupid? We don't always think about did what we say sound good. Did what we say, does it come out just right? We would think people were conceited if they did that right? No we improvise one hundred percent of the time when we're talking when we're having a conversation with somebody about a topic you didn't plan guess what you're doing? You're improvising just like you do with music. So why when it comes to music are we all the sudden obsessed with sounding good. That's our only obsession. We're not obsessed with music, we're not obsessed with emotion, with technique. We're obsessed with sounding good. That's the only thing that matters and if that's the only thing that matters you will always practice from a place of fear. You will always link you're playing to your self-esteem and you will never get over that hurdle. Your practice time will never be what it could be.

Ok we have to get past fear based playing. We have to surrender our need to sound good and we need to understand that there are no wrong notes. We need to have a love for our playing. Yes practice hard. Yes learn new things. Yes work on your timing and your groove.



But in the end, at the end of the day when you're going through your cool down you're going through that, we'll talk about that later, I want you continually say to yourself I'm in the flow I feel like this sounds good that's my voice. That's what I do. You need to accept who you are as a player. If you want a good resource for really and it's helped, it helped me years ago and it and it's helped a lot of my students break through some real mental stuff. I call it crap. Just scrap. Its crap. It's junk. "Effortless Mastery" by Kenny Werner. And if you don't want to buy it then go look up some of his sessions on YouTube of his clinics about how to begin to transform the way you think about your playing and one day maybe you'll be able to put yourself out in front of thousands of people and just play on something like I just did. Because I literally just said now without being warmed up...and my twelve year old self I was like 'oh my gosh look at what I just did'. But you know what that's what happened in the moment. That's what wanted to come out and I'm ok with it you know. It sounded fine.

Ok that's where we need to get I'm not I'm not obsessed with sounding good. I'm not obsessed with impressing you. I you know I love that you like it to a point. I need people to like what I'm doing for sales but that's not my overall driving thing to me. Accepting myself as a player. Honing my skills. Working on my skills as a teacher and drummer. That's what's going to bring students. Not my obsessive need to sound good. That's just going mean I'm always attached to how good I played the last time I sat down but this is a big issue.

If there's a big issue for you put it in the comment section below 'just so you know what I'm dealing with right now'. Or you know and maybe put some things you've done to deal with the past or maybe put some times when it's been really bad just let's start a discussion about this because it's something we don't talk about. But this is something that every musician deals with and whether you admit it or not it is deeply ingrained in you. We need to learn to accept our playing and to love ourselves for who we are as players and by doing that you're going to love the audience and the audience is going to love you back because you are laying yourself on the line. It's what all the greats have done.

I'm reading your comments. If you've got any questions put those in there and keep trucking along. You should check out the bonus section on my top three tips you know you're going to get those i just was like you know what i just i like over delivery I'm kind of big on over to so i just made this surprise you know I'm like you know what is that and that's my three tips for avoiding burnout and then it's why social media is killing your mojo those are both attached to



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the section so go practice. Love your playing. You're a good player and you just need to accept that.



WHEN TO STOP PRACTICING

It's kind of funny. I think back over my education in drums and I actually never had a teacher talk to me about ...I'm getting caught up in my cords. I'm not even going to cut this on the video, this is just funny when it happens, what is even happening right now?

This is awesome. No I'm not editing this out, real life happens. I never had teachers talk to me, let's recover, stay focused, and...squirrel!!!

I never had teachers talk to me about when to stop practicing. All of them would tell me you need to practice practice practice. Put in those hours, but no one ever told me 'hey Stephen, have you ever thought about not practicing? Have you ever thought that maybe you're done for the day?' And so let's talk about that real quick. This is not going to be a long video I just want to touch on it.

Obviously we need to put time in. Obviously if we find every day that we're needing to stop practicing we've got an issue. Obviously if we have built our tolerance up to be able to deliberately practice for an hour and stay in that very focused soft zone, if we've done that and we find ourselves only getting thirty minutes in every day for like a month, ok we've got a problem there. We need to look and something's killing our practice time. We need to go back to the first part of this course in module 1, we need to figure out ok what's killing my practice time?

But there is a time to put the sticks down and stop practicing. The time to stop practicing is whenever you can no longer maintain your practice space. Whenever you can no longer maintain that focus because at that point you're burning your reserves. At that point you're pushing yourself to a bad place. You know there's no benefit from that and it's not just me saying that. Studies have shown this. It's not just that you don't have any more positive happening from that practice. It actually begins to be negative. It actually begins to harm you're playing. Because now you're grumbling,. Now you're angry that you're there. Now you're just putting in the hours. That's not what we want to do.

So the time that you need to stop practicing is when you can no longer maintain that soft zone. Now, if you're trying to extend your practice session and you find that for twenty minutes you're frustrated, that life has crept in on your brain and you're now thinking about other things and becoming frustrated with your playing, ok at that point instead of just going



'ok I'm going to quit', if you're trying to extend your practice time, do what I talked about whenever it comes to how to practice longer and extending your practice time. Put the sticks down, try to maybe even play your trigger song. Do some breathing and then begin to hit the drums. Begin to understand that 'I like those sounds, I know my playing is not bad, I like the way I play it's ok that top head is not tuned because right now that's the best sound I've ever heard'. Go through some of those motions, those mental exercises. Then if you can get your practice space back even for five minutes that's ok. Because if you were practicing twenty minutes you're going for forty five minutes and you can add five minutes...ok cool, that's success.

But if you find yourself unable to focus, you feel just tired, you feel that you feel that you're frustrated. At any point that we get in that hard zone where we feel like a stickler about this thing or we're jamming or I'm just going to go through this, that's when you know it's time to stop. Because the interesting thing, and I'll talk about this more again I've told you before but watch that bonus video of my own life three tips for avoiding burnout. It's going to be, it's going to help you I promise you,. It's going to help you not only avoid burnout with your playing but it's going to help you see that practice ripple effect. So for the rest of your life you're not walking around burned out about your playing and tired and just defeated. You're not walking around like that. You're walking around energized because you know that that leisure activity is just as important as you're practicing. The cool thing about the study that K. Anders Erickson did or Erickson Anderson, I think it was the Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance, that's what I'm talking about. The cool thing about that is he found in the study, he found that the subjects that he was studying, the violin players put just as much leisure time into their day as they did practice time. So their leisure time almost equaled their practice time every day. Three point five to four hours of practice time. Three point five to four hours of leisure time. To me I went to bed and I'm like 'ok cool so they got just as much down time as they did deliberate practice time'. Then you add into that they were getting eight hours of sleep. Wow so now we're like almost four times the amount of relax time versus how much practice time we're putting in. And what was funny was they found that on the weekend their leisure time went up and their practice time stayed the same. Their leisure time went up their sleep went down. So the two correlates, and we talked about your practice time and how to extend it, is directly related not by available hours but by your ability to recover. So the leisure time went up on the weekends, practice time stayed the same the sleep went down. So when they looked at it they said they're compensating for that



lack of sleep by having more leisure time. Having more fun. So the two correlates to helping recover in their practice time is by enjoying that leisure time and sleep. So if you get in there and you're like 'I can't do this anymore', it's ok. There is a time to quit practicing.

I am all for practice. I want you in there focused but I want you squeezing every ounce of that practice time so that you can squeeze every ounce of life outside of the practice room. Your practice should help you enjoy life and it should help you enjoy your girlfriend or boyfriend or your marriage or your roommates or your freaking dog or your kids. You should enjoy work because you've had a positive experience practicing. If you do this right it will help the rest of your life. Like the rest of your world will begin to fall into place because this area is now ok and you know all of that, there's a symbiotic relationship between all of that.

In the book 'Daily Rituals' it's funny, I began underlining. It is so funny because almost every person, every artist, musician, composer, writer and thinker...all of them that I read about took some kind of walk during the day. Some of them two to four hours of a walk. And there was Mahler, he would drag his wife down the beach for two to four hours every day, and it's there that they processed life.

Ok so go for walk. Stop practicing. It's ok. If you can't maintain that soft zone, that focused zone, that practice space, get out of the room. Yes, I want you to try. I want to try to extend it. I want to put the sticks down, I want you to do what I talked about whenever it comes to extending your practice time. I want to do the three tips from avoiding burn out.

But if you cannot get that practice head space back, get out of the practice room. Because you're doing nothing but burning yourself out all right.

Why don't you put in the comment section, I want to hear from you now. I want you to put what is the thing that's causing you to burn out right now? What is the thing that is stressing you out about you're playing? What's prohibiting you from growing? Have you been able to extend your practice time? Put that in the comments section. If you have any questions please ask those. That's what they're there for. If not then just say 'hey Stephen, I'm here'. I love hearing from you guys. If not go watch the bonus sections and then be sure you're applying them to your playing and to your life.



INSPIRATION AND STAYING MOTIVATED

Alright this one is all about staying motivated. I am Stephen Taylor and I'll be your motivational coach today. I'm going to be, you know, over the top for you. Richard Simmons like. I'm kidding I won't do that I promise.

So one of the biggest question that you guys had in the survey that I put out as well as just my day to day students is: 'how do I stay motivated, where do I get inspiration?'. And this I know this doesn't seem like it ties in but I wanted to draw your attention to one of the bonuses that you didn't know you were getting whenever you signed up for this. I kind of just wanted to surprise you and kind of over deliver and that is 'Why Social Media is Killing your Mojo'. Like, it's killing your practice time. You might think that's completely unrelated to this but not really. So go watch that in the bonus section and be sure to check out why social media can just be a real practice killer. Just put it on your list. It is one of my biggest practice killers. It just kills, it's a time-waster and I've gotten to where it's like a love hate relationship with social media. But enough about that. We were trying to get motivated.

I mentioned one of the biggest things I get is how do I stay motivated to practice. How do I get inspiration. And so I like to keep something that I call my inspiration treasure chest. And you can think that's as cheesy as you want to, I really don't care. Like I'm not in high school anymore, and I do not give into peer pressure. It is my inspiration treasure chest. And the reason I call it my treasure chest is because it is really valuable. There is some really valuable information, there is really valuable things in there. And things or these intangible items that I can pick up, listen to, watch and all of a sudden I'm like, man I'm floored I can't wait I can't wait to go practice.

In that Treasure Chest we need to have several things okay. The first thing in my inspiration treasure chest is a list of recordings, a list of classic recordings that I can go back and listen to. And it can be different for everybody. Maybe you are into heavy metal. That is totally fine. Maybe you are into [inaudible]. It doesn't matter. Whatever you are into put that in your treasure chest. If it inspires you creatively, if you listen to it and go 'man I can't wait to go play', that is an inspirational trigger piece. Put that in there.



And make a list of it. Refer back to it because you are going to need these. You are going to have a bad gig, you are going to have a bad practice session, you are not going to want to get up and practice. When I have a bad gig, when I have a gig that was just either it just drags on or you know the guitar player just couldn't get it together or it was just my playing was a little off. I'm struggling with motivating myself the next day to get up and practice. This is when I dig into that and go 'okay, let's take a couple minutes and let's do this'. So I listen, one of mine is 'A Love Supreme', the album by John Coltrane. I just think it's a masterpiece. It is a masterpiece. I've got a ton of Miles Davis on my list of songs...his album Love Songs, the Birth of the Cool. All these I go back and I listen to and there are some specific songs by these artists too. I go back and listen to them and they motivate me. There are solos that I go back and listen to and so these are motivational and these are not random things, I don't just jump on the internet and go 'what's going to motivate me?' That's the worst way ever to get motivated. Don't do that. Don't do that because you are going to come across some crap playing and some bad video. You want to make sure that these are consistent.

And another thing that you can have is video. I just mentioned video. That may be DVDs, that may be something on YouTube. But don't get on YouTube and surf because that's a negative. You want to get on there and be very specific. Make yourself an inspiration playlist. That can be just a song or maybe its videos maybe it's just creative videos that you watch and you are like 'you know that gets me inspired to go make music. That just visually, that gets me inspired'. That's ok. Maybe it's a live performance. That's even better. Maybe it's your favorite drummer and just watching them kill and burn on this gig, maybe that's inspiration to you. What I want you to do is put those in. Stop your practice time and go sit and watch them because you are wasting your time if you sit and go 'oooo' cause then what are we doing? We're just going through the motions. Then we're not in our practice space. Then we're not in our soft zone. We're doing bad practice like we talked about earlier. There is such a thing as bad practice and that's where we are like just going through the motions. I'll just put in my time. You are clocking in and clocking out. That is not what we are doing. We are getting in there and we are working it. If you can't do that, you have got to go into your inspirational treasure chest.

Another thing that I love is live concerts. Live performances. Those are inspiring to me. Don't make them random bands maybe once a month but have certain groups that you go see. Maybe venues that you go to where you know they have good music. Whether it's a jazz place



or whatever it is. I want you to go. Maybe you find...there are certain players in town that I would go watch because they inspire me. There is a guy in town named Marcus Finney. He is an amazing player and he plays around locally. I would see that guy. I would go see that guy play anytime. Man he inspires me every time I see him play. His musicality his touch. What he does, he just inspires me. There is nothing special about him. It's just his playing for whatever reason it touches me.

So what we want to have in there is we want to have songs. Albums. We want to have videos and DVDs. We want to have live performances. All of those things help to be in your inspirational treasure chest and I'll talk about this in other areas but I also get inspired doing other things. So part of the something that's in my inspirational Treasure Chest, I didn't realize until I got married, and now I started doing that weird thing "working on your marriage". You know you have got to communicate and all those women are from Mars men are from, no men are from Mars women are from whatever, you get the point. Like you have to put effort into it.

I found out that one of my big things, I didn't know this until I got married, was recreational companionship. Like going out and having fun. That was important to me. I didn't realize until I really worked through that. It wasn't like issues we have. I enjoy going out, I enjoy getting and having an adventure, going on a walk, going on a hike, going swimming. Whatever it may be, I enjoy doing things outside of the practice room. For me that's part of my inspirational treasure chest. As a matter of fact I'm about to get up cause I have been, hardcore recording and I'm in my zone. I'm teaching. That's part of me getting into my zone and I can feel myself getting there. Like okay I can keep this up for a little bit longer, I can feel myself getting there. I practice what I preach, I am about to go on a walk. It is a nice day. I'm going to go outside and clear my head.

And I brought it up earlier...in that book 'Daily Rituals', almost every one of those creative's every day, and it's usually in the afternoon, they were going on walks. I underlined because it was 90% of these people who were walking. There's something to that. Naturally when you are doing this automatic thing you don't have to think about it. Just walking and your brain begins to do that. Even better, walk and listen to music that inspires you. I promise you this stuff works. It sounds like it's all...I know we're all theory and you are all 'how are we going to



apply it' and it's like 'Stephen when are we going to get to the drumming'? We are going to get to the drumming but this is the stuff that make your drumming happen. This is the stuff that teachers never talked to me about. Like this psychological stuff. Not the physical causes. They talked to me about what was the physical. They didn't talk to me about the psychological stuff. About staying in the zone, about how your practice time is over whenever you can no longer maintain that zone. It's not because you have three more hours. It's over whenever you can't stay there because now we're doing harm.

I want you to get this stuff. This is just not 'oh Stephen's ideas and theories'. This is, it's proven with studies. It's proven by looking at professionals. It's proven by looking at their practice routines and their daily routines. It's proven by talking to teachers that are at the top of their field. This stuff is proven to work.

So get out there and do it. Put below, I want you to put below in the comments, I want to know what everyone has in their inspirational Treasure Chest. Please let me know because I am always adding things to mine. Always adding things to mine. So we can all take and add some of these recordings or DVDS or ideas to our inspiration treasure chest.

Maybe you just like drawing. Mindlessly drawing. That's awesome, and you know what that is called? That's called play. There's no point to it. If you're putting together model airplanes, you don't sit there and go 'boy we're really getting somewhere with these model airplanes!'. No you just, you do it to relax. Like you put them together and you are done and you get another model airplane. There is never, it's not a race. That's how we need to be with our practice time. It's not a race. We just need go about it focus and enjoy the process. We can do that if we have this Treasure Chest.

So put below in the comments what is in your inspirational Treasure Chest? And who knows maybe I'll add it to mine.

Well if you have any questions that is what the comments are there for, I'm reading those, I so appreciate you going through this and committing yourself because you know what? Most drummers don't. Most musicians don't. You are well ahead of the pack if you are just putting some of these things in place and if you go ahead and put these things in place. Guess what. Your inspirational Treasure Chest, it's not just for drumming. Whenever you're feeling low like



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the kids are driving you nuts are they...come on we all love our kids but you know they're kids. Or you know what my boyfriend or girlfriend, you know what work is killing me: go to your inspirational treasure chest man. It's that practice ripple effect. So we're not just changing our practice time we are changing other things in our life.

Let me know how this helps you.



DEALING WITH BURNOUT

This is one of the extras for this module you didn't, I didn't put it in there whenever you were signing up for this you didn't know you were going to get it and that's you know again I've I said I just kind of like throwing some extras in there and I was debating whether to put this in there and how to put it in there and then and then it last night but you know what I'm going to put it in there. I'm just going to put it in there as a bonus.

This has to do with two things, this has to do with the symbiotic relationship between life and your practice time and avoiding burnout. You might think that those two things don't really go together but I'm here to tell you there, they hugely go together and in the next modules we are going to get into warming up and actual routines and then get into the practice space and the systems I go through and all those things. But if you get this, if you understand the symbiotic relationship between life, your recreational activities, your sleep, what you eat, your health, your relationships with people and your practice time or you're playing if you put those two together the practice ripple effect is going to transform, it's going to transform several areas of your life. And I'll tell you know and you've heard me tell this story before probably but a while back Kelly and I woke up and we honestly I hang out with Kelly that's my wife I hang out with her all the time. Like literally we are best friends. So if I have...somebody asked a question the other day "would you avoid, would you not go to a party just to hang out with your spouse?", and I'm like Yeah! I do that anyway. Kind of an introvert.

But she's like she is my hang, man I like hanging out with her. So we get up and you know if you've been in a relationship you have those off and we had a married discussion about, it was about something stupid and if you are married or been in a relationship you know you argue over the stupidest things you argue over like what movie you're going to put in your Netflix queue, like it's dumb stuff. Many times it's not important stuff. This was one of those times where we both leave frustrated right, we both leave. And I going through my work day I can't believe [mumbles] and you know I'm doing the grumbling thing where as when I'd left the house I do not want to see her for a while I'm going to get you know you're doing your griping and I'm sure she was feeling just the same way.



So I get to that time when it's time for me to practice. Well then that negativity was bleeding over into my, I don't really want to practice I'm just going to skip that just plow through work and I'm going to be mad when I get home. It's all going through my head and I finally I thought you know what I have lessons coming up I owe it to my students to continue improving, I preach about this stuff I need to practice it, I'm going to start my routine.

So I got a quiet space gotten a comfortable spot and I started my trigger routine and my song going I went through the 30 breaths and by that point I was like, feeling calmer, I was getting centered. I went through some visualization just really visual and at that point I was in my space and once you know it's your space you know what it feels like you know what it feels like when you get there and you're like okay now I'm in the zone. I sat down and it's still nagging at me a little bit [mumbles] I'm slowly letting it go. I went through my warm-up routine, by that time I'm like I'm feeling pretty good let's go through this.

I go through a practice routine then I had one of the best practice sessions that I've had in a while just letting things go.

Two hours went by I got done went home and when I walked in the door I didn't even thought about what had happened earlier in the day I was just, I was like on a practice high like that runner's high they get. And I walked in the door and I'm like 'oh man I'm so glad to see her', I didn't even remember the fight that had happen. I went over and gave her hug we laughed a little bit poked each other. She's like [inaudible] she's is "like careful I got to knife" and I'm like yeah well I can take it. You know make some jokes and it's over.

And later I looked back and I'm like wow my practice session actually help me get over an argument I had with someone earlier during the day. Cause I went into that practice angry but I came out just fine and realizing it was all silly stuff come on. Now am I saying that practicing is a way to save your marriage? No what I'm saying is this practice ripple effect that I talk about is no joke it really works. You getting this together and learning how to get into that space will allow you to get into that zone for other areas of your life. Because you're so happy with this area of your life and everything is together and you're happy with where that's going there's this relationship between everything else and you realize that your practice time is not the only thing that's important to improve your playing.



Ok I know I'm going to get to my three tips I'll get to that in just a second.

So the very first tip I have, ok. The first thing you can do to make your practice time the best it can be is you need to have as much recreational activity in your day as you do practice time. If you do not you're doing something wrong, if you do not it will lead to burn out okay. They did I'll point back to the study and I'll actually read you something here in a second of the study of the role, the role of deliver practicing the acquisition of expert performance. Professor Ericsson and they found that the people, the subjects that they were that they were that they were interviewing, that they were watching and monitoring at 3.5 to 4 hours' worth of deliberate practice that's hardcore going after it practice but also on the other side there were 10 things that contributed to that music related activities or we are talking about transcribe all those things but the other thing that was not music related that they did just as much of everyday was recreational activities. 3.5 to 4 hours of deliberate practice and then 3.5 to 4 hours of recreational activities.

And on the weekend it actually exceeded how much they practiced. The other thing was sleep, wow and I'll talk about that in a second. Sleep was huge it was almost three times they're getting over 8 hours of sleep at night. So I started looking at going man that makes sense. For instance I was in here recording earlier and I'm trying you know to get this course out and get all my thoughts together, I started about 8:45, it was a little after 10, 10:05 or something like that, I've been going for you know 70/80 minutes and I said you know what I got to get down. So I went out it's a nice sunny day a little chilly about 40 degrees I walked to the coffee shop by my house and walk back took about 20 minutes wasn't really about the coffee I don't even drink that much coffee these days it was about the walk.

And I listen to Antonio Sanchez and when I got back man I was ready, I was ready to go. Cause teaching is stressful to me, teaching I have to be in the zone to do that okay. And so whenever I'm, whenever I'm in that zone I get tired it's just like practicing I can only focus for so long before I'm like okay I got to have a break. Alright and then so what I do is I deliberately put recreational activities, now what does this do for the symbiotic relationship between your life and practice this is awesome because it takes away all the stress you have that on a weekend you're enjoying yourself instead of stuck in a practice room.



Should you practice? yes it showed that those professionals still maintain 3.54 hours of practice during the day on weekends but the recreational activity was way more than that, so it shows that yes practice was important but the way they were recovering was by doing those activities. I talked about it earlier deliberate practice is not driven by the number of available hours deliberate practice is driven by how long it takes you to recover from your last session and if you're not recovered you're going to go in there you're going to start practicing bad, you're going to go through the motions and then you going to burn out alright.

I want to read you something, I marked the place, let me find it. This is from the Role deliver Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance, such a long name. What we have here is and I'll read it real quick and you can just kind of do what you want with it. It says 'the best data on sustaining intellectual activity comes from financially independent authors. While completing a novel famous authors tend to write only four hours during the morning leaving the rest of the day for rest and recuperation. And successful authors who can control their work habits and are motivated to optimize their productivity limit their most important intellectual activity to a fixed daily amount when working on projects requiring long periods of time to complete'. Okay so they're limiting their number of deliberate hours of practice. 'When individuals start with the deliberate practice in the domain the initial duration of weekly practices limited so whenever you first start trying to practice deliberately you have to do at a reduced rate. It says 'given the most future International ever performer started at early ages these brief durations are consistent with the short duration' so 10 to 20 minutes per session of long-term training programs with children, consistent with the idea of slow adaptation to the demands of extended practice individuals beginning to practice are encouraged to adopt a regular weekly schedule with practice periods of relatively fixed duration. After extended time with an acceptable practice level individuals adapt their bodies and lives and slowly gradually increase that level to rapid increases in the intensity of practice lead to overuse and overtraining'. All right it says 'Bailey and Martin reported incidence of successful 9 to 11 year old children increasing their training to very high levels only to experience motivational burning or burn out and quit the domain altogether.

In summary disregard of the effort constraint on deliberate practice so disregarding that it takes a lot of effort to practice in the way that I'm trying to teach you to practice, disregarding that leads to injury and even failure. In the short-term optimal deliberate practice maintains



equilibrium so it maintains a balance between effort and recovery, in the long term it negotiates the effort constrained by slow regular increases in the amounts of practice that allow for adaptation to increase demands.

Now I know that was kind of a long read what they're saying is you need to relax, get your practice in and then go recuperate. We recuperate in really two main ways we recuperate with the leisurely activities: things done for fun and then we also recuperate with sleep: sleep was voted as the second most the second best thing you can do for your practice time. Number one was deliberately practicing, number two was sleep its right up there in the top three.

So my first tip is you should have as much leisure activity during the day as you do practice time, deliberate practice time.

My second tip for is to know when you are out of your space, know when you've reached your limit and quit practicing.

So we just red going over your limit, so being able to stay in the zone we know it's mentally stressful once you've reached that limit you need to quit because at that point you're going into just going through the motions, you're going into repetitive mindless practicing and we've said before I've said it several times that leads to burnout. Because all we're doing is putting in the hours, now we're just clocking in over at McDonald's nothing wrong with working at McDonalds but now we're just clocking into a job that is not our destination for the rest of our life. We're just popping the card in there clocking in, clocking out.

We have to avoid doing that because doing that creates mundane activities, it creates boredom, and if you want to keep things interesting be focus that whole time.

So once you've reached that limit understand okay now it's time for me to quit, go do some other activities and then come back.

The next thing so the third thing is that I would suggest for you to do and it's kind of a two-fold: take regular breaks and get enough sleep. So whenever we're practicing and I go back to my instance earlier I really can't go longer than sixty to eighty minutes and if you look at if you look at professionals and then you also look at the studies that have been done they



usually have their practice sessions divided up into that and then they take some kind of rest whether it be 10 or 20 minutes or even sometimes 3 hours they'll do a split session. They take some kind of rest and that enables them to come back with renewed strength okay, that's really important to understand. A lot of times I suggest to students that they go with the 50/10 rule, what is a 50/10 rule? For every 50 minutes of practice you put in put 10 minutes of a break. You can make that break anything you want and I have suggestions later on for how you can schedule your breaks and what you can do I don't get on social media, I don't get on email, I don't call people, I typically try to do some stretching, I go outside for a short walk maybe you know if I'm practicing at home maybe there's some, I used to when I was in college my wife worked full time: she stays home with the kids now which is more than a full-time job she used to work full-time now she just works all the time. I was and so I was in college and I felt bad because I was bringing in an income but not as much as she was and so my duties was like the house too. So when I practiced at home I would do chores you know felt like I was a kid I would do chores.

So I would have you know four rooms that need to be vacuumed and if I took four different breaks or two breaks I would get two rooms done each time. Maybe I'd load the dishwasher, clean up the kitchen something that's really mindless that I don't really have to think about so in other words it's not like oh I'm concentrating now on writing this email or I'm getting distracted I'm simply focused on vacuuming the floor takes zero thought like eh I missed a spot that's the most thought it takes.

So mundane activities like stretching, some breathing exercises, walking outside, playing with your kids, playing with the dog, doing mundane house chores and those kind of things allow you to recuperate and come back I used to listen to music while doing it. The next thing that's kind of tagged on to that is getting enough sleep and I'll talk about this later but tons of studies have been done that links sleep to efficiency and mental focus. And so you really need to be getting sleep done, all the studies that have been done on professionals as well as on those that are coming up to be professionals they get over 8 hours of sleep at night and they usually include a nap during the day, some type of a nap and if you go and read the book 'Daily Rituals' look at how much walking those people do and how many naps they take they really value their sleep time it lets them be clear. I used to not value sleep, I used to you know [mumbles] I'm 4 hours and I'm good man now that I get enough sleep if I get a day that I don't



get enough sleep I realize how much of a fog I was walking around in for years. And the horrible thing was I didn't have any focus, I was always sleepy, I was in taking too much coffee and then I was just cramming myself into the practice room for 8 and 10 hour days not getting near what I could have gotten done.

Okay I'm all for practicing but not past the limit that we can focus, you may be able to focus for 5 hours a day man that's awesome there was a time where I really could do that, if you can focus for 5 hours a day or you get to 4 hours and you are like man I'm still in this keep going keep going practice as much as you can, I will always tell you that but know your limit because at that point you're burning into reserves. Make sure you get enough sleep, you feel like you need a nap, you may need a nap alright I sound like a parent but you may a nap. Ok learn to listen to your ques.

So I'm just going to recap, the three tips that took way too long to explain were: number one we need to make sure we have as much leisure activity during our day and we do deliberate practice activity if you don't then you are going against the norm of what all the professionals that have been studied did. You are actually going into, they studied the professionals and the semi-professionals, and the semi-professionals their leisure time was kind of out of whack. Okay so you need to follow professional, this is what professionals do they make sure they are having fun so that they can put more fuel in their tanks and they can go back and be more productive.

Second thing is it take regular breaks you need to make sure that you're taking breaks, you need to make sure that your refueling yourself okay and don't run on empty and the third thing is I think I did these out of order, but the third thing is know when to quit, know whenever you're not in the zone anymore, when taking those short breaks and putting the sticks down is not working. Okay I'm in a hard zone my hands over my ears I can't absorb any more knowledge I'm frustrated, I'm going to put this down take a couple deep breaths go and have some fun all right. Take the stress off yourself, know that professional's practice 3 to 4 hours a day it's deliberate, it's crazy deliberate so if you're not a professional and you're going one to 2 hours a day, awesome you're going to get there.



