

## Becoming a Musical Jedi

I remember hearing John Lennon talk about meeting Chuck Berry, who had been his idol for many years prior. I can't find the exact quote, but John said something to the effect that it was not necessary to put him on a pedestal; that he, legend though he was, was just a regular person like you and I.

Master musicians don't put other musicians on a pedestal. They realize there is no pedestal. The higher the level of mastery, the more humble you get. But it's not a humility that in any way diminishes one's self. A master recognizes that their abilities are the result of long, hard work, but also recognizes that it was work that they felt compelled to do. They feel a sense of accomplishment but also recognize that it is the spirit of the music itself working through them.

Thus, the master musician takes pride in their actions, but not in the usual sense of the word. Pride can sometimes have negative connotations, as in when it is false aggrandizement of the ego. True pride is recognizing that one deserves success for massive amounts of action taken, yet also realizes a greater force at work than one's need for recognition. In the case of the musician, it is the force of the music. In life, it could just be called the Force.

Becoming a master musician is like becoming a Jedi. The ultimate goal is for the spirit of the music to flow through you automatically. In order for this flow to happen, one must study and train for many, many years. Perhaps when we first begin training to be a Jedi or anything else in life, we have no idea of the depth of commitment involved, but we get rewarded every step of the way by gaining self-mastery, ability to help people, power, poise etc.

Many students tell me they have no desire to become professional musicians, and that is perfectly fine. But even if you have no desire to become a musical Jedi, taking music lessons, even for a short time, is beneficial. In fact, learning directly from a master is way faster than trying to learn on your own by reading, studying, observing and trial and error. One day with Obi Wan Kenobi could potentially be worth more than 10 years of studying the Force on your own. Just think what 10 years with Obi Wan could do for you!

The Flow of Life is in everything we do. Masters are often treated as if they have super-human powers; yet their achievements simply reflect the fact that they have concentrated the flow in a particular area for a long time. Whatever you put your

attention on expands that area of attention. Masters, recognizing that this is the case for everyone universally, know that there is nothing special about them.

True self-masters also recognize the mastery within everyone. The job of a music teacher is to help others become the master they want to be, even if that simply means a master hobbyist. In this case a master hobbyist is one who can enjoy their instrument virtually every time they play for years to come, regardless of the amount of 'progress' necessary for that enjoyment to be sustained long-term.

The master is never annoyed by a student's lack of ability. All a master sees is mastery. The only annoyance to a master teacher is arrogance, wherein someone tries to convince himself and others that they are further along than they are, and the learning process becomes thwarted. But even then, the master knows that the attitude is just a facade, and that that person is a master too, they just haven't put their focus ahead of their desire for self-aggrandizement.

Everything you learn, everything you do to better yourself on your instrument, is a step in the process of mastery. You don't have to become a full-time professional musician to access mastery. You already have it, deep within you. Go forth, young Padawan, make good music, and may the Force be with you. :)