

## Reflections on How and Why Recitals are Useful

The book "Mindset" by Carol Dweck was a terrific eye-opener for me. It's about having a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset. The fixed mindset is full of fear of not looking good in front of other people. The growth mindset is simply about expanding your horizons and being willing to fail in a spirit of experimentation as a necessary part of self-expansion. In a nutshell, the growth mindset is about learning and growing rather than judging or worrying about being judged. The recital is a perfect opportunity to grow.

In a recital, neither the students, nor the teacher, nor the audience members judge anyone on the basis of how well they perform. What has been very destructive in my opinion is shows like American Idol and the like that make music out to be a sport, or at least a competition. Music is not like that at all, as we all know. It is a beautiful an easy way to immediately raise our collective vibration as evolving beings on an abundant and magnificent planet.

Not only are people not judging during a recital, but they are actually encouraging and supporting everyone who goes up to play. Yes, the audience gets the benefit of being entertained by their efforts, and yes, the ability to do so will vary from one student to the next. At the same time, everyone in attendance is very grateful and appreciative for everyone's performance regardless of their level of skill. In other words, everyone knows it's a recital not a concert, but they get the benefit of having moments throughout the recital that are equivalent to the enjoyment one receives from a concert.

I am already proud of everyone who has decided to participate in the recital, just for the sheer fact that they have realized that it is an excellent opportunity for musical growth for them, and have accepted the challenge accordingly. The pride I feel does not vary from student to student based on his or her level. In other words, unlike the fixed mindset that is portrayed in that book, we are not so much concerned with outcome as we are with the process. (By the way, I also talk about this in the commuter audio CD I made called "Music and Life.")

I am sharing this with all of you because we do live in a competitive world, and people will do and say things in ignorance about other people's ability to perform or lack thereof. There are countless stories of people who have received negative comments from teachers or loved ones, about music or anything else, and it destroyed their spirit towards pursuing things they love. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Your loved ones may not have the courage to say this to your face, but they, at the deepest level, underneath their own insecurities and jealousies, support your expanding success as a person and as a musician. We are all connected, and the expansion of one means the expansion of all. This is nothing new even though it sounds new-agey. Our world is becoming so well-connected technologically, we all have a responsibility to connect and support each other spiritually by supporting each other's growth.

I love helping, you and all my students, and I can relate to where you are at, because I have been there. It took me many, many years to overcome my own challenges with playing, and it took way longer than it would have if I had had a mentor or coach or trainer or teacher who guided me and not just pushed me through 'cookie cutter' lessons! Now, I passionately want that kind of acceleration for you.

I'm excited about the recital because it's simply an opportunity to propel you forward way faster than if you weren't doing it. I congratulate each and every one of you in advance, and I am honored and privileged that you have selected me to play major role in facilitating your musical growth. Practice hard and break a leg! 😊