

# Top 10 Secrets

For teaching adult piano students

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# Welcome



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I'm Old!

# #1. The aging population is smart!

What do the experts say?

- Malcolm Knowles (father of andragogy)
  - “Adults have a wealth of life experiences that they bring with them to new learning experiences”
  - Adults need to be respected

# Take With

- Don't pretend to be an expert on anything but piano teaching
- Listen to what your student knows
- Listen to what your student wants
- Respect your student in many ways

# Cautions

- Adults don't want to take charge at first
- Direction changes

## #2. Adults choose their course of study

What do the experts say?

- Carl Rogers
  - “We cannot teach another person directly, we can only facilitate his learning”
- What you want is going to be trumped by what student wants



# Take With

- Discuss regularly what your students wants
- Discuss again in 4-6 weeks
- Repeat
- Role of facilitator
  - Know a lot of literature
  - Know where to find theory/history/pop/jazz/improv
  - Know steps in guiding towards the knowledge

# Cautions

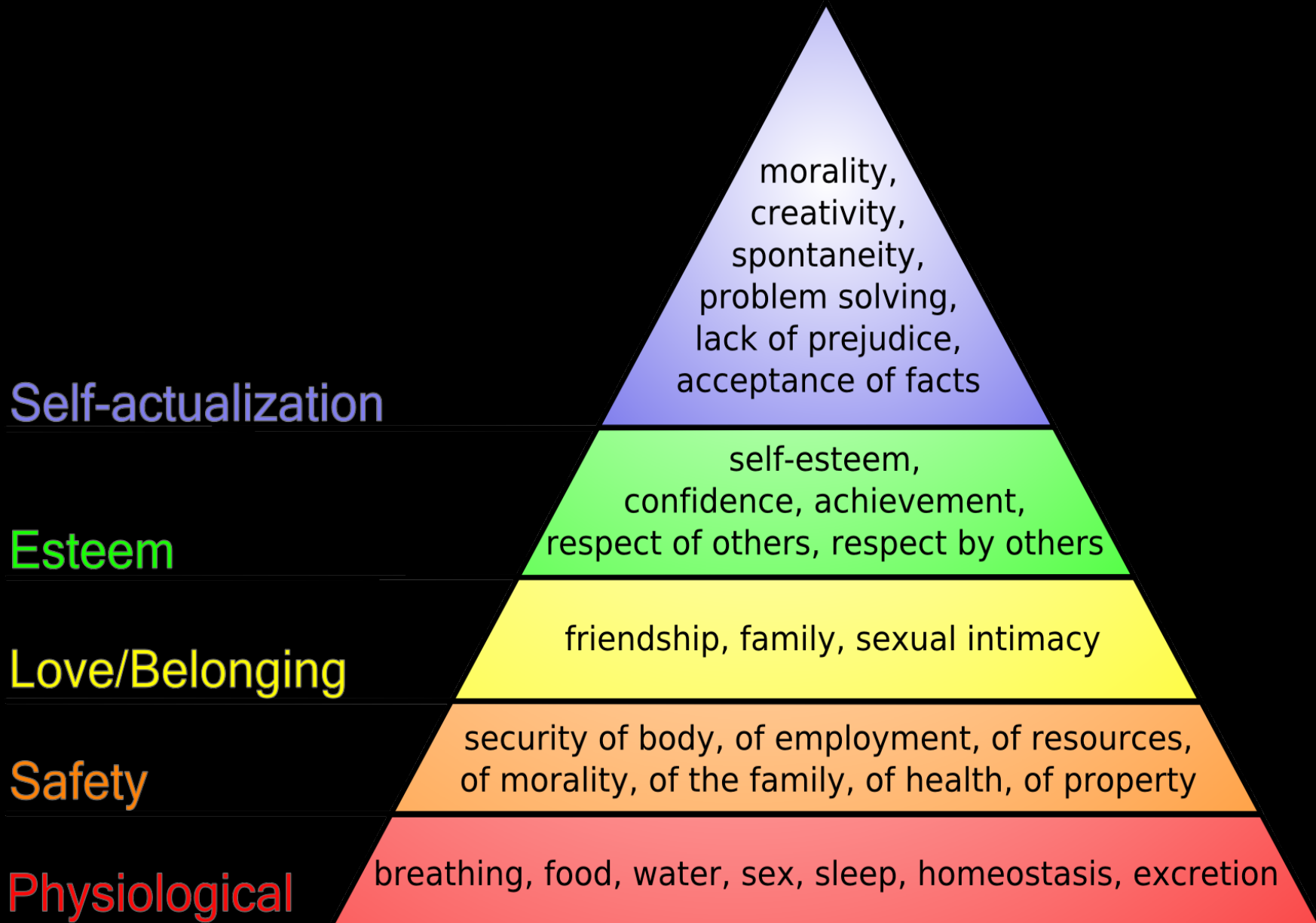
- Know steps to what the student wants to learn
- Be prepared to have the student bypass the steps!
- Let the student fail
- Discuss and reassess steps
- Some students don't want to take charge-you need to not get "lazy," but help them

# #3. Don't believe "I'm doing this just for fun"

- "For fun" usually means don't want to play recitals
- "For fun" says "I'm not good"

What do the experts say?

- Knowles: Adults are goal-oriented
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
  - "Human motivation is based on people seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth"



# Take With

- Find situations that students can express their piano study
  - Facebook
  - YouTube
  - Adult groups
  - Soirees
  - Group experiences-group class or duo partners

# Cautions

- Don't force participation
- Let students find own way to participate
- Offer ideas-stay out of the way!

# #4. Adults lack self-confidence

- What do the experts say?
  - 90% of adults lack self esteem
  - 92.5% reported raising of self-esteem through education
  - For many people, accessing learning will need to be a gradual process, which allows time for confidence to build
- Inner Game of Tennis: Timothy Gallwey
  - Self 1 (the teller) and Self 2 (the doer)

# Take With

- Give reassurance that progress is being made
- Do it again
- Break things into smaller steps
- Reassure each step
- Round out learning with physical and mental activities



# Cautions

- Don't set up students to fail (speed)
- Be honest
- Don't interrupt!

# #5. Adults will be your friend

- What do the experts say?
  - Carl Rogers: “Significant learning rests upon qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and learner”

# Take With

- You are an important part of the student's life
  - Parties
  - Concerts
  - Emails
  - Coffee

# Cautions

- Student feels personally responsible if wants to get a different point of view
  - Up front about this
- Student needs to graduate
- Lesson time focuses on musical relationship from the first word

# #6. Social is important

- What do the experts say?
  - Bandura: learn from watching others
- Myelin formation
  - What is myelin?
  - “Prolonged social isolation can lead to a decrease in myelin, an effect implicated in age-related cognitive decline”

# Take With

- Group teaching/group classes
- Soirées
- Introduce students to each other
- Concert attendance
- Local clubs and organizations

# Cautions

- You are only part of an adult's life-foster development between students
- Enjoy the parties!

# #7. Money Matters

- The “crash”
  - John
  - Joe
  - Matt
  - Ruth
- Maslow: lower level needs first before self-actualization



# Take With

- None I like:
  - Choose your studio location with economics in mind
  - Evaluate student's ability to continue paying for lessons
  - Set studio policies to keep students for “x” amount of time

# Instead...

- Make every minute count with your student
- Constantly reflect on whether you are giving your student what he/she needs and wants
- Be prepared for people to give up what they want so children's needs can be filled
- Remind through your teaching the fulfillment your student is getting in the lesson

# #8. In, through, out is expected

## What the experts say

- Nancy Schlossberg “Transitional Theory”
  - Death
  - Work change
  - Divorce
  - Empty nest
  - Personal crisis

# Take with

- When transition is done, you may lose student
- Foster an environment that welcomes return
- Be emotionally and economically prepared for this fact
  
- Adults live three lifetimes compared to children

# #9. Adults aren't all the same

What do the experts say?

Erik Erikson: three stages of adulthood

- Young Adult: 19-40
  - Starting families, making friends, LOVE
- Middle Adult: 40-65
  - settle down within a relationship
  - Develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture.
  - We give back to society through raising our children, being productive at work, and becoming involved in community activities and organizations
- Late Adulthood: 65-death
  - Reflect on life
  - Role in the “big picture”
  - Explore life

# Take With

- Don't assume what someone wants to learn
- Be understanding of time commitments
- Be understanding of role music plays in your student's life

# #10. Adults will continue to learn

What do the experts say?

- We continue to get smarter and smarter
- No significant loss of neurons as we age

Old age is inevitable

- Speed of cognition reduces
  - Myelin “disconnect”
  - Physical problems (medications, pain)

# Take With

- Promote healthy environment
  - Lots of light
  - Allow for hearing loss
  - Understand affects of medication
- Understand the process of learning
  - Give clear instructions
  - Give logical instructions
  - Allow time to pass
- Keep a sense of humor!



# From one adult...

- My brain stuff is more like music, which is getting more difficult because of my hearing. Any notes a octave or so above middle C sounds flat to me.
- Also more difficult to hear, the higher I go. Beethoven had the same problem by the way.

- To compensate for my hearing problems I play the higher notes LOUDER, much louder. So my Clair De Lune sounds like Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Dexterity suffers as well, you know stiffness and arthritis and such.
- Thus I play fast parts really slow and slow parts really fast so I start and end at the right place.
- This, of course endears me to all of my neighbors.

- I have been practicing and learning new pieces. Rachmaninoff's Eighteenth Variation, Bach's Arioso and a few others.
- I find a teacher is distracting so I am somewhat self taught. I define my mistakes as improvements to the original composition.
- I am surprised that the composers didn't see the improvements.

- I also tend to leave the really hard parts out so I am playing the Readers Digest Abridged version.
- Actually I use Rachmaninoff's method of mastering a new piece of music. He would play the piece very - very slow until he mastered it.
- I find that method helpful.

- Hopefully I have a longevity gene.

# I love my adults!!

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