

The Power of Mindfulness:

A Transformative Practice to Enhance Your Teaching!

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MTNA National Conference, Atlanta, Ga.

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The practice of mindfulness brings awareness to your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and your environment in the present moment and without judgment. When we are in the present moment, we can choose to connect to our hearts. When connecting to our hearts, we can choose to accept whatever is happening in the moment in a kinder and more compassionate way and cultivate a deeper relationship within ourselves and everything we do, including teaching and performing.

The four A's of Mindfulness:

1. Awareness - the ability to know and notice; being conscious
2. Acceptance - accepting whatever you are experiencing without pushing it away or thinking that it's wrong.
3. Allow - allow an opportunity (a pause or space) in order to shift your perception. An Aha moment. Realizing you can *choose* a thought and bring attention to what you want.
4. Awaken - connecting and listening to your heart. Bringing your attention to what your heart desires.

Introducing Mindfulness into the Lesson or Training the Mind to *Bring Attention* to:

Mindful Breathing: Breathing mindfully helps to connect our mind to the body, to focus and relax at the beginning of a lesson, while practicing a challenging section of the music and at the end of the lesson. Tools, such as a Hoberman Sphere and a Breathing Buddy, make this practice enjoyable and effective.

Creative Imagery - a powerful skill using the imagination to change negative thought patterns to positive and constructive thoughts.

Self-Inquiry: Checking in with yourself. Noticing and being present to thoughts, feelings, emotions and sensations. This skill is especially helpful when playing challenging music and preparing for performance.

Developing a Positive Affirming Mindset: practicing self-compassion through replacing self-limiting and destructive thoughts for kinder, beneficial and constructive thoughts and emotions.

The Benefits of Mindful Doodling or Mindful Improvisation

- Bring your attention to playing non-judgmentally and with self-acceptance
- Explore beginner's mind
- Expand your comfort zone
- Bring your attention to your inner self- talk
- Practice of noticing perfectionism
- Learning to trust your musical intuition
- Bring your attention to the present moment
- Consciously connecting to your heart

References

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