

## Practice even Better...

More reasons to practice the Suzuki Principles

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When I look for more inspiration I go back to the writings of Dr. Suzuki Sensei, the man who inspired me the most since the first time I met him.

*“I want - if I can - to get education changed from mere instruction to education in the real sense of the word - education that inculcates, brings out, develops the **human potential**, based on **the growing life of the child**. <sup>i</sup>That is why I am devoting my efforts to furthering Talent Education: what a child becomes depends entirely on how he is educated. My prayer is that all children on this globe may become **fine human beings**, happy people of **superior ability**, and I am devoting all my energies to making this come about, for I am convinced **that all children are born with this potential**.” Dr. Suzuki*

EDUCATION is everything. The aim in Suzuki Talent Education is not to raise great musicians but to nurture and foster all children to become NOBLE human beings.

We do it THROUGH music development. However, it doesn't mean that music development and creating musical ability /talent becomes less important.

Let's put it this way: we give everything, we put every effort into the music education, knowing that out of it will come a full human potential, while we are helping in building character.

But we cannot compromise the musical development. We cannot “sort of” do it. We have to give it our full heart and attention. (as my mother used to say: “you can't be half pregnant” ...)

We will talk about implementing the concepts into life ability in future articles. Today we'll look into WHY we do it.

We are a team. Parents and teachers working together in serving the life and well-being of your- our children. Let us work together towards helping each child become a better person, in a world that makes the task more and more challenging.

### ***"MAN IS A SON OF HIS ENVIRONMENT"***

**# 1. LISTENING** is the number 1 in creating the Suzuki environment. We listen during all Suzuki levels and it's always the main learning tool. I remember Dr Kataoka telling us that when she'd return home from a long day of teaching, the first thing she'd do was to put on the Suzuki recordings. That was how she kept the high-quality model in her ears (after a day of hearing her students playing).

When you stop listening or put it back in your priorities, your child is losing momentum, clarity, direction and naturalness. Learning becomes a chore and motivation to practice is decreasing.

Because most children's environment is equipped with "modern style of life", what the child is getting dominantly is not enough dosage of good quality music. Please look at quality music as life sustenance. I'm not negating other music. I love it myself. But the balance in young children's life needs to be well thought, well aimed and MINDFUL. If we just allow environmental sound penetrate and/or rule our children's life, we won't be able to help them become NOBLE HUMAN BEINGS.

**#2. PRACTICE.** We practice in order to become good in making music.

We help our children develop good practice habits because we want to grant them the gift of music. We KNOW in our hearts that music will do them good.

*“Music imprints itself in the brain deeper than any other human experience.... Music brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can”. Dr Oliver Sacks.<sup>ii</sup>*

## **WHY WE DO IT**

We don't know if our children will make music their way of life. We cannot predict if they choose it as their occupation. In a way, it's not even up to us. Their future will unfold as they grow up. But their way of life will be entwined and impacted by the spirit & soul of music.

And with this we have full responsibility. This is a gift we can give our children.

In one of my recent talks to Suzuki Parents overseas, a dedicated and concerned mother asked a question. I was moved by the way she talked, fully engaged in her inquiry.

“I'm giving everything I can,” she said, “to the success of my child in the Suzuki program.

- We listen to the recordings every day for quite a few hours.
- We practice daily.
- I supervise the practice with love and my full presence.
- We go through the notes and assignments given by our teacher, on a daily base.
- I do my best to provide positive and precise feedback whenever I can and when it feels necessary.
- I watch my child's concentration level and make sure we don't work beyond his ability to concentrate.

In a nutshell, I do everything that you mention in this lecture. ”

I was deeply grateful to meet a mother who is so committed and willing, and was curious to hear the “punch line”.

“I want my child to live to his best.” She continued, “I want him to earn good money, so he can live comfortably”.

There were giggles in the audience.

I respected her words. I know that many parents share this concern. They might hesitate to express it. Money doesn't come across like a good reason to do things (...)

What I heard was a mother expressing a concern for her child's prosperity when he grows up; for his wealth & welfare.

Money is one way of expressing success and good fortune. And I totally heard her. She wanted to know that she IS contributing to her son's future well-being.

"So how do I know, "she went on, "that my son is going to earn enough money in music?". Here it was! the punchline. So very valid.

"We can't really know", I replied. "We don't know if your child is going to take music as his future career. He might, and he might not. He might keep music as a hobby or completely drop it. We don't really know what the future holds for your son (or for any of us, for this matter).

However, there's something that I can guarantee" (yes! I really believe so). "And this is, that whatever your son will choose to do in life, he'll do it to the best of his ability. He will use his full potential in whatever he chooses to do. If he becomes a builder, he'll be the best builder he could be. If he becomes a lawyer he'll be the best lawyer he could be. You are giving him the greatest gift of becoming the best of who and what he is meant to become".

There was a silence in the room. And then there were tears of gratitude in the eyes of the mother, in the eyes of other parents in the room (and in mine too...).

And this is why we are all here, in the Suzuki Triangle. We want to engage in helping our children develop **"Character first – ability second"**.

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<sup>i</sup> My italics

<sup>ii</sup> a British neurologist, naturalist, historian of science, and author of “Musicophilia” and many more.