

Goals, Expectations, Attitude, and Common Sense

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Goals:

For this little discussion, let's use a typical "judgement scale", ranging from 1 to 10, with "10" being the best.

- *All of us* want to be "good enough", for the music we're playing, and that concept varies greatly from one person to another. Let's call this level of playing a "4" or a "5". This level is "acceptable", but probably shallow and boring.
- *Most of us* want to be at least a little better than "good enough". Let's say, a "6" or a "7". Here, people are seeing that you have "potential", but they're also aware of your weaknesses. This level will get you the usual "nightclub band" sort of work, and possibly a small percentage of local "studio work".
- *Many of us* want to be at least a step better than that. Let's say, an "8". At this level or above, you're one of the drummers in town who gets the most phone calls, and you could probably have the most students and the most recording time, if that was your goal. People think you are "special". You're consistent and reliable enough to be hired as a touring musician in a successful commercial band. Since you got this far, you'll probably continue to develop until you're at least a "9".
- *A few of us* want to be "the best", and that concept varies greatly from one person to another, too. (a "10") Here, you're one of the top people, with your recordings and appearances being "events", and you can probably play with anyone you want to. Don't worry... *They'll call you.*
- Separate, and above all these categories, there are *a few extremely rare people* who are a "20". They are truly "one of a kind" individuals, who clearly surpass *everyone* else. We say they're geniuses.

Expectations:

The topmost goals are not easy to achieve, so expect it to be a lifelong endeavor. We have to keep a positive attitude, so do your very best, and sincerely try to be better, each time you play. If you can do that, then it's only a matter of repetition and time until you'll achieve your goal. If at any point, you consider yourself to have "gone as far as you can go", you still have constantly improved, and that's admirable. Work hard, but be patient.

Attitude:

So...

If you're realistic about devoting your life to being a great artist, then you will probably *never* feel that "you've got it". Keep that thought positive, too. Think about the idea that you're getting better all the time, rather the idea that "you're failing to be the best". Improving your thinking is at least as important as improving your physical abilities.

That's the kind of responsible attitude you can feel good about, and that other people will understand and appreciate. Feel good about what you do, and have confidence in your *real* abilities, but don't be cocky.

Common Sense:

There's a lot to be said about the old expression, "Don't believe your own hype." People will say both good and bad things about you. That's art! *You* have to decide what you want to do, and then just set out to do it. Just as important is *how* you do it. It's one thing to play a certain passage of music, for example, but it's a different thing entirely to *invent it*. (!) When you study the history of any art, your appreciation of creativity will grow.

Think about the audience's point of view...

If you're cocky, and you make a mistake, everyone will hate you for it. If you're confident, but realistic, and make a mistake, the audience will cut you a lot of slack, and listen more for your "intent". Perfection is beautiful, and it's noble to strive for it, but if you're sincerely giving your best effort, that's what matters most.

Have fun!

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