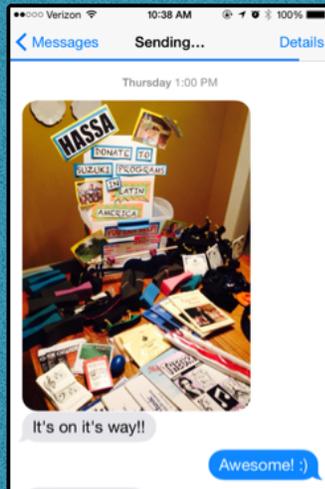


fabulous friday flyer

HOUSTON
AREA
SUZUKI
STRINGS
ASSOCIATION
2014-2015
ISSUE NO. 4



Thank you for your donations! HASSA guitar teacher, Andrea Cannon, recently visited Honduras and El Salvador bearing gifts from us! (more pictures coming soon!)



Fearless Friday, January 2015

10 Ways to Fight Your Practice Fears by Danette Schuh

The National Health Service of England (NHS) publishes a list of 10 Ways to Fight Your Fears on their website, www.nhs.uk. My adaptation is specific to playing a string instrument.

1. Take time out. Who can focus and work when consumed by fear and anxiety? Learning only happens when we're calm. Panicked, anxious children (and parents) need a moment to let the physical flood of adrenaline reduce and lower their elevated heart rate. Relax, breathe, get a drink of water before trying again.

2. What's the worst that can happen? Think about the actual consequences of trying and failing.

Usually in a practice session, the worst that can happen is that we play it wrong and try it again. Our imagined fears are often much worse than reality.

3. Expose yourself to the fear. Avoidance will just make it more scary. Take small steps: just play one note or just one small section (not the whole piece), or perform for just one new person (not a whole auditorium full of people) to gradually get used to the situation.

4. Welcome the worst. Try to imagine the absolute worst that can happen and then do it! Play with the worst scratchy tone you can and realize that you are still OK afterwards. I often remind students and parents in lessons, "violin is not open heart surgery - no matter what we mess up, nobody dies!" Humor is

a good relaxation technique here too.

5. Get real. Our fears tend to be much worse than reality. Often, if we have had one negative experience, we think that will happen every time thereafter, when in reality, the chance that it will happen again is very low. Remind your child (and yourself) that mistakes are normal and are a natural part of learning for everyone. *continued on page 2*

Next Class:

League City: February 6

Houston: February 27

Five Times Friday! Repetition is the key to successful playing!



Suzuki felt that "...we here in this life gain nothing by worrying and fear, but should always have hope and live to the best of our abilities." -Evelyn Hermann, from her book *Shinichi Suzuki: The Man and His Philosophy* on the web at hassa.wildapricot.org

What's next? Upcoming HASSA events...

January 16
Graduation Application
Deadline

January 23 - League City
January 30 - Houston
FABULOUS FRIDAY
GROUP CLASS -
Fearless Friday

February 6 - League City
February 27 - Houston
FABULOUS FRIDAY
GROUP CLASS -
Five Times Friday

March 28
Spring Workshop

April 10 - League City
April 24 - Houston
FABULOUS FRIDAY
GROUP CLASS -
Feedback Friday

April 11
Ribbon Festival

[details at hassa.wildapricot.org](http://details.at.hassa.wildapricot.org)

Conquer your fears - a reading list

Find your inner courage. Authors share their secrets in these books:

- Finding Inner Courage by Mark Nepo
- Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway by Susan Jeffers
- Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brene Brown
- Fear: Essential Wisdom for Getting Through the Storm by Thich Nhat Hanh
- Start. Punch Fear in the Face, Escape Average, Do Work That Matters by Jon Acuff
- Courage by Bernard Waber
- The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things by Barry Glassier
- Courage: The Backbone of Leadership by Gus Lee and Diane Elliott-Lee
- Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals by Heidi Grant Halvorson
- Commit to Win: How to Harness the Four Elements of Commitment to Reach Your Goals by Heidi Reeder

10 Ways to Fight Your Practice Fears continued from page 1

6. **Don't expect perfection.** Perfectionist thinking where everything is "black-and-white" can be destructive to the practice process, which is a process. 'If it's not perfect, it's bad' is a fear-inducing thought and can be

literally debilitating to the learning process. It's most beneficial to reward the effort and not the outcome, especially when we need to try again many times just to figure out how to correctly execute the task just once. Consistent correct execution of notes, fingerings, bowings, posture, etc. can be achieved, but it takes time and many, many repetitions.

7. **Visualize.** Close your eyes and imagine the goal. To quote the title of a wonderful little book I once read, "You Can't Reach a Goal You Never Had". Your child may not have a clear picture of what they are working towards. Listen to your Suzuki CD, watch musicians with excellent posture on youtube, attend concerts, use your smartphone to video your teacher in lessons, etc. Then play the "let's pretend" game at home during practice. Maybe you can play this review piece just like Joshua Bell or Sarah Chang would play it, or choose your own music superhero!

8. **Talk about it.** Sharing your fears can take away much of the intensity. Ask your child what they are afraid of, and listen without comment or contradiction. Just hear the information and understand. Share a fear of your own with your child and allow yourself to let go of your own practice fears as well.

9. **Go back to basics.** Fear is a visceral, physical emotion. How are you feeling physically? How is your child feeling? Are they tired, hungry, stressed? It never hurts to check in on our physical health. It can have a big effect on our mental health. Get plenty of rest, drink lots of water, breathe deeply, wash

your hands, stay healthy and happy and your body and mind can start practicing in good condition.

10. **Reward yourself.** Now that you and your child have faced your fears, celebrate! Do your happy dance, go out for ice cream, get a sticker, play a concert for Daddy, text a photo to your teacher, call Grandma, whatever it is that makes you happy! You were brave and you did it!

The Music Mind Games Corner

"Children exposed to a multi-year programme of music tuition involving training in increasingly complex rhythmic, tonal, and practical skills display superior cognitive performance in reading skills compared with their non-musically trained peers, according to a study published in the journal *Psychology of Music*." Science Daily 3/2009



Music Mind Games, a music theory and music reading curriculum, has long-lasting effects even outside the music studio. Musically literate students often have better grades, higher SAT scores and increased executive function of the brain than others. Hand-eye coordination is developed to an extremely high level when reading music, so keep on playing those video music mind games!