



Practice and Performance Mindsets

Strategies and mental skills that result in fun, relaxed, and engaged performing:

- **ATTITUDE:** Choosing to believe strongly in yourself & your abilities
- **MOTIVATED** by a pursuit of excellence, not perfection
- Ability to set specific and realistic long-term and short-term **GOALS**
- Strong **COMMITMENT**
- Positive, realistic **SELF-TALK**
- Ability to create and use **MENTAL IMAGES** that are detailed and specific
- **FOCUS** on what is within your control for this performance
- Ability to **CONTROL & USE YOUR EMOTIONS**
- Ability to **TRUST YOURSELF & YOUR PREPARATION**
- Ability to **COURAGEOUSLY ACCEPT YOUR PERFORMING WITHOUT JUDGMENT**

It is important for performers to recognize the need for BOTH mindsets and when they need them:

- **In practice** we need to fully engage, seek to identify and focus on all of the technical, musical, and artistic details that will produce the desired sound and effect.
- **In performance** we need to learn to trust ourselves more, rely on our preparation, and LET GO of conscious control.

Practice Mindset (Training)

Good for practice
Conscious control
Active mind
Inquisitive thinking
Evaluative
Make it happen
Trying hard: Making it happen
Impatient
Work on technique
Strive for reasonable expectations
Focus on improvement for future
Rely on mechanics

Performance Mindset (Trusting)

Good for performance
Instinctual control
Active mind
Present thinking
Accepting
Responding in the moment
Allowing it to happen
Patient
Respond to the music
Throw away expectations
Present orientation: Perform for NOW!
Rely on instincts

Breakdowns in Trust:

- Stuck in a training mindset
- Trying too hard
- Over controlling
- Over exerting
- Tension, doubt, fear, and indecision (fear of failure)
- Perfectionist thinking
- Over analysis

Situations that increase Breakdowns:

- Situations where you feel the need to control & not perform by memory
- When you are under pressure
- When you are trying to avoid making a mistake

Tips to Increase Trust in Competition

- Have a plan and stick to it
- Commit to a plan for each skill you need to execute
- Be decisive
- Be confident
- Try less instead of trying too hard
- Have more fun—less serious and more playful about competition/auditions
- Let go of mistakes—avoid over analyzing mistakes, instead look for the lesson you need

Work to Reduce the Number of Thoughts/Images

- Use trigger cues for performance (how you want to “be” when you perform).

Practice Strategies to Increase Trust in Competition

- Strive for goals in practice, but accept the fact that one cannot be perfect.
- Practice for trust during training so you can transfer that feeling to competition/performance.
- Spend 50% of your practice in the “trust mode.” (perform via images/feelings instead of verbal commands or self-coaching).
- Practice like you compete/perform—try to simulate the same atmosphere/experience
- Practice technique early in the week or day and taper off “practicing” as you get closer to performance.