

1. *Advanced Playing Concepts Series Part 3*

- a. *Maintaining Focus* - Focus in our way of talking is counterintuitive. We actually do not want to focus on anything. We don't even want to try to focus on anything. This comes from a very zen like mentality about simply being. If we try to focus on doing nothing, we are still trying, and in essence using our minds to force the music. We simply want to watch what we are doing as an observer. We want to stay in the moment. Ultimately that's all we have, is one moment in time that is forever changing. The future does not exist. It is a false reality that people live in. The past has already gone by so it no longer exists. The only truth we have is our presence in the current moment. This is the only state that exists. So when I say focus, I simply mean letting yourself go and just be with whatever it is you are playing at the moment. Do not let your mind interfere. Just accept everything you are releasing through the music as your own personal truth. When this happens you will see that your playing will be on a completely different level.

- b. *Patience* - This is a big one. Even though you may have gone through and read everything I've taught it doesn't mean you will be able to apply every thing to your playing immediately. Jazz is a life long journey. You must learn to accept this fact. If you are able to do this, then everything that comes with that journey are simply steps a long the way. Nothing will seem like a chore anymore and you will be able to obtain an unlimited amount of patience. Be patient with your progress and learning. Be patient with your playing and your experiences. Patience will ultimately solve all of your feelings of disappointment and frustration. If you are patient, your playing and everything else will improve at an exponential

rate. Without patience, your journey will resemble an immortal life locked in a cell, never to be set free.

- c. *Discipline* - Even though I have taught about freeing our mind, this doesn't necessarily mean we do not have to be discipline and practice. We still must work hard in our practice of the jazz language. Our goal is to reach a point of internalization with everything we are working on to a point where we do not have to conceptualize it. We can simply allow our body to express it however we want. If you do not possess the discipline and work ethic to continuously practice your weak areas or subjects I have discussed but you have found difficult, you will always hit a ceiling of growth. Some of the greatest musicians are working harder than they ever had at the age of 70 or above. This shows their dedication to the process and the discipline it takes to excel

- d. *Growth* - Growth will always come with work. As long as you are taking steps, growth will and progress will come naturally. This might be the easiest concept to comprehend. If you are not taking action or making steps in any sort of direction you will not grow. Your playing will stay stagnant. It is also very easy to get caught up in a place where we believe we are growing but we are actually just playing what we know. In order to make growth we must take all the previous components and combine them. We must focus, maintain patience and discipline and in turn this will produce growth and success. If you are following the previous steps, then growth will naturally be the outcome.