

The 10 Most Impactful Things We Learned in 2015

Description

The new year is typically a time for looking forward. For embarking on new paths, and creating new habits.

But in doing so, it's easy to miss an essential step in the looking-forward process. That of looking *backwards*.

We know from our experience in the practice room, that repetition on autopilot isn't particularly effective. That saying "I'll get it next time" without reflecting on what just happened, and what we plan on doing differently next time, won't lead to the results we're looking for. That the [best performers tend to engage in more reflection](#), which leads to more effective planning for the next repetition, practice session, and performance.

Similarly, an [annual reflection](#) – where you take stock of the last 12 months – can be a very helpful exercise to ring in the new year with. Specifically, to look back at the last year and ask three deceptively simple questions:

1. *What worked well?*
2. *What didn't work so well?*
3. *What are you going to a) keep doing, or b) do differently?*

To that end, here's a little look back at 2015 here at the Bulletproof Musician. Namely, below are 10 of the most impactful things we learned in the last year. Which ones will you continue to utilize and build on in 2016? Which haven't you tried, but might find useful in addressing some of the things from 2015 that you'd like to improve upon?

10 things we learned

#1: Great teachers all have different and unique teaching styles, but there seem to be some key commonalities in their approach (which we can emulate).

[19 Things That Great Teachers Do: Insights from the Approaches of Three Renowned Artist-Teachers](#)

#2: Being a musician may sometimes feel like a 24/7 proposition, but it's important to mentally detach from our work on a regular basis. That doesn't make us any less serious about our craft, but in fact, the opposite.

[Pre-Performance Apathy \(or the Importance of Mentally Disengaging From Work and Practice\)](#)

#3: There are multiple ways to to memorize music – but some are more efficient than others.

[The Two Most Efficient \(and Two Least Efficient\) Memorization Strategies](#)

#4: The best performers don't just work on the things they do well. They focus more on their weaker areas, do more planning before each repetition, and engage in more interleaved practice.

[How Do Experts Get Even Better? 5 Lessons From the Practice of Expert and Intermediate Athletes.](#)

#5: It's never too late to learn how to practice better. The savings in time and frustration are worth the effort.

[Research-Tested Practice Strategies That Will Help You Learn New Pieces Faster](#)

#6: For more effective learning, it seems that pausing a few moments between repetitions helps us make the most of each one.

[For More Perfect Practice, Try...Longer...Pauses](#)

#7: Students' growth isn't just a function of their talent. It's also related to our belief in their ability to learn.

[The Perils of Aiming Low: How Our Expectations Can Shape Our Students' Learning & Performance](#)

#8: The effectiveness of rehearsals is related to how much time everyone has put into their own part before the rehearsal even begins.

[Do You Rehearse to Practice or Practice to Rehearse?](#)

#9: To practice more effectively, it can be helpful to do our thinking out loud. Crazy though that sounds at first.

[Why Thinking Out Loud Could Help You Become a More Effective Practicer & Problem-Solver](#)

#10: Sometimes the weirdest things seem to help. Or at least might be worth trying to see if they really do work.

[A Simple Technique to Prevent Choking under Pressure \(Which Sounds Like it Couldn't Possibly Work\)](#)

What's next?

As I look back at 2015, I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a tiny part of your world on Sunday morning. That, and the ridiculously tasty [cinnamon raisin peanut butter](#) which has been a revelation...and constant drain on my willpower...but I digress...

What I mean to say is, I have no idea what 2016 will bring, but through all the inevitable ups and downs, here's wishing you a happy, productive, memorable, and truly stupendifying¹ year!

Date Created

January 2016