

Becoming Bulletproof | Part 3

Description

Becoming Bulletproof

Lesson 3: How to focus past your inner critic

Today's Video

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Today's Practice

Keep in mind that attention control depends greatly on the situation, so there's no fixed attention control formula. Even for Mark, my understanding is that his ratio of intention to external monitoring varies from moment to moment, and situation to situation.

There are also a range of different attention control strategies, involving rhythm, improvisation, images, and emotional triggers that can all help in varying ways with different types of music.

The key principle that I hope you take away from today's lesson is that **attention control is a skill that can be practiced**. And though this needn't be the number one priority when you're in the early stages of working on a new piece, it's definitely an aspect of preparation that becomes increasingly important, the closer you get to a performance.

Because if you leave your thoughts to chance, most likely, your brain will choose to think about things that take you out of the present moment, and have the potential to derail your performance.

So here's how you can integrate a bit of attention control training into your practice today.

[Practice attention control](#)

Practice attention control

Select a minute or two of music, that of everything you're working on, is closest to being runthrough-ready or performance-ready.

Press record on your phone or a recording device (this is optional, so just skip this step, guilt-free, if you feel any internal resistance).

Play through that section, while singing or imagining the sound of your instrument in your head. Don't worry about what's actually coming out of your instrument – just see if you can stay focused on creating what you want in your head, rather than analyzing what you're actually getting.

As artist Sister Corita Kent once wrote – “Don't try to create and analyze at the same time. They're different processes.”

Post-Practice Reflection

After you finish, take a moment to reflect on how this felt. Did it free you up to play more freely? Did it help you feel more engaged in the music-making, and detach a bit from obsessing about technique and mechanics?

Or did you worry more about your rhythm, intonation, etc., because you weren't able to create and analyze at the same time?

If so, try doing this with a recording device next time. That way you can listen back later with a more analytical ear, and give yourself permission to just play when the recording device is running. ?

Let me know how this went in the comments below!

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