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WHY SHORT-TERM COMMITMENTS TO MUSIC DON'T WORK

December 6, 2016 - Christine Goodner

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WHY SHORT TERM COMMITMENTS TO MUSIC DON'T WORK



I get many calls for prospective violin & viola students from parents requesting more information. I always explain my program and direct them to my website for more information.

A phrase I hear some parents use when they describe why they want to start lessons is: my child seems interested in music (or the violin) and we want to **try it out** to see if they will like it.

As a parent I completely understand that this is the approach we take for many things we sign our children up for. We often sign them up for many different types of activities in order to expose them to a wide variety of things and to see what they enjoy.

A word of caution though.

While there are many activities that we can sign our children up for to *try it out* for a few months and decide how much they like it – *taking Suzuki lessons is not like that.*

The whole premise of the method, and what makes it work so well, is that your child will be learning an instrument the way a young child learns language. They need to be immersed in hearing it, see others doing it, practice daily, and they will gradually learn to “speak” the language themselves.

Imagine you want your child to be bi-lingual. What kind of commitment would that take? It would certainly be different than exposing them to gymnastics class.

The Suzuki Method is about immersing our children in music, not exposing them to it.

The Suzuki Method is about immersing our children in music, not exposing them to it. In order to do this, you don't have to commit to your child playing their instrument until they are 30. We never know what our children will be doing 10 years from now. However, if we

just *try out* music lessons it lowers the chances that they will still be playing their instrument that far in the future.

Research shows that when students start lessons with a long-term commitment their ability to play the instrument years later is dramatically higher than those who begin with a short-term commitment in mind.

Daniel Coyle describes this in depth in his book [The Talent Code](#). I would highly recommend reading it to read about this study in more detail.

This quote from the book, by researcher Gary McPherson (about his study following students and their outcomes on their instrument from about age 8 through high school) stood out to me: "With the same amount of practice, the long-term-commitment group outperformed the short-term commitment group by 400 percent."

How can that be?

I would argue that a short-term commitment is not enough to motivate us to adopt the habits and mindset that lead to success on our instruments.

There are many different aspects of making this method work. It takes an approach to learning that is *all in*, rather than dipping our toes in the water to try it out.

Before we get into the details of starting lessons, this is a big concept to wrap our brains around as parents. Do we want our children to learn to play an instrument to the best of their ability? Do we want them to make and appreciate beautiful music? Do we

want our children to develop character qualities that will help them succeed later in life, whatever they choose to do?

If the answer to those questions is yes, then this process is worth committing to!

Whatever path your child takes with music and in their lives, what they learn through studying music (and what we learn as parents supporting them) will serve them well.

Make a commitment to view this as a long-term process and you have already taken one step towards being successful!

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This is an excerpt from my upcoming book on the mindset of successful Suzuki families. Please subscribe to the blog to see the latest posts, and to read updates about the book as it gets closer to being published.

If you are trying to decide if the Suzuki method is the right one for your child (and family) and are looking for detailed information about what the Suzuki Method is and how it started I would recommend reading [Nutured by Love](#) by Shinichi Suzuki and visiting www.Suzukiassociation.org to learn more about it.

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