

Why Routine?
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Chapter 3: The 1%

Mr. Adam established what became a trade-mark pie graph that he used to try to describe the trumpet player's mind. We can use the word "awareness" here. . . what are we aware of when we play? Where is our focus? What has *PRIMACY?*

The pie graph shows that 90% of our awareness goes to focusing on the IDEAL sound. This in and of itself is its own essay - "Keep your mind in the sound" was something we all heard absolutely *constantly*. But I suggest that for too many, "the sound" is not well defined. For great players, "the sound" is extremely well defined; in great detail, the core/resonance/brilliance trifecta, the color, the mood, the presence, the whole thing . . . EXTREMELY well defined, not just a tone or a pitch.

If you are not playing as well as you'd like, perhaps your awareness of the detail in your own sound could use some sprucing up.

Next comes the 9% awareness of the breath. Very important, vital, no question, but still dwarfed in importance to the SOUND.

Finally, the 1%. What is that? That literally means: everything else. Make a list if you want to:

- Aperture?
- Jaw position?
- Corners?
- Embouchure?
- Hand position?
- Posture?
- Mouthpiece?
- Leadpipe?
- Bell?
- Brand of whatever?
- Support?
- Pressure?
- Anxiety?
- Confidence?

And the list goes on and on and on, but ALL of these and more fit into the 1%.

Next, let's establish some vocabulary. The dictionary defines *PRIMACY as follows:

***PRIMACY: the state of being first (as in importance, order, or rank)**

So, put another way, SOUND always takes Primacy over all else. ALWAYS. The instant your awareness goes to anything on that 1% list, in that very moment, that awareness has supplanted SOUND having primacy in your thinking. Only one thing at a time can have primacy. This is a neurological fact. This fact becomes very vital in terms of problem solving.

Next, we will differentiate between information that is true vs information that is useful.

“I know we're not supposed to think about (fill in the blank) but . . .”

OK, we ARE going to feel things. We ARE going to notice how our chops feel, or if we're anxious, or if we feel beat up, or we feel great (the IF Poem, “If you can meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two imposters just the same”), yesterday I played great and it felt like (fill in the blank), or today I sucked and it felt like (fill in the blank).

But here is another indisputable truth: None of the above are useful. They may be real, they may even be true, they may be our perception and NOT true, but in the final analysis, they are NOT USEFUL.

What is useful? Aha - here's the gold:

The notion of kinesthetic response tells us that whatever has PRIMACY in our thinking tells the body what to do. This is also a neurological fact.

Mr. Adam taught us, over and over again, that there is only one thing in this world that we can control, and that is our thinking. He did not say it was easy, but he did say we can do it, with practice, over time.

On the other hand, you canNOT control that 1% stuff. If you think you can, that is why your playing has not improved. Harsh but also true. Until you accept the fact that the Primacy of SOUND guides the process, you are going to remain stuck where you are, or worse, you can regress.

Greg Wing talks about “Stinking Thinking” as something to be rid of. Amen!

Get your head in the place that is useful, and that is to more strongly imagine that ideal sound coming from YOU. If you think this is not sufficient, I would counter that your thinking needs to be spruced up, and be more purely dedicated to this truth.

Get rid of that stinking thinking by replacing it with what is going to work for you, what will trigger the necessary kinesthetic responses. And yes, this takes disciplined, repetitive practice, and is best mastered in simplicity, not in the middle of the Tomasi Concerto. Yet as mastery takes hold, its Primacy will be there for you in the most challenging moments.

You apply this 100% of the time in every sound you make, in your routine, in your etudes, solos, excerpts, improv, ensembles, everything.

The 1% begins to disappear, and trumpet playing truly becomes all about sound, with only a peripheral awareness of the breath. This is where we want to be. Playing becomes far more rewarding, enjoyable, and satisfying.

Mr. Adam, "it's only a thought away young fella."

KS.