

# **The Monster Jazz** *Formula*

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The Complete  
Practice Plan  
Worksheets

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# The Monster Jazz *Formula*

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## **I Have a Dream...**

The following exercises will help to expand your dreams. During this stage, it is important and encouraged to let your imagination run wild. Do not limit your answers by what you think is possible or realistic. In fact don't think in terms of possible or impossible at this point. Many people limit themselves by limiting their dreams and vision in the name of being 'realistic'. Jazz pioneers are not 'realistic'. They are visionaries who are not afraid to dream. By expanding your dreams you are expanding what is possible for you and moving one step closer to the pioneers.

Now, answer these questions honestly. Have fun. Even if you think your answer is wild and crazy, write it down anyway. There are no limits.

**1. What one dream would you dare to dream if you knew you could not fail?**

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**2. If you had all the time, money and resources to do whatever you wanted (musically) what would you do?**

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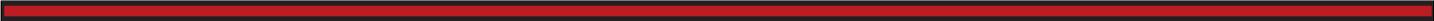
**3. What have you always wanted to do but have been afraid to do?**

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**Who are your top five musical heroes and why?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Write down 10 musical dreams.**

**Big dreams!**

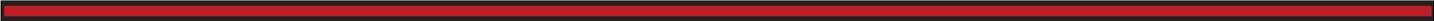
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_



# The Monster Jazz *Formula*

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## Lesson 2: Big Dreams

### I Have a Dream...

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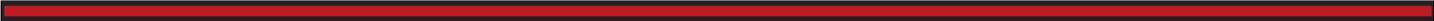
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**Who are your top five musical heroes and why?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Write down 10 musical dreams.**

**Big dreams!**

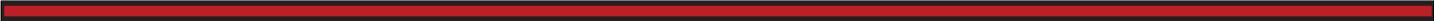
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_



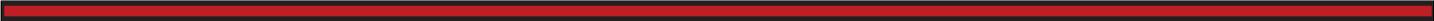


**Choose 5-7 Values from the values list on the previous page or write your own.**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_

**Read through your answers. What values are most important? If you had to choose one over the other which ones would you be willing to sacrifice for the sake of other more important values? Rewrite your list in order of priority and importance from most important (#1) to least important (#7)**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_



List again your top five musicians. The ones you would call a hero. Explain what it is about each musician that moves you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think would be their most important values? List what you think would be the top five values for each of your heroes.

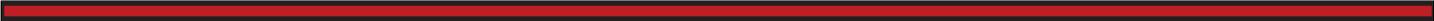
**Musician 1** \_\_\_\_\_ Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Musician 2** \_\_\_\_\_ Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Musician 3** \_\_\_\_\_ Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Musician 4** \_\_\_\_\_ Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Musician 5** \_\_\_\_\_ Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Value 5 \_\_\_\_\_



**Imagine you could combine these musicians into a 'super musician'. Take 1 or 2 traits from each, the most outstanding traits in your mind, and create your ideal 'super musician'. Write a description of this musician below.**

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**If you could take lessons from any musician, living or not, who would it be?**

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**List your 5 most burning questions for this person.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your 'Dessert Island' record? \_\_\_\_\_**

**List your 5 reasons why you chose this record..**

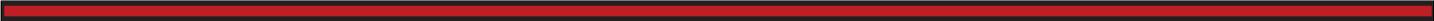
1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_



**What music do you listen to when you are alone? What records and players do you listen to?**

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**What music do you play when you are alone?**

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**Now, reread all of your answers. Do they feel good? Do they feel 'right'? Using what you have just learned about yourself and your values choose your top 5-7 values again and place them in order of priority. Define what they mean to your music and what your music will sound like if you honor them.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

**What have you just learned about yourself and your musical values? How do you think this new knowledge of your musical values will affect your playing, listening, practicing and writing?**

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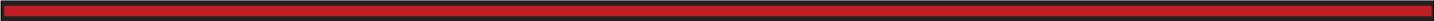
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# The Monster Jazz *Formula*

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## Lesson 4: Your Musical Vision

First you should reread your values list. Make any changes that you see fit at this point. Remember this is a gradual and constant process. Next, go back to your list of 10 musical dreams. Again make any changes that you see fit. Now choose the top 3-5 dreams from the list. And place them in order of importance below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Two exercises to help figure out your vision statement.

**Write a eulogy for yourself.** Imagine you were gone and a close friend or peer was reading a eulogy at your memorial service in front of your family, friends and the jazz community. How would you want to be remembered? What would you want to be known for? What aspects of your life and accomplishments would you want them to talk about?

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**Pretend you are a jazz critic** writing a review about a performance or release. Pretend it's YOUR performance or release 5 years from now. How would you want your music to be described? What elements would you want to stand out in your music? Make this an ideal description of your music.

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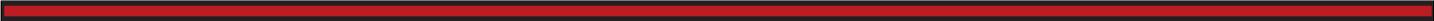
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**Now use the exercises you just completed to craft a vision statement of your future.** There will be elements in both the review and the eulogy that you may want to use in your vision statement. Remember make it as clear as possible. While writing it, keep the following questions on your mind: How far can I go? Can I go farther? Can I go in a different direction?

Start with your top 3-5 dreams and begin crafting a paragraph that describes what you will do, accomplish and what your music will sound like in the future. Make your statement bold and emotional. Remember the purpose of this statement is to motivate you and inspire you to keep moving farther and keep taking action.

Your statement may scare you at first. It may seem uncomfortable and unrealistic. That's fine. In the coming chapters you will learn to break it all down into bite sized pieces. Pieces that you know you can hit. And as you hit target after target your confidence will grow and your confidence in the inevitability of your vision will grow.

**My vision of my musical future is...**

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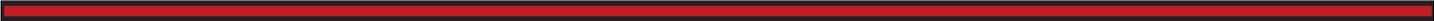
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**Chris' personal vision...**

"My vision is to be a truly original voice in jazz, and a world class jazz drummer with impeccable swing feel, power, 'big ears', a melodic & thematic style and the ability to lift a band up to new levels and make them sound great."

*"You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction."  
— Alvin Toffler*



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## Lesson 5: Your Musical Mission

Some Tips on Crafting Your Mission Statement

1. Make it serve your vision. It should describe your basic actions and strategy to realize your vision.
2. Keep it simple, clear and brief. A few sentences.
3. Make it positive. Describe what you will DO, as opposed to what you will NOT DO.
4. Include specific actions and behaviors.
5. Make it grand and inspiring.
6. Use your musical values and vision as a starting point.
7. Consider how it will affect your day to day actions (i.e. practicing, listening, sessions, etc)
8. Rewrite it many times until it becomes clear if necessary.
9. Have several very close friends or teachers read it. Is it clear to them what your purpose is?
10. Include an emotional element. Something that resonates deeply with you.

Now Write Your Mission Statement:

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## Lesson 7: How To Choose Powerful Goals

### The 6 Main Areas of Musical Practice

**Instrumental Technique-** this is control of your instrument. Topics to study would include, arpeggios, scales, scale patterns, accent patterns, range, articulation, dynamics, rudiments, coordination, etc.

**Etudes-** are any classical or jazz pieces written for your instrument and designed to bring the instrumental techniques together into a musical setting relating to execution, technique, expression and interpretation.

**Sight-reading-** this is, of course, the ability to read new material at will. You can choose appropriate material each day to hone and practice sight-reading. This material could include rhythmic sight reading, reading lines with no rhythms, chords, classical pieces, music written for an instrument other than your own, etc.

**Repertoire-** jazz is a language of music built on and around tunes. You should constantly seek to expand your repertoire by learning tunes from the whole library of standards, jazz tunes and modern tunes.

**Ear-training-** this is your ability to recognize musical elements by ear (pitch, harmony, rhythms, forms, articulation, dynamics etc) and respond on your instrument.

**Improvisation-** this is what it's all about--creating art in real time. Topics for improvisation would include chord-scale soloing, rhythmic values, phrase lengths, pacing, motive development, etc.

See Hal Crooks books, "How to Improvise", "How to Comp", and "Ready, Aim, Improvise" for a comprehensive list of improvisational topics and exercises to master them. They are available at his website [www.halcrook.com](http://www.halcrook.com).

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**Begin by rereading your vision statement, mission statement and values.** Based on what you wrote choose at least ten goals that you would like to accomplish and write them on the lines provided.

Be sure to choose goals that serve your vision. Each goal should be achievable in six to twelve months. You must believe that it is possible.

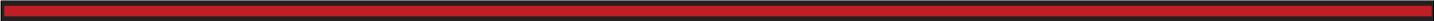
For example, if you have been playing saxophone for one year choosing the goal of improvising over John Coltrane's tune "Giant Steps" at quarter note = 300 is not realistic and will only serve to discourage you when you don't even come close. No matter how much you like the tune. Learning to improvise fluidly using chord tones over the blues in four different keys is a much better goal. It will still push your limits but it's doable. Be as specific as possible.

	importance
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

Now, you want to limit this list down to the most important goals. Go back through the list and label each goal "A" (very important), "B" (important) or "C" (nice, but not important) in the space provided on the right side of the page.

From all of the goals you described as "A" goals choose the top three goals and place them in order of importance here. You can't hit them all at once.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



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## Lesson 10: The 'Classic' Planning Method (slightly expanded)

**1. Decide exactly what you want-** the first step in goal achievement is to decide exactly what you want. You do this by reviewing your vision and mission, brainstorming possible supporting goals and choosing one.

**2. Write it down in vivid detail-** Write it down on paper. With as much detail as possible. What exactly will you be able to do when your goal is accomplished? How will you know when you've accomplished your goal? How will you measure it? The more clearly defined your goal is, the greater the likelihood of achieving it. Physically writing it down on paper can not be over-emphasized. Write and re-write your goals daily. This will keep your mind focused and your "eyes on the prize."

**3. Determine how you and your music will benefit from achieving that goal-** write down all of the ways that you will benefit from achieving this goal. How will your music change? How will it improve? What musical opportunities will hitting this goal bring you? What music will you be able to play? What bands will you be able to join? Determining how you will benefit from hitting your target will motivate and unleash tremendous power, energy and motivation. The more benefits you can come up with, the more motivated you will be

**4. Determine the major obstacles you will have to overcome to achieve your goal-** what will be most challenging for you? What could potentially keep you from achieving your goal? Knowing this information up-front will help you to plan more effectively and will also help you deal with these challenges. When you put your challenges down on paper, they usually don't seem so big.

**5. Determine the resources you will need to achieve your goal-** will you need to buy a certain CD, or a certain book. Will you need a metronome or a pitch pipe?

**6. Determine the people, whose cooperation you will need to achieve your goal-** Is there a teacher whom you should study with? Will you need to put together a practice band, or find a practice partner? Will you have to talk to your parents or significant other about giving you the time and space to practice or about being understanding of the 'noise' level?

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**7. Make a List-** write down everything that you can think of that you will have to do to achieve this goal. List every single step. Break your goal down into tiny bite-size pieces that you can complete in one practice session. As you think of more steps, add them to your list. This is how you accomplish a big goal. You have to break it down into the actual steps that you will complete in your daily practice sessions.

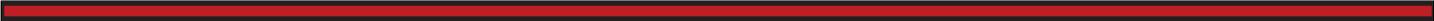
**8. Put your list in order-** now turn your list into an actual plan. Put every step in order. What will you have to do first? Second? And so on. This will now serve as your blueprint; you map. This blueprint will move you forward fast.

**9. Give your goal a deadline-** without a deadline a goal is simply a wish. Decide when you will achieve your goal. On what date will you be able to perform “I Got Rhythm” in all twelve keys from memory? If you find that you are not going to hit your deadline, simply create a new one. Not to say that deadlines should be changed on a whim. You should always strive to hit your goals on time, but there will be occasions when you will have to modify your plan. As you practice this method you will get better and better at estimating how long a goal will take to complete.

**10. Take Action-** go practice. Get busy. Work on your plan. Action is the key to success. Without action you cannot accomplish anything. With action you will accomplish great things. Even if your plan is flawed you can accomplish a lot, simply by taking action. Action, Action and more Action.

**11. Practice and Work on Your Plan Everyday** develop the habit and discipline of practicing and working on your plan every single day. Even if you only have twenty minutes to practice, do it. Learn something or take a tiny, tiny step forward. You will be amazed by how much you can learn and how fast your music can progress by utilizing this formula. This is the most powerful tool to help you progress on your musical journey and become a monster jazz musician.

**12. Resolve to never stop until you hit your goal-** never give up. Make a commitment to yourself to keep going until you finish. The habit of follow through is truly a habit of greatness. Many people don't realize how close they are to achieving their goals and they quit just before they get there. Follow through is what separates the good from the great. Never give up!



**Goal # 1**

**1. Write it down in vivid detail-** write it down on paper. What exactly will it look, sound and feel like when you reach it. Use keys, tempos, dynamics and any other detailed information you can to define it.

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**2. Determine how you and your music will benefit from achieving that goal-** write down at least five ways in which your music will improve in which you will benefit. The more benefits you come up with the better.

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**3. Determine the major obstacles you will have to overcome to achieve your goal-** what will be most challenging for you? What could potentially keep you from achieving your goal? What will be the bottle necks?

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**4. Determine the resources you will need to achieve your goal-** will you need to buy a certain CD, or a certain book. Will you need a metronome or a pitch pipe?

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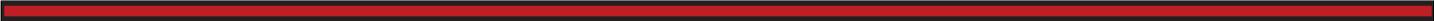
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**6. Give your goal a deadline-** when will you hit your target. Use a specific date as in June 1<sup>st</sup>, 200X.

I will hit my target

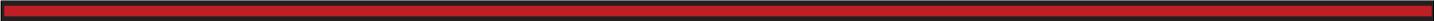
on \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Make a List of the major steps on the way to reaching this long-term goal.** Don't make this list too detailed. These steps should each take 1-3 months to complete. These are your medium-term goals. You may have only 3 or you may have 12.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**8. Put your list in order-** now turn your list into an actual plan. Put every step in order. What will you have to do first? Second? Organize your steps in the right hand column using the numbers 1-12. #1 being the first step

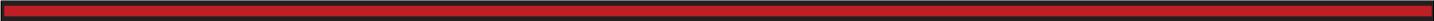
Now we have a list of medium-term goals that you will refer to through out the next six months to a year on the way to your target. **But for now focus only on the first step.** This is your primary medium-term goal and it should take from 1 – 3 months to hit it.



**9. Short-Term Goals-** Make a List of the steps on the way to your primary medium-term goal. These steps will be your short-terms goals. These steps should each take several days to a week. Each day when you practice, the first short-term goal on your list will be your focus.


**10.** Put your list in order- now turn your list into an actual plan. Put every step in order. What will you have to do first? Second? Organize your steps in the right hand column using numbers. #1 being the first step

Your first target (#1) is your primary short-term target for the next several days. This is what you will be practicing everyday until you hit it. You may wish to further break this goal down into a step by step day by day plan. First you should complete the planning process for your other two long-term goals (see below). When you're finished this process you will have three plans and three short-term goals. You will use the daily practice plan located at the end of this chapter to set specific results each day and to track them.



## Goal # 2

**1. Write it down in vivid detail-** write it down on paper. What exactly will it look, sound and feel like when you reach it. Use keys, tempos, dynamics and any other detailed information you can to define it.

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**2. Determine how you and your music will benefit from achieving that goal-** write down at least five ways in which your music will improve in which you will benefit. The more benefits you come up with the better.

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**3. Determine the major obstacles you will have to overcome to achieve your goal-** what will be most challenging for you? What could potentially keep you from achieving your goal? What will be the bottle necks?

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**4. Determine the resources you will need to achieve your goal-** will you need to buy a certain CD, or a certain book. Will you need a metronome or a pitch pipe?

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**5. Determine the people whose cooperation you will need to achieve your goal-** Is there a teacher whom you should study with? Will you need to put together a practice band, or find a practice partner?

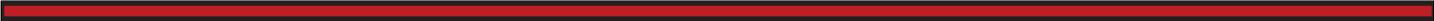
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**Goal # 3**

**1. Write it down in vivid detail-** write it down on paper. What exactly will it look, sound and feel like when you reach it. Use keys, tempos, dynamics and any other detailed information you can to define it.

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**2. Determine how you and your music will benefit from achieving that goal-** write down at least five ways in which your music will improve in which you will benefit. The more benefits you come up with the better.

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**3. Determine the major obstacles you will have to overcome to achieve your goal-** what will be most challenging for you? What could potentially keep you from achieving your goal? What will be the bottle necks?

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**4. Determine the resources you will need to achieve your goal-** will you need to buy a certain CD, or a certain book. Will you need a metronome or a pitch pipe?

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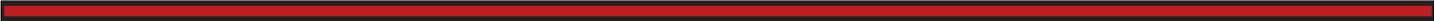
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**6. Give your goal a deadline-** when will you hit your target. Use a specific date as in June 1<sup>st</sup>, 200X.

I will hit my target

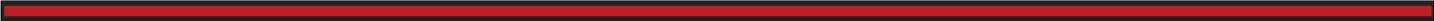
on \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Make a List of the major steps on the way to reaching this long-term goal.** Don't make this list too detailed. These steps should each take 1-3 months to complete. These are your medium-term goals. You may have only 3 or you may have 12.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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**8. Put your list in order-** now turn your list into an actual plan. Put every step in order. What will you have to do first? Second? Organize your steps in the right hand column using the numbers 1-12. #1 being the first step

Now we have a list of medium-term goals that you will refer to through out the next six months to a year on the way to your target. **But for now focus only on the first step.** This is your primary medium-term goal and it should take from 1 – 3 months to hit it.





# The Monster Jazz *Formula*

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## Lesson 11: Keeping Track Of It All

**Vision**

**Mission**

**Goal 1**

Target #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #5 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal 2**

Target #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #5 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal 3**

Target #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

Target #5 \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date \_\_\_\_\_

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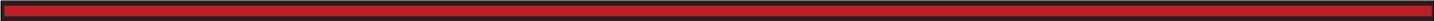
## Daily practice plan

This sheet is used to plan specific target results for a specific practice session and to track specific results achieved for a specific practice session. You will be working on one short-term goal for each of your long-term goals.

Date:

Mission Statement:

<b>#1 Primary Short-term goal:</b>	Specific Desired Results for Today:
Time Allotted:	Specific Results Achieved:
<b>#2 Primary Short-term goal:</b>	Specific Desired Results for Today:
Time Allotted:	Specific Results Achieved:
<b>#3 Primary Short-term goal:</b>	Specific Desired Results for Today:
Time Allotted:	Specific Results Achieved:



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## Daily practice plan

This sheet is used to plan specific target results for a specific practice session and to track specific results achieved for a specific practice session. You will be working on one short-term goal for each of your long-term goals.

Date:

Mission Statement:

<b>#1 Primary Short-term goal:</b>	Specific Desired Results for Today:
Time Allotted:	Specific Results Achieved:
<b>#2 Primary Short-term goal:</b>	Specific Desired Results for Today:
Time Allotted:	Specific Results Achieved:
<b>#3 Primary Short-term goal:</b>	Specific Desired Results for Today:
Time Allotted:	Specific Results Achieved:

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