



CrystalVoice
— *Studio* —

Mind • Body • Breath • Voice

**Mindfulness in the Studio:
Creating a Safe, Collaborative Coworking Space**

MY STORY:

Injuries
Over/Under achiever
Why I struggled



MY GOAL

I especially love helping singers to discover all the cool stuff THEIR voice can do.

Sometimes the path to vocal ease and freedom is simple, but usually it's hard, with some bumps along the way. Anyone who knows me knows I will never give up.

This determined mindset, along with my own history of vocal injury led me to reimagine the way voice is being taught. Today, my multi teacher studio serves singers of all ages and abilities, public speakers and voice teachers at all stages of their career.



Your vibe attracts your tribe.



I am NOT an expert. I am learning.

**Today, I offer a few observations gained
from ongoing collaborations with students
along my journey.**

"By your students you'll be taught."

-Oscar Hammerstein

What is Mindfulness?

Oxford Languages: a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Benefits:

- Emotional Regulation

- Decreased reactivity and increased response flexibility

- Ability to express oneself in various social situations

- Enhance functions associated with self-insight, morality, intuition, and fear modulation

- Improve well-being and reduce psychological distress

- Increased information processing speed, decreased task effort, able to focus on the task at hand (Davis, 2011)

"Gabby's" Story:

College graduate, BFA Musical Theatre very prestigious university

Member of Actor's Equity

Highly successful business woman, doesn't perform

Studied with many prestigious teachers

Came to me because she was still trying to find her mix.

(You're my last hope Obi Wan)

Extremely intelligent and artistic

Gabby's First Lesson

Fixated on long term goal--couldn't stay engaged/focused

Complete disconnect from reality (physically and vocally)

Fight or flight (face/voice didn't reflect)

Failure--shut down

Tears

Assumed failure

Gabby's underlying issues:

*Marginalized
Quota*

*Betrayed by authority figure
Teachers blamed her for her lack of progress
Fear of repeating the cycle
She didn't believe she could "do it"*

What worked for Gabby:

*I see you, I hear you
I believe in you
Goals and boundaries*

*Lots and lots of play, restructured/unstructured lessons
repertoire deviation*

*My priorities:
Build sense of safety and trust*

Mindful Pedagogy

Scope of practice

Healthy nervous system's response

Some people get stuck (Dana, D., 2018)

- previous training/performance
- personal life
- injury/surgery
- you could "remind" them of someone else

You may have to "change" the rules to help them



Co-Regulation

*"Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives."
(Kolk, 2015)*

Cues and Clues:

Vision

Breath

Posture

Energy level

Ability to focus and engage

Strategies

Breath work

Gaze/Horizon

Change direction

Stimulate feet

Model ventral vagal state
(Counseling)

Story of Elena

*Referred to me by her friends and otolaryngologist for MTD
(laryngeal massage) and vocal pain*

- Graduated from college (performance degree)*
- Father passed away shortly after cancer diagnosis (days)
(she was only child/divorce)*
- Mother also diagnosed cancer*

Elena's first lesson

Body rigidity (bracing for impact)

Hyper-sensitive to touch stimulus

Everything I did was "huge" a "game changer" (savior)

Unable to imitate (ironic)

Frightened to phonate

Elena's underlying issues

Grief

*Negative past experiences with teachers
(perception--was never "good" enough)*

Scared of future: adulthood/next steps in career

Dreading the next bad thing to happen

Fear of hurting herself

Lack of trust between mind/body/voice

What worked for Elena

(no trust issues with me)

Exploration and discovery of body parts and different muscles

*Learning to identify what she felt
(on Zoom)*

My priority: increase body awareness, establish trust

*Incremental (*my inspiration for online)*

Slow and steady pace to allow trust

Repertoire deviation

Considerations:

Scope of practice

Boundaries

Transference

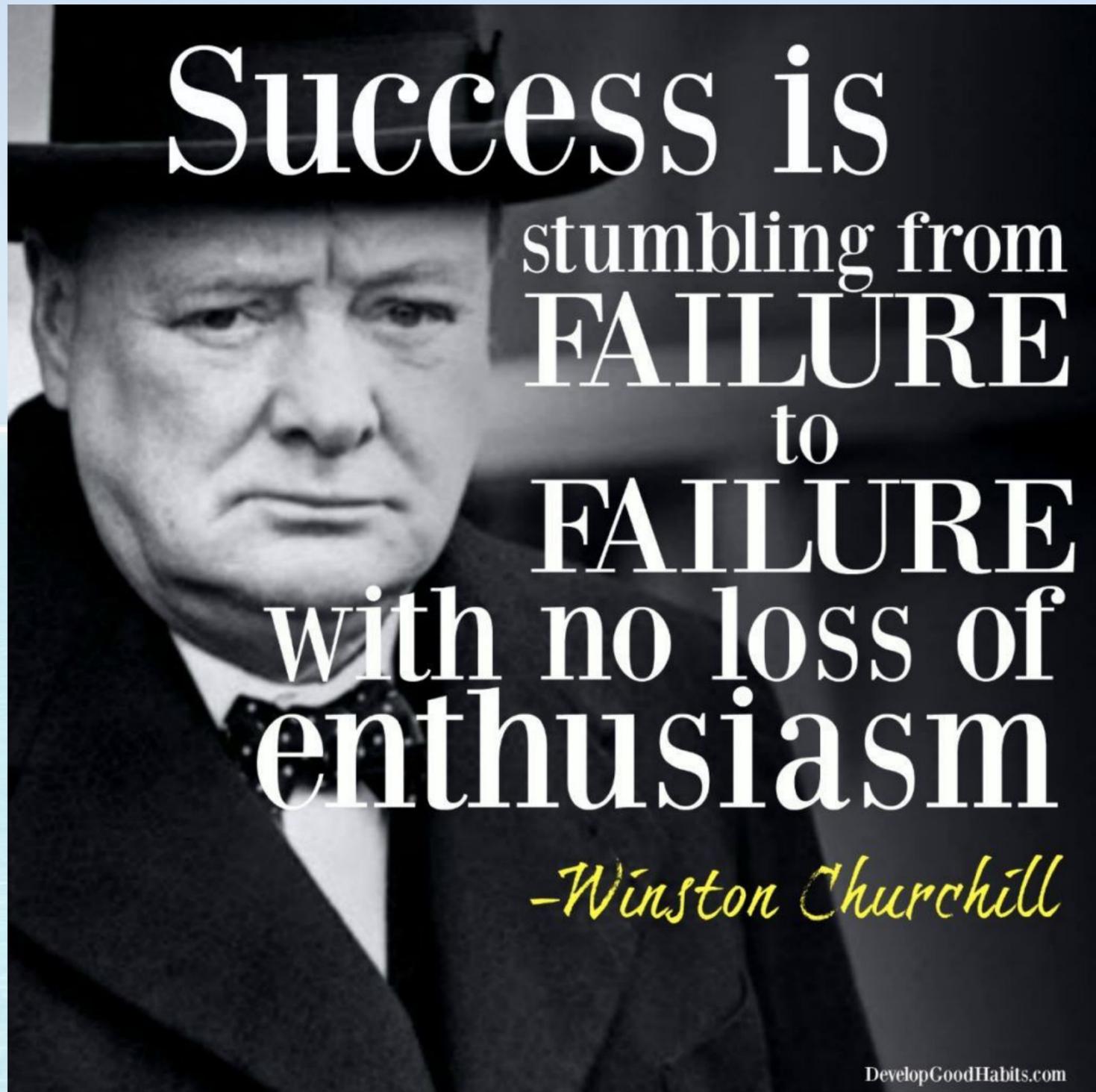
*Every student will be different--
meet them where they are*



Toolkit



Destigmatize Failure



We cannot avoid failure, and if we view it through the constructive lens of self-improvement, we need not cushion its blow to self-esteem. (Loscalzo, 2014)

How babies learn



Curiosity/Playfulness

"Let's play a game"

"Let's explore how this feels"

It's ok to be silly--lead by example

Show your enthusiasm

EXAMPLE:

Tongue in and out

Better, worse, the same



Novelty

"...at the stimulus-level, novelty can also have a beneficial effect on learning. -Schomaker, J. (2019)

"How can I mix things up?"

--Sensory, kinesthetic, environment (spatial), sequences

--Can be before or after learning

Examples: Non scale based warmups

Talk sing

Warm up improv

Switch roles

Backward lesson

Change scenery

Focus on unrelated task

watch video, look at art

Dr. Kittie Verdolini

Dr. Treniece Robinson-Martin

Robert Sussuma



Non-judgmental mindset

Model non-judgmental mindset

Positive wording

Set guidelines

Body shame culture



recommended reading: "Inner Game of Tennis"

Student and teacher as collaborators

Hone self assessment skills to build more
autonomous learners

Self-awareness builds self-confidence

- Incremental--1 thing to focus on and observe
- Ask, don't tell
 - "What do you notice?"
 - "What do you feel?"
 - "Do you like how that felt?"
- Teacher as listener
- Student is owner of their experience
- Silent, then spoken, then sung
- Incorporate movement

Example



WHO SAYS?

Lessons have to be in a prescribed format

You have to warmup using scales and arpeggios

You should talk less and sing more in lessons

Repertoire is the best way to measure student progress

The teacher knows best

Outside the lines

Don't be afraid to break the "rules" to serve your student

How do they learn best?

What is their natural gifting?

What am I reinforcing with this instruction?

Am I allowing my student to have their own experience or am I trying to recreate my own?

How can I best serve this student?

Thank you NATS Cal-Western!

Thank you all for joining me today!

Feel free to reach out:

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RESOURCES:

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