

# Ask Mike!

Stressed about an upcoming gig? Work got you singing the blues? Local 47 member Michael I. Goode can help!



In my last column in November, we talked about playing with asthma, allergies and non-toxic valve oils. Today, we are going to talk about getting your life back under control and keeping balance while maintaining a busy playing and teaching schedule.

**Q: No matter what I do, it seems I don't have any time for anything but music. I love what I do, and have been successful, but all my friends most of whom are in music, tell me I am going to burn out soon if I don't start getting some balance. Any suggestions?**

**A:** We all can get panicky deep down that if we don't keep obsessively doing what we love it will all go away. This is especially true with music and especially if we are on the studio track. In studio work, we know very well that if we don't say "yes" every time the phone rings, we may not be working again.

So how do we manage the situation

and get some kind of balance in our life and keep working? We need to have activities we can do that don't involve music, that are pleasurable and that we can fit in whenever we have an unexpected break in our day, which will not compromise the upcoming job.

For example, let's say your recording session is for 1-3 p.m., so you know you have the rest of the day off. Schedule something like a drop-in yoga class for you do not have to plan in advance for which you can go to after the session.

Maybe you can go for a walk, a swim, a bike ride — these physical activities are great for your spirit and your well being. Or paint. You need to discipline yourself to have some outside activities that you can do on a moment's notice every day instead of just going out to eat and hanging out at the bar or in front of the television. These things have their place, but if they become the only thing we do after or between gigs, we are going to end up being very unhealthy and out of balance. We all need something more. Doing something else, especially physical and/or other artistic activity, will also improve our playing and concentration on the job a lot as an unexpected benefit.

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A colleague of mine from the Chicago Symphony whom I played with in the Ravinia Festival Orchestra used to raise dogs; my teacher Adolph Herseht used to golf, and would even bring his golf clubs on international tours. You have to do something, otherwise you can destroy your health and eventually maybe your career. Our personal "batteries," which are spiritual and physical in nature, have to be recharged.

**Q: Things seem to be spiraling out of control for me. The more work I get, the more things are going faster and faster. It's getting so crazy that I am starting to have a hard time concentrating on the job and teaching. Is there anything I can do to remedy this situation? When things start affecting my playing on the job, I start to get worried!**

**A:** In addition to what I have suggested above, there is a direct spiritual component to everything, including concentration. All the great composers had it. Without this, you will never be in balance. We can all remember times when

we played a gig that was "out of this world" that took us and the audience to a whole other place. That's the spiritual part I am talking about. Just like anything else, there is no way that you can access or keep the spiritual part of yourself available unless you try to access it every day in some way, just like practicing. Whatever kind of spiritual discipline you are into is OK. Simple is best. It could be a walk in the woods, some people might join and attend a religious organization or service, some people might work with a very advanced yoga teacher; there are many paths to this that resonate with each of us. But it is this part that connects us to that higher energy that takes our performance to a whole new level. Use this area to keep yourself in balance, it works!

*Ask Mike!*, Trumpetworks Press, P.O. Box 11574, Marina del Rey, CA 90295 or you can check out my website at [www.trumpet-workspress.com](http://www.trumpet-workspress.com) and see information on my book, "Stage Fright in Music Performance and Its Relationship to the Unconscious" and my upcoming book, "Your True Self." All names are confidential and will not be published. © 2009 Michael I. Goode

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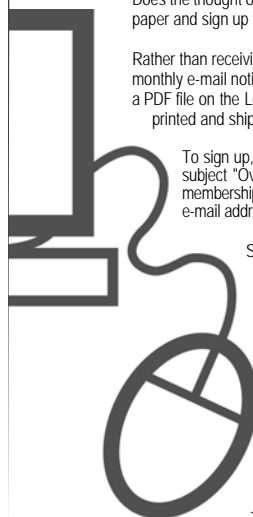
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