

# 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 December, we talked about playing consistently and why record-keeping is always important. Today, we are going to talk about why you have

to run your own race and dress right for the job.

**Q: I am a young player, just getting started in L.A. and have come here from the East Coast. I trained at a really good music school and have a lot of experience but all I keep hearing is how so-and-so is a "great player," "a fine player," etc. etc. I do want to respect people's abilities but this gets a little tiresome!**

A: I understand that at times some of us like to gossip and rate each other in this business. If a person is genuinely complimenting someone, that's fine. But when it is used as a weapon from some of our colleagues who might not always have the best intentions, it is not right or good. That is, they might be worried about you

as competition, so they essentially say so-and-so is a great player implying that so-and-so is better than you. We don't really like to talk about such things, but there is a small percentage of players who do get into this competitive thing which ultimately helps no one. There is a huge difference between friendly competition and vicious competition.

This example that you cite based on what you have told me is more in the vicious variety. I would suggest writing an anger letter as I have before, not sending it of course, and after writing you should have better insight into how to handle the situation with people who have told you such things for competitive purposes simply to mess with your mind. I would write one now regarding these competitive vicious comments something like: "I am angry that this person (insert name) is putting me down by suggesting that I am not as good as so-and-so just to mess with my mind to gain a competitive advantage. This makes me angry and I am sick of this..." and finish the sentence with whatever comes to mind. Keep the letter private, uncensored, and tear it up when you are done.

You will feel relief, or recall something else that upsets you, or you might feel numb after the pen leaves the paper.

If you feel relief, great – you've drained the negativity that was getting in your way. If you feel angry about something else after writing, keep writing until you feel relief. If you feel numb after writing, this means you are hitting a big emotional issue for you that is blocking your playing from being at your absolute best and playing the way that works best for you and your career needs. If you do feel numb, write an anger letter that starts with "I am angry that I feel numb and have no reference point..." and you will recall a memory or topic that you can start writing about as an anger letter until you feel relief. This will help your playing, your career and your approach to life will become much more positive!

The main thing to remember is that you should run your own race at all times in your career. That is, you should play and do it in a way that works for you, and not worry too much about what others are doing. A colleague of mine who was heavily involved in track and in coaching

runners said that the number one reason runners lose races that they should have won was because they turned around for a split second to look at the competitor behind or to the side of them. This same idea applies to your career.

**Q: Hi Mike. I am a guy brass player. They told me it's a "white tie" gig. Will my regular black tux be alright?**

A: Unfortunately, the regular tux will not be OK. White tie is different than regular black tie and means you have to wear a black tail coat with a white tie, plus a white vest inside your coat. People get fired for blowing the dress code, especially at big events. Ask your bandleader exactly what to wear and rent, buy or borrow it.

Send your questions to: Ask Mike!, Trumpetworks Press, P.O. Box 11574, Marina del Rey, CA 90295 or you can check out my website at [www.trumpetworkspress.com](http://www.trumpetworkspress.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

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## ESTATE PLANNING An Introduction

It's that time of year again when resolutions are made. Did you keep your resolution last year to do your estate planning? Did you simply not get around to it? Or month after month you postponed it because the money was tight? In fact, the timing couldn't be more critical to take care of your estate planning. Estate planning can save you or your family thousands of dollars in legal and court fees. The best time to plan your estate is now – while you can and before you need it.

Estate planning is not just the writing of a will. A good estate plan will also protect you in the event of your incapacity. It will let you – not the courts – make decisions about your medical care and keep control of your assets. It will allow you – not the courts – to decide who would care for your minor children should they become orphaned.

### Who Needs Estate Planning?

EVERYONE over the age of 18 should consider the benefits associated with designating a person who, in the event of your incapacity, will have the authority to make health care decisions on your behalf. And whatever the size of your estate, even a small one, someone should be in charge of its management and distribution. If

your estate is larger, you will want to consider various ways to preserve your assets for your beneficiaries and to reduce or postpone the amount of probate fees and estate tax which otherwise might be payable at your death.

### What Is My Estate?

Your estate consists, simply, of everything you own – your home, bank accounts, investments, retirement benefits, insurance policies, collectibles, and personal belongings. When you start adding it up you may find, like many people do, that you actually own a lot more than you think. Now, perhaps, you understand why people need and should do estate planning.

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