

Ask Mike!

Stressed about an upcoming gig? Work got you singing the blues? Columnist Michael Goode can help!



BY MICHAEL I. GOODE,
LOCAL 10-208 MEMBER

In my last column, in February, we talked about how big lifestyle changes can affect your playing and what to do with a sudden bout of stage fright. Today we are going to talk about some personal issues in our business and how to deal with them. Here's March's Q&A:

Q: I have been a player and a contractor in the city for 30-plus years but my business partner of 28 years just died suddenly. Everybody is telling me to retire now, but I still play well and am relatively healthy. What do you think?

A: I am so sorry to hear about your loss, please accept my sympathy. A very close relationship takes time to get over when the other partner dies, especially unexpectedly. Many medical studies that have been out for some time have shown that early or sudden retirement after the death of someone close to you is not always

the best or even a good idea. We all need to mourn first, and write a letter to the person who died expressing everything that we wanted to say to that person but were unable to because of their death. This is a very healing thing to do and gives us closure. We should take some time off or at least cut our schedule down somewhat to accommodate our grief.

Always remember that even if your emotions go up and down like a roller coaster, the roller coaster will still stay on the track and arrive at its destination safely no matter how scary things may seem. It is also important as soon as you can to remain active in your profession that you have spent years learning and participating in. Keeping at your profession is something that is far more meaningful to us than we think, even though over the years things happen that make us tired or sick of it from time to time. You must look at the big picture. A time of extended grief is NOT THE TIME to retire early. It is the worst thing that you can do! The social contacts that you have built up over many years are a much larger part of our lives than we realize and for most people once the professional situation ends with retirement, these contacts become few and far between. If we retire too soon after the loss of someone important in our life, we will be left alone and isolated. That is a dangerous psychological situation to be in. There is a great deal of disorientation that goes on emotionally when someone dies and you go through the natural grieving process. The closer you were to the deceased, the greater the disorientation. At this time, certainly for at

least a year or two, you should be around the familiar faces from your career and your job instead of running away from them. They will be a tremendous source of strength.

The other factor is that retirement is right up there with other major events in life like death and moving, and if your dear business partner has passed away, you do not want to add an additional stressful event to your life to disorient you further. This is also a time where you should be on guard for people that might take advantage of you in your grief especially with your money, as there are unfortunately some people that will try to con you in your vulnerable state and get you to do things you really don't want to do. Stick with knowledgeable people that you trust and have known before, who know what they are talking about especially in all financial matters and don't make any sudden changes in your lifestyle. Give yourself a chance to adjust to all that has happened through the death of your business partner and don't make any drastic moves just because somebody else thinks it's a good idea. You have to do what's right for YOU! Talking with a professional grief counselor helps, too.

Q: Along with my playing, I also have a music publishing company. One of my younger employees, who has been working with me for a while and has been very nice, all of a sudden refuses to play jobs with me and is telling me that I need to sell my business to him. This guy has been good to me, but now it seems a little creepy that he wants to take over and is getting persistent about it. I am getting older so

the thought does enter my mind about selling, but do I want to, and when?

A: It does trouble me that all of a sudden this fellow wants to buy you out and no longer wants to even play with you. This change in his behavior would make me a little uncomfortable as well. Talk to as many business associates and colleagues as you can who know the music publishing business and get their opinions. And most of all, take some time to jot down how you feel about this guy and the concept of selling your business.

A lot of us do more than one thing in the music business and this makes our lives more profitable and happy. Ask yourself, do you really want to give your publishing business up? Don't let someone else bully you into making decisions for you. Find out what you really want to do regarding your business and your career and do that instead of what somebody whose personality may have changed says to do. It's still your life. Just because you are getting older doesn't mean you still can't control your destiny and your life! You don't have to be helpless! There are people out there that care!

Send your questions to: Ask Mike!, Trumpetworks Press, 715 Lake Street #269, Oak Park, IL 60301, or you can check out my website at www.trumpetworkspress.com and see information on my book, "Stage Fright in Music Performance and Its Relationship to the Unconscious." All names are confidential and will not be published.

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