

# Ask Mike!

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



BY LOCAL 10-208 MEMBER  
MICHAEL I. GOODE

In my last column, in August, we revisited an old subject: how to deal with bad people in the music business. Today, we are going to talk about how important it is to go your own road and do things your way, the way that works best for you in spite of what others may say, revisit the idea of taking time off, and talk about support. Here's September's Q&A:

**Q: Gosh, Mike, your advice has been really helpful and all, but you know I really want to follow my teacher's advice in lessons, but lately it seems that for the past six months every**

**time I do, I am not winning any auditions for better jobs and the commercial gigs I play aren't going that great. I have been doing EVERYTHING my teacher says but it doesn't seem to be working. WHY?**

A: Sometimes, even with a great teacher, even if you are his or her best student, things will not work at a certain point. This is because we get to points in our learning journey in music and in our careers where we must "leave the nest" before we get kicked out of it!! What I mean by this is that at some point you have to develop your own style. Adolph Herseth, the legendary Principal Trumpet of the Chicago Symphony, always tells me, "You have to sound like you." What he means by this is that you have to find a way to play that fits you. Now this does not mean that you ignore your teacher's great advice and help. But what it does mean is that you take chances and try to incorporate their advice into your playing in a way that works best for you. Arnold Jacobs the legendary tubist and teacher from the Chicago Symphony, another one of my teachers always said, "I don't care how you get there, as long as you sound good." What he meant by this is that you have to find a way that works for you in practice and in performance. For example, if your teacher always uses a daily rou-

tine and that works great for him or her, but not for you, that's OK. If you play better by doing something different everyday in your practicing, then stick to that. Experiment whenever you have time in the practice room. See what things and times cause you to play your best and make you feel the best about it when you do it. We are all human beings but we also are all unique. What works for some of us may not work for others!! Your playing will improve greatly for it and you will have a lot more fun playing on the job as a result. And when that happens, EVERYBODY starts to notice on auditions and on gigs. Go for it!

**Q: Hey Mike, what is a good time to take a vacation? I'm a freelancer and I really don't want to miss out on anything! When that phone rings I want to be there!**

A: In the early stages of our careers, and especially if we are doing studio work and are freelancing, it is difficult to take time off. As I have mentioned before, time off enhances our playing rather than takes away from it if we do it right. Look realistically at your schedule, and look at the times for the kind of jobs you play when things are the slowest. This would be the best time to take some time off. And take as much time off as you think you can live with, but please do it, because we all need to recharge our batteries even

if we love our work! Also, try to vary the intensity of what you do both in your practice and performance schedule, with some days being more intense and others not so much if you can. This also helps a great deal to prevent burnout, which we talked about before. It also helps to have a hobby, so that you are not always totally focused on music even though you love to do it!!! I learned a long time ago that having interests other than music helps your playing rather than hurts it. Also, being with your friends is very important. They encourage you and you come back to the horn refreshed and ready to go! We need other people to love and encourage us; it is an important thing and always helps us play better. As my wife always says, "Nobody gets anywhere without support!"

Next month we will talk about the differences between practicing, performing and auditions and how you can bridge all three of these areas together to play great all the time!

*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](http://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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