



ROSIE BENNET

ON PRACTICING

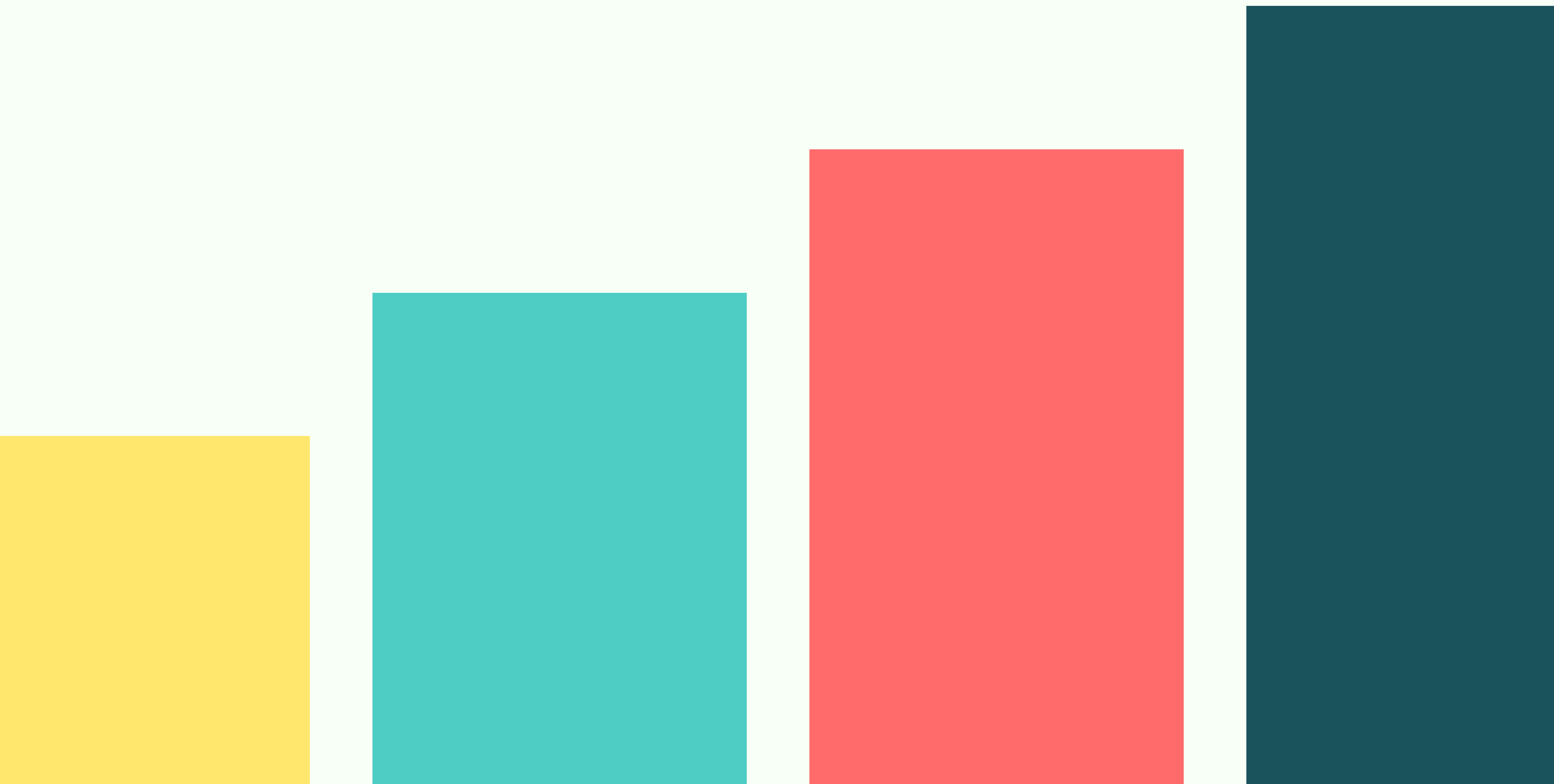


TABLE OF CONTENTS



1. What is practice and why do we need it?
2. Why don't we know more about practice?
3. Sport Psychology – Identity, Personality, and Self Esteem
4. Perfectionism and Anxiety
5. Tradition and my favorite old tropes
6. Tools for building a healthy relationship and getting where you want to with practice

WATCH THE STREAM

ROSIE BENNET

Born in London in 1996, Rosie Bennet started playing guitar at age seven, receiving her early musical education at The Yehudi Menuhin School of Music on a scholarship funded by The Rolling Stones. She went on to study with Zoran Dukic (The Hague, NL), Johan Fostier (Tilburg, NL), Rene Izquierdo (Milwaukee, USA) and Raphaella Smits (Leuven, BE). She has performed in festivals all over Europe including Open Guitar Festival in Křivoklát, Czech Republic, Glasgow's Big Guitar Weekend, Scotland, Porziano Music Festival, Italy and the West Dean Guitar Festival, UK. Highlights of her concert career include performances of solo and chamber music at Wigmore Hall, London, The North Wall, Oxford and concerts given on El Camino De Santiago.

1. what is practice and why do we need it?

“Practice” in the musical sense is the name we give to the time we spend working on developing our skills. Through our early experiences with learning, our repeated frustrations, or the expectation we might feel being a part of the music world, many of us may have developed a negative attitude towards practice. Let’s explore some of those feelings so we can get a little deeper.

a. when you think of the word “practice,” what comes to mind?

b. how often do you feel excited to practice?

most of the time

some of the time

rarely

never

c. how often do you feel accomplished after a practice session?

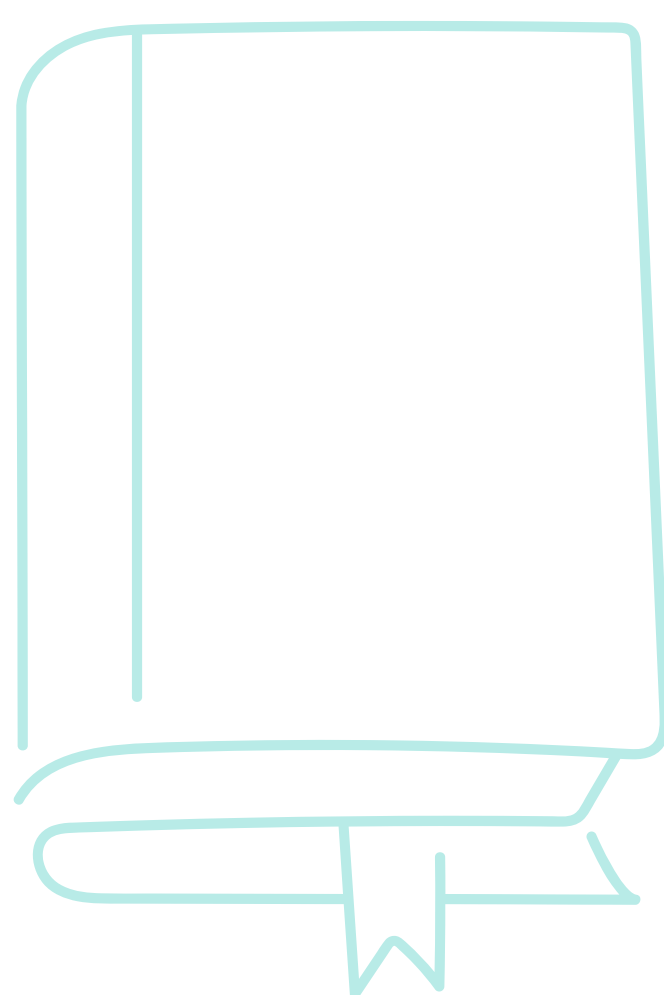
most of the time

some of the time

rarely

never

d. what (if anything) holds you back from practicing as much as you’d like?



2. why don't we know more about practice?

For most people, the pressure to practice far outweighs the knowledge about what practice is for, what should be done during a session, and how we should be structuring and organizing the time available to us.

a. what concrete information have you been given about practice in your musical life that you have managed to put into direct action?

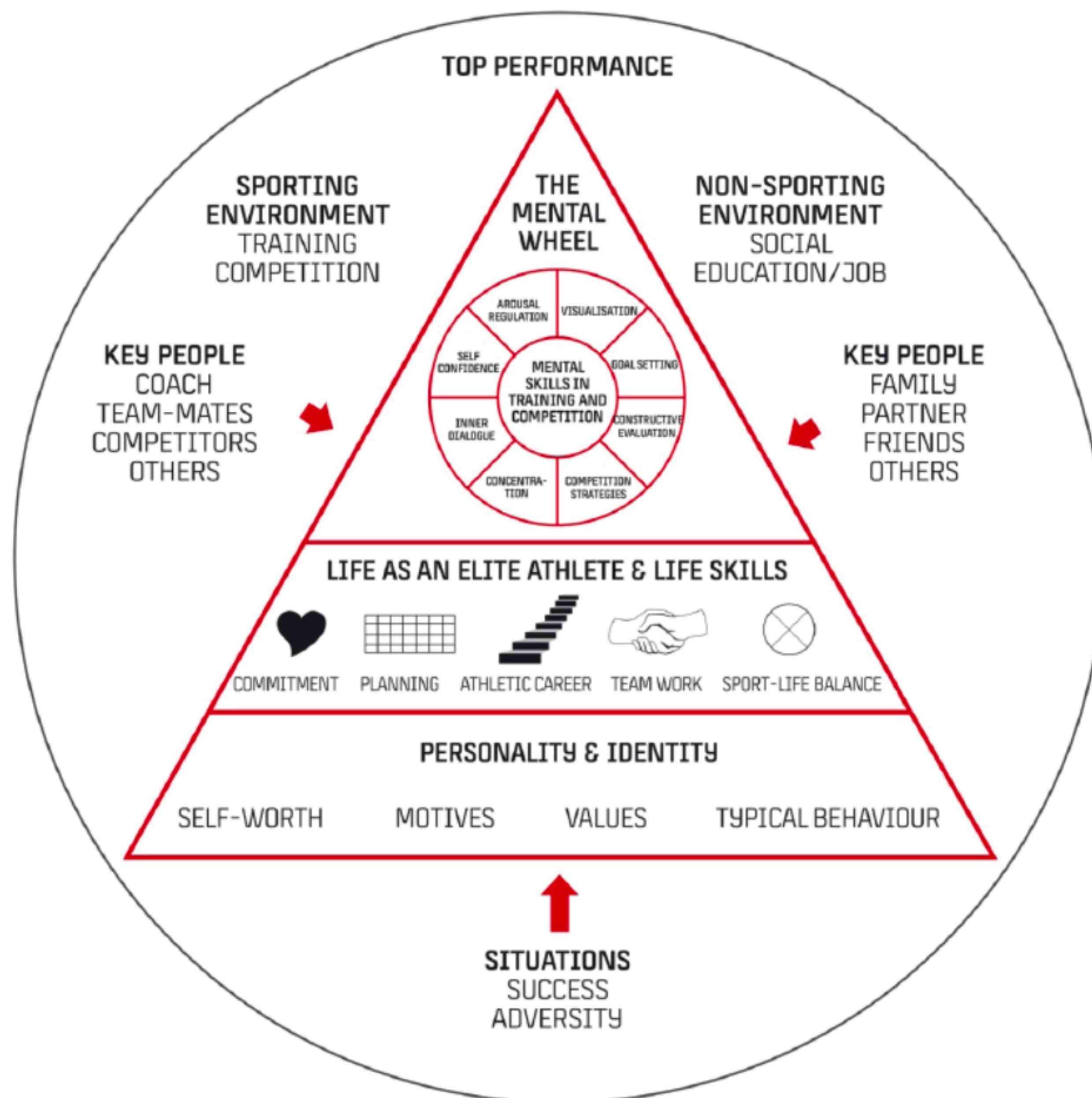
b. what information (if any) have you been given about practice in your musical life that you have struggled to put into action or that doesn't seem to work for you?



3. sport psychology – identity, personality, and self-esteem

Sport psychology is the study of what it takes to be an athlete: not just the qualities that make a successful sports person, but also how athletes deal with the particular psychological challenges that accompany a high-pressure career.

There are many things we can learn about ourselves as musicians from the world of sport psychology. Most interesting to me and important for unpacking our emotional reactions to practice are the psychological challenges that athletes face regarding their personal identity, how a life in a high pressure setting forms their personalities, to what extent that shaping of their personality affects their future life, and how their career and performance in that career affect their self-esteem.



4. perfectionism and anxiety

a. are you a perfectionist?

yes

no

sometimes

i don't know

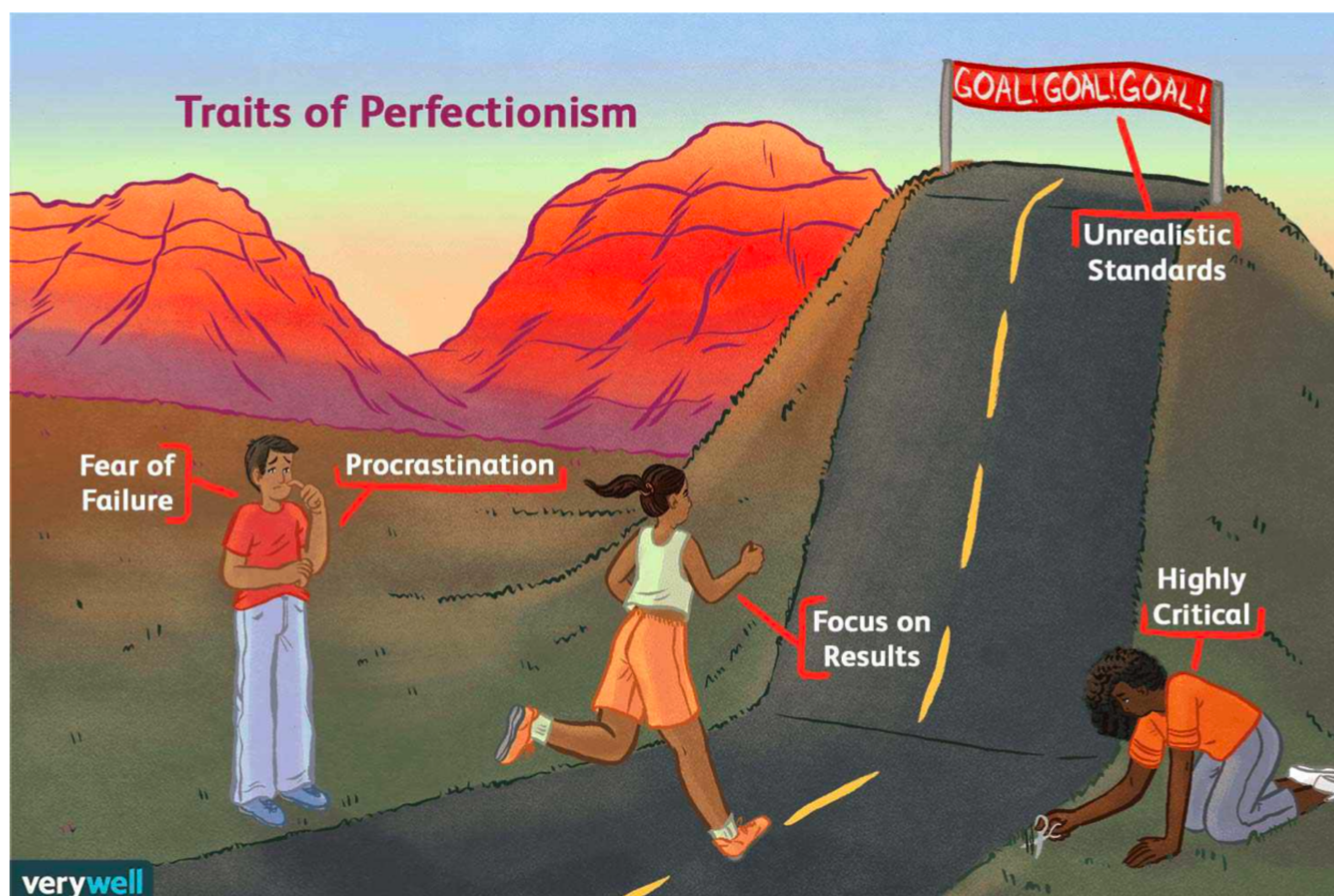
b. what qualities in your work do you think make you a perfectionist/not a perfectionist?

The three types of perfectionism:

Self-Oriented Perfectionism - attaching irrational importance to being 'perfect', having unrealistic expectations of one's self and holding punitive self evaluations.

Socially-prescribed perfectionism - when individuals believe that their social context is excessively demanding, others judge them harshly, and that they must be perfect to get approval from others.

Other-oriented perfectionism - when individuals impose unrealistic standards on those around them and evaluate them critically.



Strategies for overcoming perfectionism:

“When someone is a perfectionist, they are constantly feeling pressure to perform or prove what they can do to themselves and others. Recovery starts with recognizing how harmful constant perfectionism can be and to recognize that one can still hold high standards for one’s self and achieve them without being perfect.

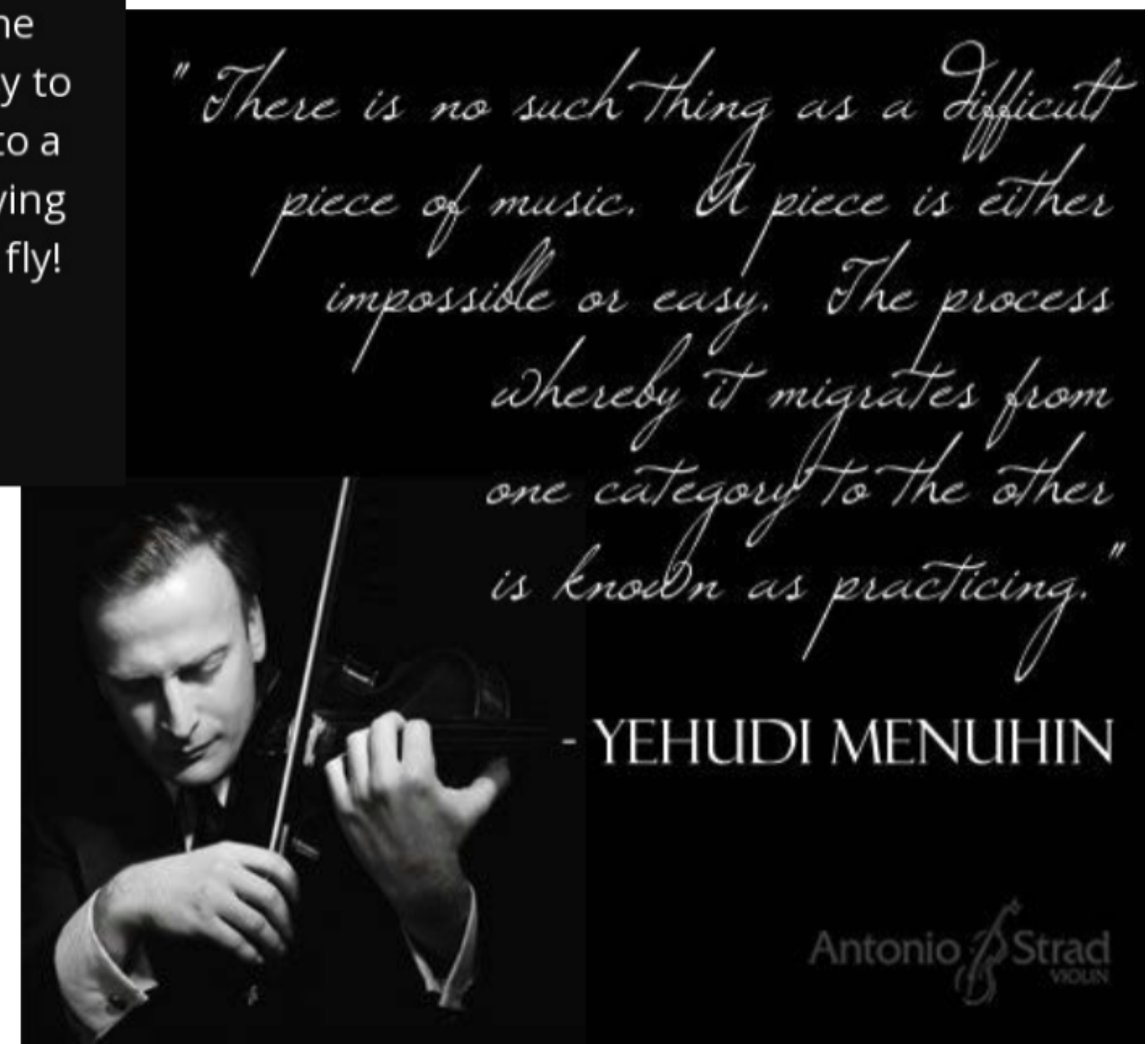
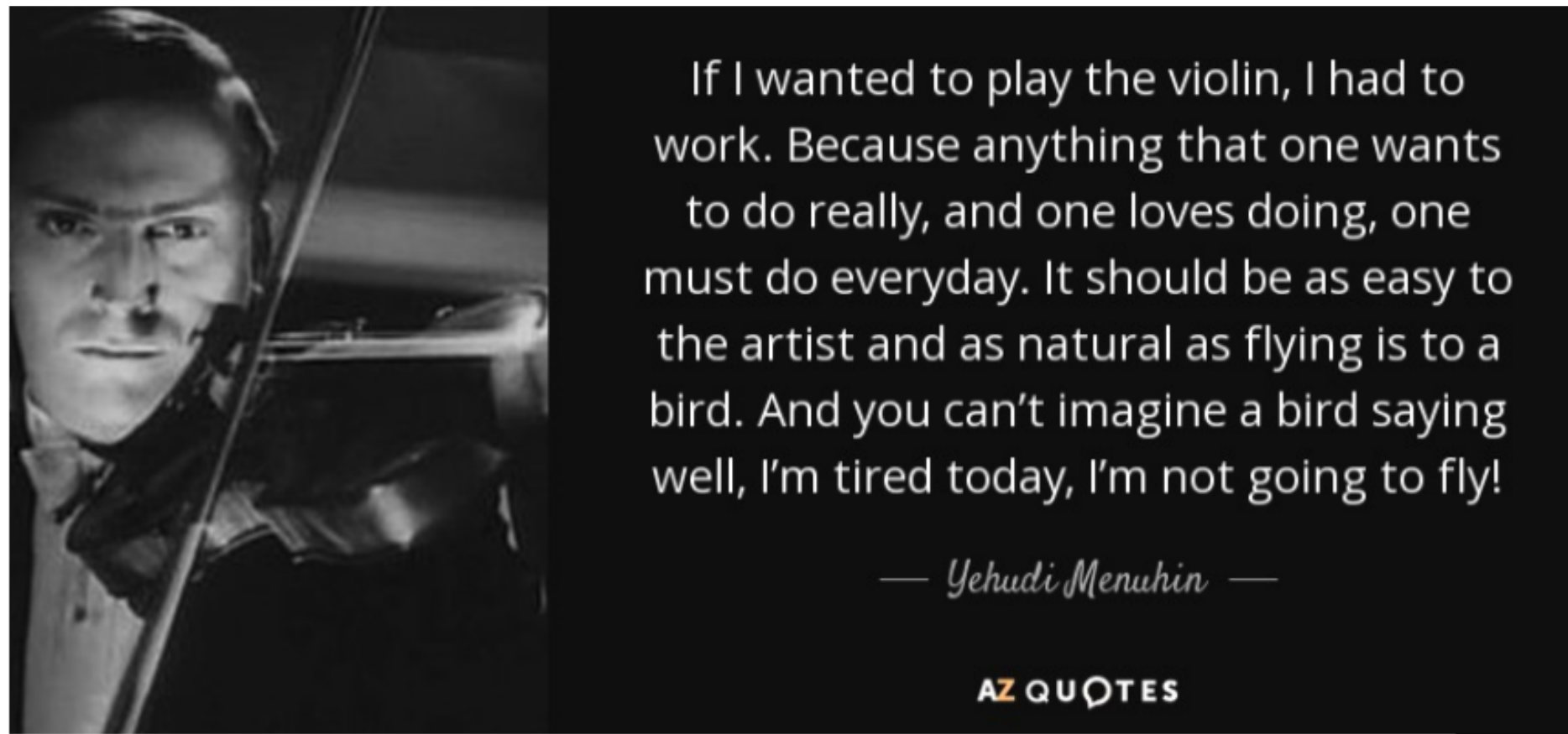
Other ways to combat perfectionism include letting go of the need to compare yourself to others. When we compare ourselves to others, we make judgments that we can rarely actually confirm, especially through social media (e.g. she looks like she has the “perfect” life). We often compare how we feel inside to how we think others look on the outside (e.g. he is so happy because he is always smiling). This is a faulty comparison and frequently a damaging one.

Other strategies such as mindfulness (trying to stay in the moment), having gratitude for what we have and those that love us, examining our own harsh self-judgements and negative internal dialogue, can all be helpful antidotes to harmful perfectionism. Finally, having self-compassion is important, as is truly learning how to see mistakes and challenges as valuable opportunities for growth.”

5. tradition and my favorite old tropes

Having been a student at the Yehudi Menuhin School of music in London from age 10 through to 18, a lot of the way I personally was taught about the music world and a musical life comes from the veneration and glorification of Yehudi Menuhin’s thoughts about music. When examining the preservation of traditions it’s important to remember that the environment from which a tradition was born, the environment in which it was initially repeated and the environment in which it has been continuously repeated are completely different.

I like to think of these as chemical reactions - perhaps a tradition was born in conditions that made it like mixing salt and vinegar - tasty! Maybe the next time it was repeated it was like vinegar and water, kind of inert, but maybe one day it will be like mixing vinegar and bleach - completely toxic!



6. tools for getting where you want to and building a healthy relationship with practice

Whatever your experience has been with practice, there are always ways that you can better your relationship with your work, or your relationship with yourself while you are working. Ultimately, practice should help us feel closer to ourselves and get us further along the journey of where we want to be, whether that be streamlining or improving our physical capabilities, or helping us glean more information that we can put into our intellectual or emotional enjoyment of playing. In order to come away from each session feeling more positive and more accomplished there are a few things that we should take seriously:

- a. Making a sustainable routine
- b. Creating measurable goals we actually care about
- c. Creating effective monitoring systems for those goals
- d. Tuning into which indicators are part of the inner game, and which are signals that should be followed
- e. Relinquishing total control and surveilled perfectionism
- f. Reparenting our perfectionism as optimalism