

Guitar Wisdom

1. The greatest precept is continual awareness. (fortune cookie)
2. I never practice; I always play. (Wanda Landowska)
3. Speed is the enemy of emotion. (Emilio Pujol)
4. Every time I touch the guitar, I try to make it the first time. (Jamie Andreas)
5. Practicing does not make perfect, it makes permanent.... Don't waste your time fiddling around on your guitar. Dig in and learn something that will aid you on your quest for musical success.... You can become better just by using your time more wisely. (creativeguitar.org)
6. [When memorizing music,] I prefer to visualize the fingers, frets, and strings rather than actual notes, because these are the final images sent by the brain before a sound is produced. (Sharon Isbin)
7. Making music—doing anything we really love—we are always at the limits of our ability.... No one is singled out for disdain because he hears and feels more than he can express. Every musician, every artist, every person suffers this disappointment. (Glenn Kurtz)
8. Most of the time the solutions you achieve in impatience are narrow and awkward. You establish your first response as a habit, then have to spend all your time trying to correct it, instead of waiting, listening, and learning more. (Glenn Kurtz)
9. Even if a passage is difficult, the player should not center on the difficulties but rather on the beauty of sound and the musical phrase. Fear creates tension and, consequently, we lose our "touch" and sound. (Celino Romero)
10. The ultimate goal is not to play the guitar but to play music. (Frederic Hand)
11. To play something beautifully and with command is a life-long process. (Frederic Hand)
12. If you have effectively prepared for a performance but still feel tense on stage, you might consider the question of musical and spiritual immersion. Are you really *listening* to the music you play? For the more you are engaged musically, the less time you will have to be nervous or distracted. Are you actively *feeling* the music, emotionally and spiritually? If not, your subconscious could be saying, "This whole process is a big lie, and I don't really care what happens." After all, you have to believe in what you are doing in order to be effective, and that is possible only when you are giving your heart and soul. You must be able to identify with and feel the music you are playing. And remember to emote in the practice room, because that is what allows your feelings to be free and open on stage. (Sharon Isbin)
13. You become the music, not yourself.... Like actors and actresses, musicians are performing artists. Their job isn't to express their own personalities, but to let the "character" of the music speak through them. They have a responsibility to express the qualities of the music rather than to exhibit their own personality.... When we accept our role as interpreters of the composer's music, we cease to be so worried about how we appear to others. (Barry Green)
14. If it's not a challenge, you're not working hard enough. (Herbie Hancock)
15. If you hear a voice within you say "you cannot paint," then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced. (Vincent Van Gogh)
16. Ten thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert — in anything. In study after study, of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, and what have you, this number comes up again and again. Ten thousand hours is the equivalent to roughly three hours per day, or twenty hours per week, of practice over ten years. (Dr. Daniel Levitin)
Success has to do with deliberate practice. Practice must be focused, determined, and in an environment where there's feedback." (Malcolm Gladwell)

Exercises:

- Think of a great player you have seen. Pretend you are recording a video and you are to *appear* to play just like your hero. Don't focus on how it sounds; just focus on *looking* like the great player, playing with confidence and really expressing the emotion.
- 1) Play once focusing only on technical accuracy. Play like a robot, every note and dynamic accurate. Notice what you do well. 2) Next play focusing only on the emotion. Be as expressive as possible, without concern for accuracy. Notice what you do well. 3) Finally play combining the best of both these worlds, playing with accuracy *and* emotion.