

music cth? inks

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'Use Your Buzz To Play The Guitar'

ryan-kershaw.com



This 'having a partner' approach can help with getting better at playing an instrument too. Your partner can ask you to recite note positions and correct you where necessary. A partner can also test you on new chord positions, music history, music theory, and help you to recognize notes by hearing them (aural recognition and perfect pitch).

Action Step: If you are a guitarist find a partner who can test you with things that you are trying to learn at the moment and set up a practice session in the following week.

If you don't play the guitar you can find a partner to help you with music theory or music industry knowledge.

Helping You With Your Weak Areas

For musicians who wish to make music their career, take note: Your career is going to need other people.

Yes, the responsibility is yours and only yours to have the discipline, focus and drive necessary to put in the required effort for a successful career, but you won't have a career without other people – whether that's people buying your music, introducing you to other people, or providing you with music services etc. As you get busier you will need another person to provide help or assistance (think about a voluntary assistant) in your weaker areas, otherwise there is a good chance of experiencing 'burn-out'.

As an example, for me personally I am more enthused by creating ideas in music than I am by trying to understand tech set-ups. I have very strong ideas when it comes to design and composition, but I don't enjoy the back end of things like website construction and maintenance, or the setting up of digital distribution platforms. For that reason I am fortunate enough to have the help of a graphic designer and an assistant – my cousin and my girlfriend. Pay attention – do you see what I just said? I said 'My cousin and my girlfriend'. Most of us do not have the luxury of starting with thousands of employees so start with who you know. Start with someone that you can trust and who knows how much effort you put into what you do. It may be a friend or relative. (note that for roles that eventually need a professional such as manager or promoter, you will want to make sure that both parties are clear that at some stage you will hire professional services).

Stop with the excuse that you can't find anyone to help you and reach out more in order to get a bit of help.

Action Step: If you are a semi-pro or pro musician who feels like you are spreading yourself too thin, find someone this week

JUST THE TWO OF US - Why finding a partner can help (pt1)

In Part one of this column I talked about who can help you out as a friendly partner in music. This time lets look at why and how that partner can help.

Swapping Music With You

I have put this at #1 for a couple of reasons. The first reason is so that you remember that music is and always should be at core of what you do as a musician. After working in the music industry for a while I came to notice that music is often the last thing that people in the business think about. Sitting around tables with lawyers, label owners, managers and agents and often they have all worried coming up with ways to make money or get attention for their artists, yet they forget to use the one thing that their artists career should be based on – music! Swapping music gives each party fresh ideas and encourages awareness of undiscovered acts. Discovering and creating music is still at the core of everything else.

The second reason that I have put 'swapping music' at #1 is because you can do this no matter what your age or experience. I started making music compilations and swapping them with friends at school when I was 8 or 9 years old, and continued right through my school years and beyond. It provided so much inspiration for me to learn and get better at the guitar, and was what a lot of my conversations with friends were centered around.

Action Step: See if you can find a friend or relative to swap music with, and do so this week. See if you can introduce music to each other that you have not listened to before.

Testing You To Help Expand Your Knowledge

I am learning how to speak Italian at the time of writing this article and am doing so with my partners help. It is so much more enjoyable, and seems easier than when I tried to learn another language a few years ago without a partners help. One of the reasons is that they can test me on words throughout the week, and it is collaborative learning; having a partner takes a bit of the pressure off.

"Music is, and always should be, at the core of what you do as a musician"

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Guitar Intuition

to help you as an unofficial assistant (or official if you are both sure that it will work and they are clear on the 'voluntary' part). Your new assistant can start by helping with sending and sorting emails to music related people whose services you wish to work with.

Support and Feedback For You

Feedback plays a crucial role in you getting to where you want to be.

Due to factors such as wind pressure and air traffic, an airplane in flight is off-course 95 to 99% of the time, but with feedback from its computer systems it makes small adjustments to correct its direction and arrive at its destination (see the blog 'Staying On Course' by J.S. Gilbert which expands on this idea).

In the same way we can use feedback to gauge how on or off course we are, and to figure out where we can make improvements. It is important to use your better judgment to decide if the feedback is from a trusted and credible source. Listening to feedback about touring from someone who has never toured is not always reliable, whereas advice on that subject from a successful professional with experience in that area may be a bit more solid.

The other amazing benefit of having a partner to help you with your guitar playing or music career is 'support'. Whether it's promoting your music or simply motivating you to stay positive in the difficult times, a partner that supports you can make a world of difference.

Action step: Write down a list of those can support you emotionally and those who can give you honest feedback. Get in touch with them this week and thank them for playing a positive part in what you do.

Also listen to the audiobook version of 'Failing Forward' by John Maxwell – it contains some great advice about looking at failure or experiences that haven't gone well as learning curves. Having such a perspective will prove vital in establishing a long and successful career.

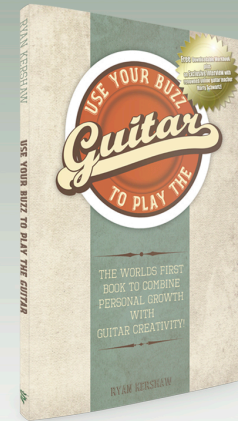
Help You To Reach More People

If you want to get the word out about your new song or live show, you might on your own tell 20 people. That's your reach. If you have a partner and they also tell 20 people, then that has already doubled what you had before. 2 partners = 60 people. 3 partners = 80 people. So just by getting 4 people to tell others, you hypothetically have a reach of 100, which is 80 more than you had before.

Of course these figures can multiply greatly when using social media campaigns or more experienced promoters - but what a simple and effective idea. So number 5 on the list of ways that having a partner or voluntary assistant can help you, is that they can expand your network. When your network grows, it opens more opportunities and more resources become available to you. It starts though, with getting one person. Just 1 person to help you is all you need to start in building your team. Take some of that weight off your shoulders and find someone to be your partner this week.

Action step: Make sure the previous steps have been undertaken and make sure that you now have a voluntary assistant or partner that can help you with some aspect of your music. And just a thought: be aware of how you can help them too. We all like a little help sometimes.

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