

C A R M E N M O R I N

Music Mindset Podcast - Episode 2: Limiting Beliefs - The TRUTH about Short Term Commitments to Music Lessons

Episode 2 Transcript

Hi everyone. Thanks so much for being here. I'm Carmen Morin, and this is the Music Mindset Podcast, and we are onto episode number two. I am so excited to keep the ball rolling. We are onto our week two of our podcast. I want to thank everyone for all of the messages and support and just feedback and conversation about last week's episode. As you know, we were talking about my absolute favorite exercise that I have students and student families do when they start lessons, which is the clarity exercise, and I've heard from people that they will be giving this to their students when they start lessons or people who maybe gave up on themselves and lessons who wish they would have had something on paper like what we did. So I'm so happy if it's been a value to you and I'm so thankful for your conversation, connection and support.

So I also want to take a moment and just give a little shout out because I have received my very first podcast review, and I wanted to share it with you here today. So the review comes from Jessica Erlendson, a music teacher and also music yogi. I've seen on her social media and her pages. She is not only an experienced music teacher, but also a yogi who does beautiful yoga therapy work. So I've seen that and admire it quite a bit. So Jessica took the time to write in. Thank you so much and I want to share with you. She wrote, "I am a lifetime musician, raised by the jazz pianist and composer, Bob Erlendson, and have been teaching music for 20 years. I feel very fortunate to have listened to this podcast and printing off the worksheet on Clarity in the goal of learning a musical instrument."

"When I showed it to my bass player and opera singer husband, Martin Van Remmen], he pointed out how this sheet can be used for any goal. We talked about how it applies directly to weight training, for example. If you want to get strong as your tip of the iceberg goal, you will need to be prepared to feel tired and discouraged along the way. We both think that Arnold Schwarzenegger would approve. (That is so great to hear. I sure hope so!) During an interview, we watched Arnold said that his goals were achieved by visualizing them clearly and knowing they would happen. Carmen is offering her professional peers and amazing tool and I hope that others will take advantage of this worksheet to guide their students towards success." I am so thankful, Jessica, that you took the time to give that feedback, share that feedback, and I'm so happy if it can help you with the way that you approach any challenges or work with your students as well.

So thank you again, Jessica, for writing that in. If you are new to the podcast, I would love for you to take a moment and subscribe on whatever podcast platform you like to listen to this on and remember that my show notes and transcripts will always be available after I publish my episode at carmenmorin.com/podcast. So let's get started and talk about this week's episode, and this week I wanted to talk about limiting beliefs. I'll tell you limiting beliefs are something that

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we all have. I know that I can name off the top of my head several that I have. I am terrible with directions, I am not very good with sports where I can't stand on my own two feet. All these things that I have truly believed for years and years, and as I've become older and hopefully a little bit wiser, I've been able to realize that maybe this isn't fact, maybe this is something that I'm holding onto because of some kind of experience I've had.

So we should all be familiar with limiting beliefs, and I'm sure that we are all aware that we have them. Last week we talked a lot about clarity, and I let you know that I wanted to talk about a very sneaky sentence that often comes up when I speak to students or parents who are beginning lessons, and the sentence is, "I'm not really sure if I want to commit to music lessons. I just want to try them out. I just want to give them a try just for a couple of weeks, maybe a couple months, and see if there's any talent, see what happens, and then I can decide from there." It sounds harmless and totally reasonable, doesn't it? But I have found over the years this one little sentence and sentiment can plant the seed that can really snowball into big challenges down the road. Limiting beliefs are powerful.

If you've ever seen the image and heard the story of the elephant and the tiny rope, and I will see if I can find an image and put it in the show notes for this episode, but it's an elephant, a big glorious elephant, healthy elephant who is tied with a tiny rope to a tiny stake. But because he believes that he is stuck and confined, he is, and that's how powerful our beliefs can be. So limiting beliefs are everywhere and we are certainly aware of them. But what I want to talk about today are some of the limiting beliefs that you may not realize that you have that might take a little bit of digging. I thought that this was an important thing to talk about for our podcast because as we are getting started talking a lot about mindset, I find that the number one thing that challenges people when they're starting to learn a musical instrument or limits what they're willing to do or the work they're willing to put in are these limiting beliefs that sometimes they do and sometimes they do not even realize that they have.

That's what I want to talk about today. So the idea for this episode actually started with another content post that I made a couple of years ago, and it started as a blog post and went to a video. It was something that I wanted to share with students because I realized it was a question that kept coming up. So I created a piece of content that we would be able to send to students at our school. It was talking about some of the most frequently asked questions, and the title of the blog and the video was The Truth about Short-Term Commitments to Music Lessons. So I went on to explain that often when families contact us hoping to try lessons, there is interest and they want to see if they will like it or if their child will like it and they want to find out and see if they have any natural ability or if they have any talent.

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I always like to say, I of course understand the concept of wanting to be exposed to various activities and various skills, especially when you're a child, but equally important when you are an adult. The thing is, is that the mentality of short-term commitment is in direct conflict with the mindset that you need to really enjoy this type of training. If you're really working on learning a musical instrument in a formal setting, that short-term commitment to just giving it a try and waiting to find out if there's any natural talent or ability that shines through is in direct conflict with the learning process that you need to be able to go through and that you'll really grow through. So I always like to share this and I always make sure to be clear, it really doesn't matter to me if someone studies for three years or 30 years.

It's actually the mindset of the long-term commitment that is necessary to adopt the habits that will lead to enjoyment and success. So this was the premise and the content of my article and my video, of really trying to help families to understand, students and families, how important it is to have that long-term commitment mindset, even if it's not something that you're going to do for 20 years, that mindset that says you have faith in the process is really what you need. So I always like to say, consider the fact that the mind learns to play a musical instrument much in the same way that you learn a language. So if you were wanting to become bilingual, you need to hear and practice that language daily. We know you have to be immersed in it in some level. You have to gradually grow the ability to express yourself through that language, and it takes practice, patience and commitment.

That is all necessary to learning how to communicate through an instrument, which is why the idea of just trying out music lessons really doesn't work. So we would talk about it and when we compare it to if you wanted to go into a French immersion school, here we have many of those in Canada, and you wanted to learn to speak a second language, you wouldn't go and try and do that for three months or six months and then wait for some kind of sign that maybe you are able to learn a second language, and then commit. You would either make the decision that you're going to commit, that you believe that you can do this or not. Obviously, down the road if something came up or you had learning challenges or something that really made it clear that it wasn't for you, you might stop that language. But you wouldn't just try to learn that language for three months and then decide whether or not it was something you were capable of. Right? So when we put it into that framework, it becomes a lot easier to understand.

Learning to play an instrument is a discipline of delayed gratification, which means the more that you develop your skills, the more you'll enjoy it. But in a study that followed students in their outcomes on their instrument from age eight all the way to high school, they did a study where both groups practice the same amount of time each day. The group who had a long-term commitment mindset outperformed the group with a short-term commitment mindset by 400%.

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They did the same amount of practice, they had the same amount of lessons, but those who really believed that this was something that they could and would be able to do, they outperformed the other group by 400%, which is why these limiting beliefs really dig in deep and finding out if you have them and where you have them is so worth your time if you are currently pursuing musical training or if you're thinking about musical training, and of course, if you're a teacher, being able to identify these limiting beliefs when they come through from your students, being able to really guide them through that.

So I always tell families and students that if it really is something that you just want to have exposure to, there are many ways to have exposure to music and music enjoyment without actually beginning instrumental lessons, because that will require this long-term commitment mindset. Like I said, even if you don't do it for decades and 10 plus years, it's that long-term commitment mindset that you need to have to really work through and get the most out of the process. So this was the content that I shared with my students and my families, and it was so helpful to so many. So many of them were able to really walk through and understand about the language learning process and it was very helpful to families that would reach out and really to identify that maybe they weren't ready to start formal lessons, and that's okay. But a funny thing started happening after I created and shared the article and the post.

What I found when I started talking and digging deeper with our students who were expressing that they really just wanted to try it out and not commit, when I began digging deeper and really finding where this came from, I almost always found that it stemmed from a self-limiting belief that they were living in. So the first story would be from an adult student, [Ginny 00:00:11:23], who worked with me for years and did beautifully in her lessons, and then later moved away to the US. She started in her lessons and was very much of this mindset of, "I just want to try it out, I'm not necessarily going to take it. Seriously, I just want to see what happens and try, and if it turns out that I have some potential there, then I'll start coming to lessons more seriously." I kept asking her and having this conversation with her, you can't have these short-term commitments if you really want to see progress and you really want to enjoy it. You really have to shift your mindset.

So in digging deeper and trying to find out why she really wanted to have one foot in and one foot out of the process, it led me to learn that when she was younger, her older sibling was playing and was quite strong and she was brushed off as the sibling that didn't have musical talent as much and was thrown into sports more. Deep down, she really adopted this as she doesn't have that talent and really had adopted the belief that she was the athletic one and her brother was the musical and artistic one. If we're parents or we all have parents, we know how sometimes these things can stick with us, that maybe a comment was made. At one point, she

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said it was probably when she was about seven years old, but it really stuck with her that she was not the musical one, she was the athletic one, and so there she went on that path and she continued with this belief, and by the time she had come to see me, she was an adult.

Her kids were almost off to university, so it had been decades later. As we worked through this conversation, we realized that the reason she was so hesitant to really commit to that long-term mindset that we both knew would set her up for way more enjoyment and fulfillment from the process, the reason why she was hesitant to really own that is because she was holding onto a limiting belief, and therefore, that belief was really protecting her. If she can be one foot in and one foot out, then she never really has to own that she's trying and really wanting to learn because that leaves her vulnerable the same way she may have felt vulnerable when she was trying to learn as a young child, and someone made her feel that this wasn't for her.

I've seen something similar, where ... Of course, any parent who's pursuing music education for their child is always doing so with the best intentions. It always comes from a place of love. So I always like to ask certain questions just to, again, dig deeper, and in speaking to parents, I actually hear it fairly often at our school and parents will say in a very loving way, they will just matter of fact say, "Well, no there's not really ... I don't think there's any serious talent there. We just want her to learn how to play or him to learn how to play." I see where that comes from, where they don't want to place pressure on them to have talent. This is something for another episode entirely because I believe talent is built brick by brick, and so anyone can cultivate and create and build talent. So anyways, that's for another episode. But when they come in the door and they are already certain that their child won't have much talent in that area, usually that's another cue for me that they are probably sitting on a limiting belief.

That's just the way that it works for all of us, is that we tend to share our beliefs and we project our beliefs. So if they would say right off the bat, "No, I don't think that there's any talent there, but let's just learn how to play and just ... for enjoyment and to augment our skills and our experiences." But when they say that right away, I have learned that very often it comes from a place where they might feel vulnerable trying to explore this new area of learning, or they likely don't have experience in music themselves, so it seems so unknown, how can they even know what to expect? Or they might have had, again, a negative experience with their own music lessons. They were maybe told that they didn't have talent, so they will expect and project that same thing on their child. Again, this always just comes from a place of observation, never from a place of judgment.

But what I have learned is that when these limiting statements come out, they can almost always be connected to a limiting belief that is a few layers deep, and these limiting beliefs will

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change the way you approach your challenges. Those that really have faith in the process that they are capable of learning and that they have just as much of a seed of talent within themselves as anyone else, is going to approach their learning process and challenges when they come differently. We know that. As you know, I love a good exercise and I love being able to put pen to paper. The worksheet that I have attached for this episode is what I use in conversation when I walked through parents and students, adult students who are expressing a limiting belief that is constraining their ability to learn or augment their skills or grow further, and this is the conversation that I walk them through. So I want to be very clear. This exercise is not about me trying to change anyone's beliefs.

You are the only person who knows your entire experience and what your goals are, so this exercise isn't about me trying to change your beliefs. All this exercise does and this conversation does is it helps, I have found, to identify where you might be living through a limiting belief, and then it's up to you whether or not you want to continue taking that on or really examine that closely. As you know, I love a good worksheet because I just believe in the power of putting pen to paper and putting your thoughts into written words. I also know that in order to change anything, you first must be able to identify it. Okay, so let's go through this worksheet and this is our worksheet to find out which of our challenges are fact, rooted in facts, and which ones may be internal limiting beliefs, and this is just something, again, to build awareness so that we are always peeling that onion a few more layers. This will come up naturally in conversation if you are a teacher and you're really touching base with your students.

But if you're doing this exercise, a great way to start it and a great way I've seen it done, is you just start listing your challenges. So I want you to not think too much about it, but go ahead and just do a brain dump on paper of what the challenges are to learning a musical instrument. The next step in the process is to take a look at this list of challenges, of reasons why you may have not pursued learning a musical instrument or why you're holding yourself back when you're studying a musical instrument, and I want you to try to split up which ones of these may be fact and which ones may be an internal limiting belief that you're living in. So a fact example would be something like you don't have a musical instrument. That is a fact that would be holding you back.

But a limiting belief might be something like you're not coordinated enough or you don't have anything to express artistically or musically. So what I want you to do is I want you to take your pen and you can cross out a great big line through any of the statements on your list that you are sure are facts. Then you can take a look at your list and you can choose maybe two or three of those items that are remaining, and I want you to change them into definitive I statements. The reason why I want you to change them into a definitive statement is because limiting beliefs

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are sneaky by nature. Sometimes we're really not sure where they even came from, but somehow they've woven their way into the way we think and into the way we view what we're capable of. So by making it into a definitive statement, you can really be able to examine it closely and know once and for all whether or not it's something that you agree with or if it's something that's actually there holding you back.

Then finally in the last step, we have our chance to examine the statement. It asks you once more if the statement is absolutely true. If it is a no, then that means it is just your belief, which means you get to examine it with three very key questions. First one, what does believing this statement protect you from experiencing? Often, this is protecting us from experiencing vulnerability, putting ourselves out there, maybe past pain with trying to develop new skills in this area. Next, what is the action that the statement stops you from taking? So there's something that, by having this barrier of this limiting belief, what does it stop you from doing? What is that next step that you don't get to take because you have this belief? Lastly, what would change about you or the way you approach your musical goals if you did not have this belief?

So if you did truly believe that you had something to express artistically and musically, or if you really did believe that you have just as much of a seed of talent within you as anybody else could, what would change about you and the way that you would strive for your musical goals if you didn't have that limiting belief? So as I said before, this exercise is really not about changing anyone's beliefs. What this is about is trying to identify and pinpoint where we might be getting stuck and how that might be impacting the way that we're approaching our musical goals and our goals in all other areas where we may face challenges. If you are on social media, I am on Instagram [@carmenmorinpiano](#), and of course, I have my Facebook page as well and I would love to connect and hear from you. Next week, we are going to be talking about the five top mistakes that people make when they are beginning music lessons.

So I want to talk about five things that have come up over the years that I see can be adjusted at the beginning of your journey, and I know that that will help you lots. So thank you so much again for listening. I'm so thankful to have this connection with you. Reach out anytime with anyone questions you have. Otherwise, I will look forward to chatting with you more next week. Thanks.