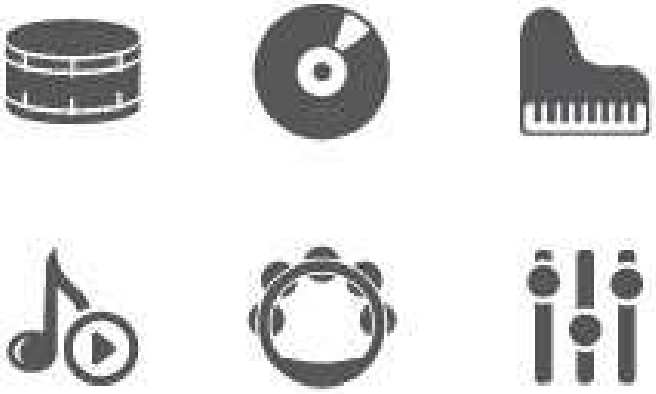
THE WORSHIP MUSICIAN



10 Habits Of A Healthy Worship Team

Jon Skaggs

THE WORSHIP MUSICIAN



Ebook Series

Basics and Core Essentials

Approaching Your Instrument Professionally

10 Reasons Why Rehearsals Are Important

10 Habits Of A Healthy Worship Team

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1: A Worship Team That Prays Together

It might be one of those things you hear often. But prayer has deep roots in everything spiritually healthy. I'm often involved with a lot of worship teams as a guest drummer. The spiritual preparation for leading worship in some churches is just non-existent. Spiritual preparation is necessary in every worship team.

The irony of this is that I often see prayer involved in a lot of mainstream acts as well. Albeit, it seems most are praying to something like the universe or the god of performing. Whether this is generic or not isn't the point. It’s the discipline. Some of these mainstream acts have more discipline in prayer than worship teams. Obviously, the difference in the Christian’s prayer is that we’re praying to the God who created the Universe and all things. We’re praying for focus and not for the power of focus. Our worship team prayers should understand that our prayers can sometimes look and seem like any stage act pre-show prayer. Our prayers need to differ. We are asking for the mainline to God. Our asking is to be in union with the Holy Spirit’s wishes. We want to allow the Holy Spirit to work. We do not wish to quench his presence.





Prayer is union. Your worship team will suffer some frustrations and difficulties. What you need is prayer in truth. Prayer in the truth of Jesus Christ. Prayer that worship is to God the trinity. Prayer that your team will not stand in the way of the Holy Spirit's work. A worship team with the right motives in prayer will be in essence a healthy worship team. A team that seeks Almighty God to lead many into to worship him in spirit and in truth. Everything else, missed notes, or wrong lyrics, won't matter if you're following God's promptings.

2: Rehearsal starts on time

There’s more to this than meets the eye.

It’s the motive. The aspiration. Sure there will be some who can’t make a rehearsal for family needs or work going late. But a rehearsal must go on.

Rehearsing is a lot more than rehearsing music. Rehearsal is about the striving for excellence. The need for greater community. A team that can't wait to be better at playing the selected songs as best as they can.





A rehearsal that starts on time sets a precedent. It tells everyone in a worship team that we are a team that values the downbeat. A worship team striving to give their congregation the best of their talent.

3: A Worship Leader Who Leads On And Off The Stage

Maybe it's an email to your worship team a week. A visit to a team member's home when they've lost a family member. Going to dinner with your band and/or your vocal team. Leading a small devotional on Sunday mornings.

These are all examples of some things that mean a lot to not people in your worship team. They matter to everyone.

So why not do these things all the time?

Leadership is a word we hear a lot in churches these days. There’s thousands of books on the topic and there’s just as many sermons and master classes as well. But what is it? And why does it pertain to a healthy worship team?

It is in fact so big and so important that our Lord Jesus Christ gave many sermons on the subject himself. Maybe not the topic of leadership. But what it means to govern yourself and the importance that others see in that. The Apostle Paul wrote about the very act of leadership many times. In fact, there were many early churches spinning out of control because leadership was weak and rudderless.





There’s a big responsibility of a leader. There are so many optics to it and it demands you to build trust with your team. The spiritual health of your worship team demands that your own spiritual health be in top form. This is a tall task but it’s a task that goes with much help and strength from the Holy Spirit.

How many times to you ask God for help you in your weaknesses? How many times do you ask to be delivered from temptation?

Being the leader that God wants us to be will not be the most comfortable task. It will be humbling and challenging. But in the end, you and your team will benefit from your striving to be the best as a spiritual leader.

4: Do you pray? No, Like really pray.

You sometimes do it before a meal, before a game, and before you lead your worship service. But do you really pray?

There are many people who pray. We pray in distress and pray is thanksgiving. But praying to open the floodgates of our hearts? To move unseen mountains? To heal the sick?

These things are the miraculous. These things demand more than token prayer. They demand an unwavering alliance with with your heart, mind, and soul to be aligned with Jesus.

Could you imagine what God would do through your worship time with a focus like this? It would be uncanny. No, it would be refreshing to you, your team, your leadership, and your congregation.

So, do you really pray? Go Deeper.



5: Everyone Comes Prepared.

That’s not to say everyone will always be prepared. But let’s not set anyone up for failure. A worship leader needs to make sure everyone is equipped to be prepared.

Organization can be tough for some and not so much for others. This why we do those tedious personality tests. We simply need to find out if we are up for organizing our worship sets or if we need lots of help. There’s no shame in getting help. You have enough to do anyways.

These days we have many tools to help worship teams prepare. I have gone over the use of Planning Center in previous tutorials of mine. If you've never heard or used this incredible software to plan your worship service and organize your set. Feel free to visit this link to look it over and see if it's right for you https://get.planningcenteronline.com/services.

This is just one of the ways that you can organize your team and be on the same page. I believe planning center is perfect for that. Getting everyone on the same page decreases the risk of setting anyone up for failure. You also have a chance to communicate with everyone directly. I highly suggest this planning software. Help your team come to rehearsals and services prepared. A worship leader will make the extra effort to communicate and make sure everyone is looking at the exact same information.

Opening Praise & Celebration		
6:00p	1:10	**Countdown**
6:01.10p	4	**Alive Again [Bb]**
6:05.10p	4:30	**The Lord Reigns [C]**
6:09.40p	5	**Welcome/Vision/Prayer - Fred/David**
Praise - The Name		
6:14.40p	5	**Our God**
6:19.40p	5	**Majesty [C]**
6:24.40p	5	**Your Name [A]**
6:29.40p	8	**Overcome [A]**
Repentance & Dedication		
6:37.40p	4:10	**Just Worship - Remix**
6:41.50p	5	**Reading & Vison - Mark**
6:46.50p	6	**Father will You Come [A]**

6: There's A Passion For Excellence, Not Perfection.

In my early days as a music student. I regularly practiced my trumpet on a difficult piece of music. It was a piece that I nearly perfected but always fell flat in competitions. That bothered me. I thought it was perfect. But in fact, it was "near" perfect. Or so I thought.

Excellence isn't perfection. It shouldn't be seen as the same thing. As a music student I was striving for perfection instead of excellence. Excellence is such a different mindset. It isn't the absence of the attributes of perfection. But it's a goal that makes more practical sense for an everyday musician.

As a worship leader and worship musician. I've learned how to treat striving for perfection vs. striving for excellence. Striving for perfection is something I do in my flesh. Striving for excellence is something I do when I dig for wisdom and pursue God. I've often found that we can do a lot of both in worship. Perfection is that mark we miss daily and strive for. But it's something in our minds that will always defeat our expectations and make us feel like we've failed.

Excellence isn't perfect. It is an attitude that exudes a humble confidence. Excellence lifts us into realistic results versus what we expect out of pursuing perfection.

When leading a worship team. Excellence comes wrapped up in another great quality. Patience. This is an attribute that is needed and a gift of the Holy Spirit. Dealing with others who don't see the same goal as you will require it. You will be in the trenches of realistic goals. Pursue excellence and not perfection.





Here's a great and brief read by Pastor Mark DeJesus on Perfection vs. Excellence

"Many who battle perfectionism, may hear a thought screaming, “But doesn’t God want our best?”
Of course He does. The problem is that legalism has entered and placed a performance pressure on us that burdens us with standards that torment rather than empower us. Rather than releasing us into daily rest, we become driven to achieve. Yet that driveness is never satisfied, so contentment is never cultivated. We have to be very careful that we do not sacrifice contentment and inward peace on the alter of producing what we have been trained see to as “perfect” results.
So how do I know if I am in perfectionistic bondage or just simply being perfected as the Bible teaches? What helps me to know if I am following bondage or simply walking in excellence?
Perfectionism needs to be contrasted from biblical excellence. Excellence as we often define it in Turning Hearts is giving the best with what you have and where you are at. Under the mindset of excellence, we give all or ourselves, but we are not under bondage and torment in the process. There is a different spirit behind perfectionism than walking in true biblical excellence."

7: Constructive Critique

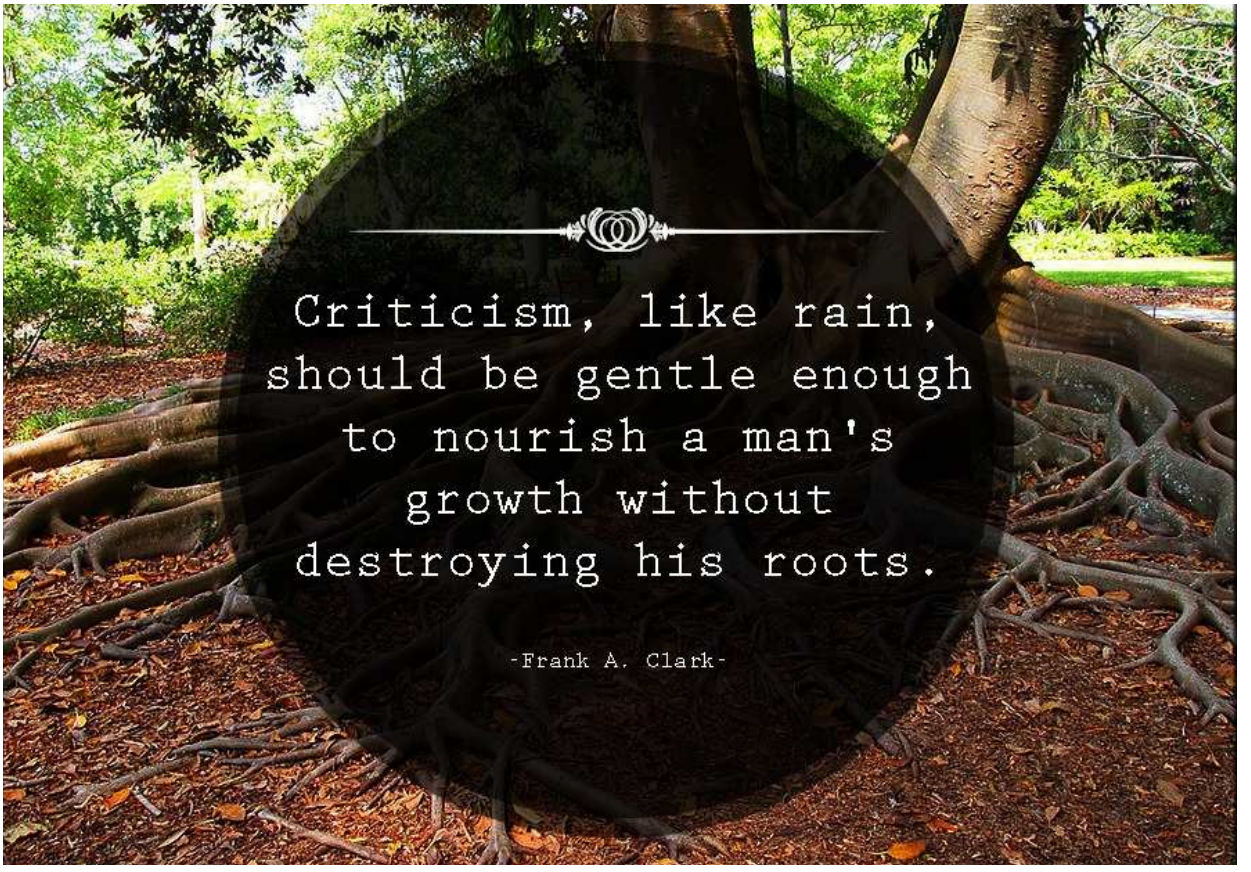
First of all, it’s difficult to critique anyone. You really have to tread lightly if you play in or lead a volunteer band.

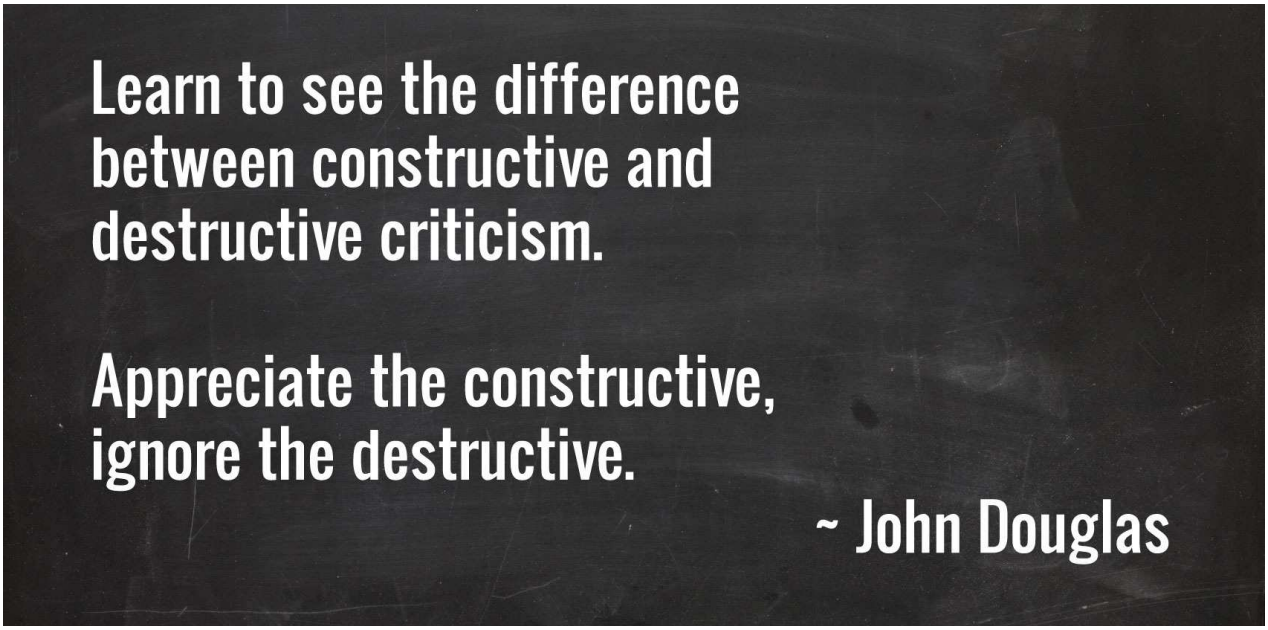
My experience with critique, both negative and positive, has been very educational. I took a lot of notes when it was handed to me or I had to dish it out. I have been around a lot of it in the music industry and as a drummer in churches both big and small.

Critique is handed out by a lot of people in music circles. There are some who take it upon themselves to be the one to fix everyone and everything. It is a challenge for some worship leaders to deal with. It is also something, if not directly dealt with, becomes a negative experience for another worship team member. It could be real annoyance in a worship team if not handled correctly or in a timely manner.

Point number 6 talked about perfection vs. excellence. That really translates into this point in a seamless way. Critique can come from both sides of the heart. The negative and the positive sides. And even if you do it in the most humble way, it can still be a major buzz kill for someone in a worship team.

Constructive Critique, even though it's constructive, should be handled with some kid gloves.





Critique should come from the worship leader and/or an appointed band leader. The critique should be constructive and gentle if verbalized. It is important that critique should be handled this way and come from a person of leadership.

Some ways to handle constructive critique are as follows:

- Hold an early sectional with your guitar players, rhythm section (Drums/Bass/Guitar), Vocal Team, and/or Acoustic Guitar players.

- If you or the worship leader hear something right after the worship service. Tell the worship leader what the problem might be. Handle it immediately and don't let it become gossip.

- If you're the worship leader and hear a problem then handle the critique immediately. Don't let it linger. Handle the critique while the problem might be fresh and still able to remember.

- Always handle critique gently. Remember the proverb - "A harsh word stirs up anger but a gentle answer turns away wrath." - Proverbs 15:1

8: Feels Like Family

I never turn down food in the green room brought by a vocal team member. Almost never turn down an invite by a band member for coffee in between services. And I definitely don't say no to my worship leader when he asks if I'd like to go to a movie with him sometime during the week.

A healthy worship team feels like family. Some of us are more hospitable than others. If you don't have any team members that exhibit or have that this crucial gift then I suggest you audition for it. It will save you and your worship team. That inviting and warmness is not just southern hospitality. It's an attribute of the Holy Spirit.





I could tell many stories of the different worship teams I've been grateful to be apart of. Some of them great experiences. The not so good experiences always dealt with this one nagging issue. I didn't meet one friendly soul.

This is important. This builds community and lifelong friendships. These simple things can take your worship team to new heights of feeling connected to your church and to God. The family of God isn't a cold place. It's a place of community and warmth. Remember to reach out and make strides even when it's not comfortable. Being a healthy worship team is so much more than the music we make on stage.

9: The Green Room Is True Community

If you have a green room (most churches do these days) then you're accustomed to being around the whole team at some point. The Green Room is a busy place for a church worship team. And let's be honest, most of us listen to the sermon backstage and some of us don't. But as sometimes this is the case. I felt as though I was participating in community.

Ok, so we should all listen to the sermon at some point during our time in the Green Room. For some churches, especially the churches that have 4 or more services. You will have your chance. But in the other instances there should be some time for great community building.





In some of the best community building times of the green room. I was under great leadership from a great worship leader. The worship leader would always encourage hearing the sermon at least once and then never let the team slip from a weekend of meaning from then on. Those were the church worship teams I was drawn too. I needed that. I worked in strenuous jobs in the music industry and yearned for a church of substance. I have found that this green room community was key. It was a time to reconnect with believers and talk through struggles and real life circumstances.

The Green Room is true community when Christ is truly at the center. There is just no other way. Don't let the Green Room conversation slip. Let it be building to your team's life.

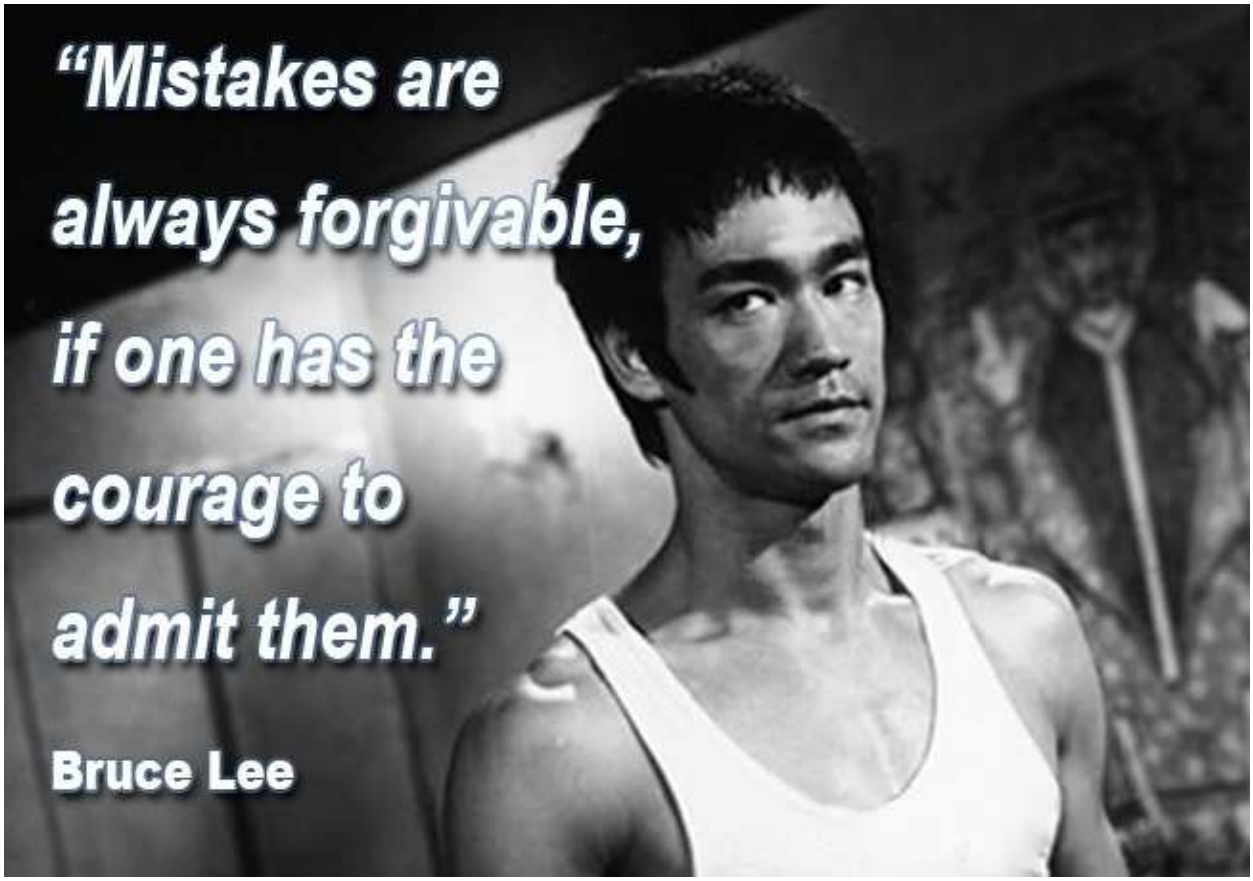
10: Admitting Mistakes

Nobody likes to be around someone who never thinks they’re wrong. At least I never have. I can't speak for everyone.

That's the thing about admitting mistakes though. It eliminates this attitude. It helps others know that you're not there to be perfect. You're not infallible. You're like everyone else. Imperfect.

Humility is a very important theme throughout the Bible. It's a theme that is taught through many different lives in the Old Testament, the parables of Jesus, and the writings of Paul. We see it's importance because admitting we're wrong takes an attitude of humility. It takes a will to make yourself less known to make the Father known.





Being a musician can sometimes be the hardest test of humility. Admitting a mistake is admitting you might have been the person who made the 2nd service sound like a train wreck. Humility never says we're infallible. Although Christ was, he was still prone to its temptations. He was tested and he triumphed. This might look easy but it simply is not.

Humility is a test to every musician. Being a musician in the worship team or being the worship leader will test your will. The trials will make you better. It will make your team better. But always remember to admit mistakes. Be humble if asked to change music up on the fly. Nobody is immune to mistakes. It's how we respond when someone points them out.

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