Dodging the Fame Game

Songwriting Workshop

Series 1, Session 13

By Andy Park

FIND A GREATER PURPOSE THAN FAME or APPROVAL

We all develop our style partly by **copying other artists**. That's how everyone learns and grows. But longing for recognition is just a distraction. When you focus on recognition, you're not as creative. You're worried about what others are thinking about you.

Jennifer Egan reflects on the impact of winning the Pulitzer Prize on her future writing:
The **attention and approval** I've been getting for *Goon Squad* — the very public moments of winning the Pulitzer and the other prizes — is exactly the opposite of the very private pleasure of writing. And **it's dangerous**. Thinking that I'll get this kind of love again, that getting it should be my goal, would lead me to **creative decisions** that would **undermine me and my work**. **I've never sought that approval, which is all the more reason that I don't want to start now.**

Maybe you've struggled with the issue of **worrying about what people think of your work.** It's common to all humans to want to be loved and appreciated; we want people to like our art.

The typical **DEFINITION of finding SUCCESS** in the music industry is one of working hard to stand out in the crowd and **make it to the top.** But performers like Bob Dylan, who are at "the top" see behind the façade of fame:

"It's not to anybody's best interest to think about how they will be perceived tomorrow. It hurts you in the long run." **Bob Dylan**

Thinking about other people's opinions of you will hurt you

In my years of playing in front of large audiences, I found that as soon as my attention started to turn towards the accolades of people, I could never get enough of that to satisfy me. Living for fame is a shallow existence. So, I like to think of writing and performing songs as a GIFT I AM GIVING to people.

Set your sights on a higher purpose for your art.

The **root issue** here is: What's your **purpose for writing**? And an even deeper root issue is what's your **purpose for living**?

The highest purpose for writing and living is to LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE.

Each of us is **UNIQUE** – both in personality and artistry. Each of us has a **UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE OTHERS** for good. And, each of us has a **UNIQUE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.** So, do the best you can with the skills, ideas, time and energy that you've been given.

The very famous singer/songwriter, **NEIL YOUNG**, said:

"I'll never be Bob Dylan. He's the master."

Neil Young was not trying to be Bob; he was just being himself. There will always be someone more gifted, more famous than you.

Who do you want to be? Just be **you.** Work hard, Strive to be excellent, set your sights on accomplishing as much as you can, but ultimately FIND A PURPOSE for living and writing that's GREATER THAN FAME.

Love and honor God, and use your musical gifts to love and serve the people that God has put in your life.