

Drummers: Without “Why” You Have No Power

“This is how you come to me: without why, without power, another link in the chain” is what the Merovingian said to Morpheus, Neo, and Trinity in “The Matrix Reloaded.” How true I’ve found this out to be in my careers as a Civil Engineering Hydrologist, Senior Programmer Analyst in healthcare information technology, and playing and teaching drums & percussion to over 4700 students since 1998. If you don’t understand WHY you are doing something, you become just another link in the chain, one of sustain yourself to reach your goals nor the ability lack the “fire within” or passion to go where few hamster wheel of activity that you forget why you to your destination, like the hamster, you end up going in circles. Oh, you may be busy, but busy going nowhere fast! I’ve found that I have to remind myself frequently of “my main things” so that I can “keep the main things the main things.” Otherwise, I can easily fall prey to the “tyranny of the urgent” and end up “majoring in the minors.”



the many minions, and have no inner power to to convince others to help you succeed. You will men dare tread. You can get so caught up in the started and where you are heading. Instead of getting

So, why do you drum? Maybe it’s time to really reflect on why you started, what your goals are, and what will keep you practicing every day until you get there. What will help you climb up the “hill of discipline” so that you can enjoy the incredible view from the top? The logical reasons in your mind might not be able to sustain you, so look deep within your heart. Write this down on a 3 x 5 card and put it on your music stand or somewhere you’ll read it each day. This will build a resounding “YES” inside that will help you to say “NO” to all the distractions that would keep you from your drumming. Invest in yourself by investing in your dreams! **Maybe telling you why I’ve stuck with drumming 46 years will encourage you.** When I started out at 8 years old, I would have thought you were from Mars if you said, “Mike, you will end up having played in 35 bands & orchestras, and teaching over 4500 students through: 8 public and 2 music schools, 4 music stores, 25 community organizations, festivals, camps, expos, drum circles, drum publications, 9 DVDs, and 126 online videos.” Mars!

I started because I was amazed watching Buddy Rich play on Johnny Carson’s Tonight Show. Then when I saw Ringo Starr smiling from ear to ear while playing the drums for the Beatles, I said: “I gotta learn how to do that!” My friend and I would make cool beats with our hands on the school desks. The teacher said: “Take it to the band room,” so we joined band! By the next year I was lead drummer and the school band made a 45 rpm record at a local recording studio. This absolutely blew my mind! I convinced my parents to buy me a drumset for \$200 and give me private lessons, but I sure wasn’t a natural. I struggled and would cry because I just couldn’t get the hang of the drumset. So I would argue and fight with my parents because I didn’t want to practice, but they closed the door, making it crystal clear I would either practice or be grounded or whooped if I kept fighting with them. Within a month of daily practice I started sounding better and looking forward to getting home from school to play the drums. I built my own giant speakers from Radio Shack parts and would play along to a few records I could afford or to one song after another on the radio. I got pretty good at faking it! Thanks to my parents and teachers I got over the “hump of discipline” and started enjoying “the fruit of my labor.” I mowed lawns for a summer and bought a \$1000 drumset that I still have! As a freshmen, I auditioned for the award-winning Moon Valley High School Advanced Band, and for the first time ever, they let two of us in! A senior gave me inspiring drum lessons and I became a section leader the next year. All the fun music performances made four years fly by despite how hard getting nearly straight-A’s in college prep classes was. A music scholarship helped pay for two years of college and my academic scholarships helped with my other three years to finish with two degrees. Later I nearly lost my life working through the intense stress of two technical careers with subsequent health scares, but thank God I came back to drumming! I started teaching through CoreBeat full-time in 1998.

Drumming is the only activity that has consistently given me joy, and the more I give myself over to it, the more joyful I become. I found that almost anyone will get good at something they consistently give time to, and that the better you get the more you enjoy it, which makes you want to do it more! The key is to start, make it a small part of each day, and get a teacher to coach you along the “shortest path” and keep you from quitting! **I hope that I can help you reach your goals for drumming.** I teach all a kinds of drums & percussion and drumset at Guitar Center and my home drum studio. **Give me a call: Mike Burris (520) 392-9093, Facebook/azCoreBeat, Facebook/azKrakatoa.**