

Cultivating Happiness as A Private Music Studio Teacher

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Music Teacher Quick Journaling *Reflect on your last year of teaching. In 30 seconds, jot down:*

Top 3 Sources of Stress in Your Studio

Top 3 Helpful Resources for Your Teaching

Top 3 Fulfilling Moments as a Teacher

Top 3 Challenges in Your Teaching/Studio

If you could wave a magic wand and fix one thing in your studio, what would it be:

Look ahead to the 2025-2026 Term. In 30 seconds, jot down:

Top 3 Goals for Your Studio

3 Things You Want to Stop Doing/Do Less of in Your Studio

Your Top 3 Musical Goals for Yourself (not necessarily related to teaching)

Top 3 Goals for Your Personal Life

Name 3 Colleagues You Could Call to Ask for Help/Guidance/Troubleshooting in your Studio

Overwork/Underpaid Problem

- Too many students, too few breaks, schedule too tight, many short lessons crammed together
- Nighttime/weekend teaching. When is your social & personal life?
- Extra-studio expectations: orchestra concert, school musical, etc. Do you have to go?
- Summer slump, variable income
- Cancellations and makeups
- Extra work outside of lesson time: lesson planning, emails,
- Being your own tax preparer, accountant, secretary, scheduler in your "off" (unpaid) hours.
- Can anyone really teach 40 hours of lessons a week and not burn out?
- Setting rates, raising rates, what are others charging?
- Travel to/from lessons/studio locations

Interpersonal Drama Problem

- Parent/guardian interactions, student interactions, communication, expectations
- Are students practicing?

- Emails/texts/calls
- Student/teacher fit, what is your niche?
- Repetitive curriculum, boredom...or...every student needs something different! Overwhelm!
- Supporting students as whole people—not just teaching music! When is this time for a therapist?
- Money conversations
- Is it my fault when a student leaves my studio?
- Training others (and ourselves) about our boundaries—being consistent
- *Resentment = a signal that you're over-extended. You cannot teach well if you are overextended.*
- *Boundaries = what give you the ability to bring your best, the bandwidth to have flexibility when last-minute needs/changes/emergencies inevitably come up.*

Loneliness Problem

- All clients, no coworkers
- Other teachers – colleagues or competition? “If I tell them my rate, will they think I’m overcharging/undercharging? Will they steal students from me?”

Reclaim Power Over Your Finances & Schedule

- Simplify & automate scheduling & billing- studio policies, payment/scheduling software, rethink reschedules/makeups (no makeups, monthly group class in lieu of makeups, etc)
- Use lesson time for most/all activities
- Schedule admin time and/or hire admin/accounting help
- Pay yourself for vacations, breaks, incentivize summer lessons and/or offer special packages
- Re-evaluate who, when, where you teach
- Normalize regular tuition increases & fees for additional activities as needed
- System for supporting students in non-studio activities
- Building studio culture: achievement bulletin board/blog, end of term party, service project (coat drive, etc)

Set Interpersonal Boundaries

- Train yourself & others on your off hours/days. Make use of email/text scheduling.
- Clarify your niche. Not every student needs to be in your studio. Who do you refer out to?
- Systems for responding to emails, student onboarding, etc. Drafts of sample emails, Google forms.
- Standardize or shake up your curriculum when needed and/or ask colleagues for rep/curriculum ideas
- Kindness in the studio – listening for what is working as well as things to “fix” = a mindset shift for YOU for more enjoyable teaching
- Reconnecting with your 1st memories of musical joy

Connect With Colleagues & Feed Your Musical Goals

- Professional groups
- Coffee dates, mastermind groups
- Colleagues, not competitors. Supporting others leads to being supported.
- What is your creative outlet? What are your personal goals, hobbies, needs?

Books:

Burnout by Emily Nagoski & Amelia Nagoski
The War of Art by Steven Pressfield
The Savvy Music Teacher by David Cutler
Beyond Talent by Angela Myles Beeching

Instagram Accounts:

@thespeakeasycooperative
 (Michelle Markwart Deveau)
 @savvymusicstudio (Sara Campbell)

Facebook Groups:

@FonsFamily