



# TWINKLING THE IVORIES

November 2016

## SUCCESSFUL PARENTING AND PRACTICING: HOW YOUR PARENTING STYLE BECOMES YOUR PRACTICE STYLE

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Recently at the Fall Workshop, Guest Teacher Nicole Wilton presented a thought provoking talk for ESPS parents. She invited parents to consider what their parenting style is: Lenient? Strict? Wet noodle? Screamer? (She described herself as a reformed screamer).

There are dangers of being too strict or too lenient. And how you parent is key to your success as a practicing parent, so it is important to be aware of your own style. Ask yourself if you:

- Tend to over or under-react?
- Tend to say one thing and do another?
- Make excuses for your child?
- Are regularly late or miss lessons?
- Interrupt the lessons or interject?
- Have trouble following through with consequences?
- Follow the crowd? Succumb to pressure of your child wanting something?
- Set clear expectations? Let things 'slide' sometimes? Let your child call the shots?
- Teach and model to your child respect and manners?

Find what works for you depending on your strengths and weaknesses and be honest enough with yourself to identify both good and bad habits, and set up boundaries if needed. Strive to see your child as a real person, not perfect but with flaws AND abilities. With her three daughters, Nicole expects honesty, hard work, responsibility, and respect. Honesty includes giving appropriate and specific praise as children need a lot of encouragement about their effort and not so much about the outcomes. Remember that all children progress differently, their brains work differently, and there is no expectation that your child should be at a certain stage of learning at a certain age.

Establish your own expectations. One parent asked "how do you avoid your child quitting?" Nicole added that you may also hear things like: "I hate this", "Why are you making me do this?" "I want to quit" and "Why do I have to practice?" Nicole suggests i) let them vent, but also ii) make a firm, long-term rule that is a guidepost for everyone, such as "you will study piano until you are 18 years old". Talk to your teacher about expectations, both daily and long term. Nicole regularly asks her families for a ten-year commitment. It takes that long to develop this craft, and you must use your instrument daily.

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# SUCCESSFUL PARENTING AND PRACTICING: HOW YOUR PRACTICE STYLE BECOMES YOUR PARENTING STYLE, CONTINUED

You can be a successful practicing parent if you take the time to honestly observe both yourself and your child, act to set up boundaries and expectations, and work together with your child to develop a meaningful and focused yet fun practice style in an environment of support and encouragement. Effective practicing style also calls for judgement.

- Don't get hung up on the quantity of time spent at practice: focus instead on the practice points your teacher set out.
- Using a timer can sometimes be a deterrent as ten minutes of mindful practice is better than thirty minutes of unfocused practice.
- Remember playing is not practice and should be left to the end.
- The length of practice may depend on age and time available. It is appropriate to recognize that your child may not be able to do all the practice points set out that week at each daily practice session. Come up with a game to divide up the practice points. If there are 5 practice points, assign each on a popsicle stick and choose several each day.

Good judgement again comes with knowing your child and knowing when to quit when you are ahead, so you can end a practice session early if you see that your child has mastered a certain technique or practice point. Mastery is the goal. You may see that your child glows with their accomplishment and will take pride in the playing, because those are the moments when the connection is made between all their hard work and their growing skill to create a beauty all their own.

Two minutes of joy, five times a day! --- *Dr. Shinichi Suzuki.*

*Apryl Gladue, ESPS Parent*

## NICOLE WILTON'S FIVE PILLARS OF PIANO PARENTING

1. Don't overschedule with other activities, clubs, and sports
2. Seek out support network including friends, community, and Suzuki events and workshops
3. Attend Group classes and concerts. Anything that is a fun adventure will stick with your child and provide motivation. If you place value on certain activities, your child will as well. Many children who play hockey have gone to an NHL game, whereas it is surprising how many piano students have never gone to a symphony or concert.
4. Encourage efforts and INDEPENDENCE from the beginning since the end goal is to have the child practice by themselves. Don't use "we did it", use "you did it" and ask "how do you think you feel about your lesson today?" and a very successful question "what were you trying to accomplish today?" because children are very honest about their abilities and progress. There is a small window for developing good practice habits, only up to about age nine.
5. Be your child's HERO  
**H – Helicopter less**  
**E – Embrace them**  
**R – Relate and build relationship**  
**O – Observe them (stop talking and listen!)**



**Scenes from the ESPS Fall Workshop: Visit [www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca](http://www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca) to view the album**

# DISCOVERING DALCROZE: ESPS TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In July of 2016, the Suzuki Charter School hosted a week-long seminar of Dalcroze Eurythmics activities for music teachers. The course was facilitated by Dalcroze Canada Co-Director of Studies, Cheng-Feng Lin, and his associate and Dalcroze Canada Co-Director, Laura Ono, both from the GTA. There to take the course were several ESPS teachers as well as members of the Suzuki Charter School musical faculty. A few teachers from around the province attended as well.

Dalcroze Eurythmics is a multifaceted musical philosophy that educates through movement; refining the body as an instrument of rhythm and pitch. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) was a professor of harmony at the Geneva Conservatory who believed music was the best way to reconcile mind, body, spirit and emotion. Over his lifetime, he developed educational models in three distinct areas: Eurythmics, “good rhythm”, which uses movement to study rhythm; Solfege, the study of pitch relationships and Improvisation, the synthesis of Eurythmics and Solfege. This work has had a tremendous impact on musicians, composers, dancers, choreographers and actors leaving a legacy of ideas and practical examples.

Our daily routine commenced in the gym with Eurythmics class which mirrored Dalcroze’s traditional notion of moving around the room in bare feet. In one example, Cheng-Feng encouraged us to move freely around the floor, physically engaging to the pulse of music while he improvised on the piano. From there, he would devise exercises based on quick reaction giving the participants the opportunity to practice “thinking on their feet” as a musician might be able to listen and respond seamlessly and musically during a performance. The main intent here was to create experiences where the entire body participates becoming the intermediary between what we hear and what we think.

A description of the next class, Solfege Rhythmics: Singing to connect the physicality of Eurythmics to the inner-ear. Dalcroze uses the “fixed-do” Solfege system of relating to pitches. This is similar to the way tones are named using letters (A, B, C..), which don’t change regardless of the key of the music. Syllables are used to name the tones (do, re, mi...). We were led through various exercises singing in Solfege as well as by scale degree number. As in the previous class, reaction to cues created the need to think “on our feet” to keep the participants engaged.

Laura’s pedagogy class was mostly an information session. Many Dalcroze papers were shared as well as book titles, a video and online resources. Laura was happy to answer questions and discuss topics but she also demonstrated several teaching activities and concepts. This class gave us an opportunity to better understand and internalize the substance of the courses and allowed us to explore ways to apply it to our own teaching.

The Improvisation class with Cheng-Feng focused on the instantaneous creation of musical ideas on our own instruments. We explored various compositional methods and experimented with ways to convey musical ideas in a way that listeners/students would easily understand. Next, we began to apply these ideas to Eurythmics class activities and exercises.

Everyone who participated in the week-long course felt it was very-well facilitated and that we all gained a lot of valuable experience and information. We all agreed that more Dalcroze courses would be welcomed in the future. Many thanks to the Suzuki Charter School for hosting the course, and to Laura and Cheng-Feng for travelling from Toronto and working with all of us!

Ken Zeller, ESPS Teacher

## LEARNING THROUGH LISTENING

Consider some of these ideas for incorporating more listening into your practice routine:

*Play the music quietly in the background. Listen to the music in your repertoire, but also take time to play additional books in the Suzuki repertoire for inspiration and a little motivation.*

*Listen in the car. Families spend a lot of time in the car. You have a captive audience, so why not take advantage of it?*

*Sing meaningful words to the melody – you can use some of the lyrics from our workbook, or personalize your own.*

*Listen to fine music from any genre or style. Inspire a love of listening to music of all types.*



**“Listening until we remember is not enough. We must listen until we cannot forget.”**

**Shinichi Suzuki**

21 year old  
pianist  
Jan Lisiecki



## ESPS AT THE EDMONTON CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY – JAN LISIECKI IN CONCERT

Join ESPS at this exciting performance sponsored by the Edmonton Chamber Music Society on January 21, 2017! Bring your children and be inspired by the performance of this incredible young pianist from Calgary!

*“Celebrated young virtuoso Jan Lisiecki has already achieved international accolades in performances with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including Orchestre de Paris, New York Philharmonic, and BBC Symphony. A Deutsche Grammophon recording artist, Lisiecki has played in venues such as the Kennedy and Lincoln Centers, Royal Albert Hall, and Carnegie Hall. He returns to his home province of Alberta with a program featuring grand works for piano.”*

The Edmonton Chamber Music Society has kindly extended special group ticket pricing to our ESPS members. Join us for this rare opportunity and enjoy performances of works by Bach, Schumann, Chopin and Schubert by this 21-year old Calgary native. These discounted tickets (\$35.50 for adults and just \$10.50 for students) are available for purchase by ESPS members on our website at [www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca/shop](http://www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca/shop).

For more information about Jan Lisiecki, take a look at this CBC TV profile on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMMSLYZ0mXQ>  
For more information about the concert itself, visit the Edmonton Chamber Music Society website.

### CONGRATULATIONS NOVEMBER GRADUATES

*Congratulations to the following students for their hard work and well-deserved graduations:*

#### **Volume 1**

Timothy Chua  
Lochlan Hoffmann  
Toby Johnson  
Antero Williams  
Carina Wong  
Erin Zapesocki

#### **Volume 2**

Morgan Burgess  
Linnea Johnson

#### **Volume 3**

Amber Chen  
Rachel Mack  
Nathan Oddoye  
Ethan Zhang

#### **Volume 4**

Marlon Beakhouse  
Micah Truong

#### **Volume 5**

Julianna Graham

#### **Volume 6**

Dariush Khani-Hanjani

*“Music exists for the purpose of growing an admirable heart.”*

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

### 2016/2017 EVENTS CALENDAR

**January 21, 2017** ESPS at the Edmonton Chamber Music Society – Jan Lisiecki

**February 5, 2017** Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall, MacEwan University

**February 5, 12, and 26, 2017** Winter Recitals at PCL Hall, MacEwan University

**March 19, 2017** Graduation Ceremony at PCL Hall, MacEwan University

**April 22, 2017** Spring Festival at Suzuki Charter School

**May 7, 2017** Groups Concert at Suzuki Charter School

**June 3, 4, 10 & 11, 2017** June Recitals at Convocation Hall, University of Alberta

**June 18, 2017** Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall, MacEwan University