

DOING ONE THING WELL!

Dr. Suzuki had some wonderful sayings. One of our favourites is his statement that “all children can be educated” and another is “where love is deep, much can be accomplished”. Another is his suggestion, ‘only practice on the days that you eat’!

One of his ideas which speaks just as clearly to us here in Australia as it did when and where Dr Suzuki first said it is the following: **parents should make it possible for their children to do one thing really well**. He believed that for each of us there can be an area of life in which we can excel, and having found it, this then gives us an opportunity to contribute to society and also to feel happy and accomplished.

I was thinking about how this applies to us as Suzuki students, parents and teachers, and how well ‘Suzuki’ teaches us to focus so that each of us can do the best we possibly can, not just in music, but in all areas of life. We have a great ‘recipe’. We know about the value of starting young and of providing an environment which will guarantee success. To achieve well in our music we know that there needs to be a happy ‘Suzuki triangle’ – student, parent and teacher. We know that we need to provide lots of opportunities for listening, for sharing music, for performing and that everything we do needs to be ‘seasoned’ with affirmation and love.

The importance of creating the best environment brings to mind some of our young sporting heroes. Lleyton Hewett, our young Adelaide born and based tennis champion has often spoken of his tennis beginnings and they really remind me of our Suzuki principles. There was never any doubt in his mind that he would be really good at tennis. His whole environment was set up to achieve this goal, and he and his parents worked consistently to this end. I am sure the same can be said of Chad and Kane Cornes who are now excelling in the AFL, or Tiger Woods, the young American golf champion.

However, in addition to the fact that these young high achievers were placed in the best possible environment, the other significant thing which they did, with the encouragement and assistance of their parents was that they ‘put in the hours’! Centuries ago young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s life began in a similar way. He was born into the perfect environment to guarantee his success as a musician, he started very young, but we also know that he ‘put in the hours’. Is it any wonder that he became such a brilliant performer and composer? He was really like many of our Suzuki kids today! If they ‘put in the hours’ the results speak for themselves. Each achieves to the very best of his or her ability.

Today our children have so many choices. They can do a variety of sports, play a variety of instruments or sing in the choir that suits them the best. Together with their parents they can choose which school to attend and can often make subject choices, they can choose a huge variety of books to read, TV programmes to watch and food to eat. Fortunately our children have parents who can educate them in choosing discerningly, and can ensure that they live healthy lives. I think that Dr Suzuki’s idea that parents should enable children to **do one thing really well** is very useful advice. It is good to remember it as we assist our children to make some of those choices, and guide them in limiting their choices, for example, with regard to extra-curricular activities, knowing that for optimum success the environment must support what the child is doing. We also need to remember that there needs to be time in the lives of our children for them to both ‘put in the hours’ but also to just enjoy being children.