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Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, PERSISTENCE, PERSISTENCE, and more PERSISTENCE!

- * What is SUCCESS?
- * How do we define/determine SUCCESS in our music education world?
- * Moreover, how do we ATTAIN-and-SUSTAIN SUCCESS?
- * What is the pathway one must traverse to achieve the elusive destination we know as SUCCESS?

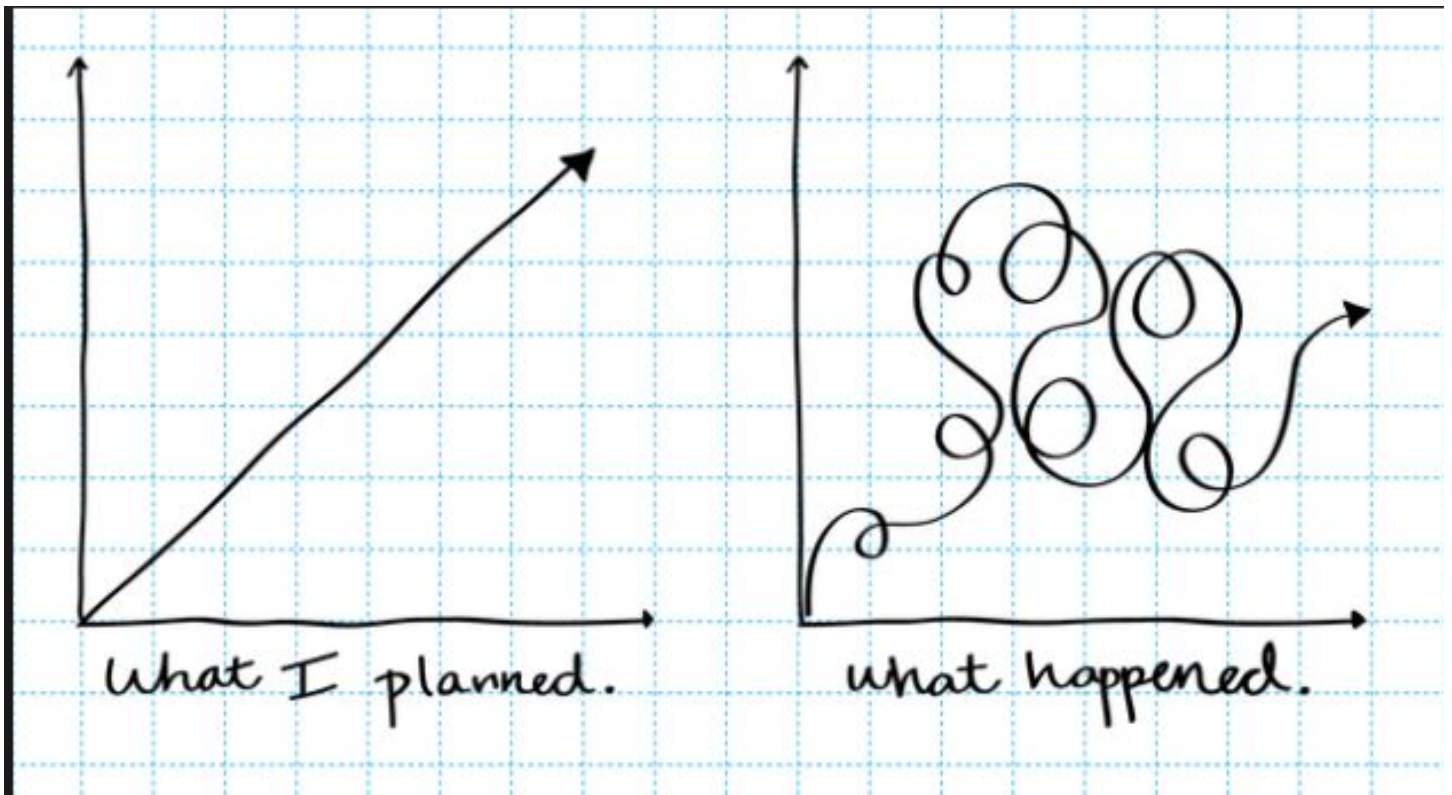
To borrow an equation from Angela Duckworth’s wonderful book GRIT:

$$\text{TALENT} + \text{EFFORT} = \text{SKILLS}$$

$$\text{SKILLS} + \text{EFFORT} = \text{ACHIEVEMENT}$$

As we quickly ascertain, the common denominator is EFFORT. One can be “talented,” one can be “skilled,” but without the magic elixir of EFFORT, the “achievement,” (whatever it may be for each of us) will not be realized.

It would be logical (then) to simply conclude, “If I dedicate myself to a rigorous schedule of EFFORTING, my personal and professional goals will come to fruition.” However, we know - all too well - there is far more to it. It is not a quick-easy trip from idea-to-outcome. In fact, rarely does the planned course unfold as it was originally conceived to do; please refer to Illustration #1: (What I planned. What happened. ...shared by Julia Gamolina)



At this point it is tempting to throw-in-the-towel and turn our backs on the self-assigned goal(s)... even claiming (rationalizing!) the original idea was not worthy and/or certainly not achievable. However what-about-those who always are at-the-pinnacle of their game? How do they get there and stay there? Are they always just the benefactors of good luck? What do they know and do that ensures their ongoing high level achievements?

Might I suggest all outstanding accomplishments are fueled by PERSISTENCE, or - if you will - "Giving up giving up." Are these master teachers TALENTED? Of course they are. Are they SKILLED? Absolutely. Above all, they are PERSISTENT. They don't know any special shortcut, or some secret code; they just stay "on it" and "at it" until they arrive at the road sign that reads: ACCOMPLISHMENT/SUCCESS.

Illustration #2 may explain it best:



On my desk is a framed-quote* from Calvin Coolidge; it serves as a BOLD reminder of the answer to the quartet of inquiries at the beginning of this article.

Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not. Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. -- Calvin Coolidge

Time-and-time again this wisdom has served as a WAKE-UP call (a slap-in-the-face, if you will!), particularly when I was tempted to retreat-in-defeat. For our programs, for our students, and for ourselves; PERSISTENCE IS THE KEY.

...let the music begin...
