

“Accomplishments”

Contributed by Bernadette Serrano

Do you remember the first time you attempted a difficult feat? Perhaps you recall the disappointment that came along when things didn't turn out “ok,” and then of course, the swelling pride when they did. In one's youth, there was a certain impatience for quick results-- to get “there” A.S.A.P.

Then comes maturity, and along with it, the realization that some achievements are a slow process-- a culmination of steady effort. One doesn't always recognize when one has “arrived”-- often, not until it's been pointed out by an observer. It takes a great deal of patience and perseverance to continually work towards a goal, not always knowing if there IS a peak to this particular mountain.

Learning to play an instrument, such as the fiddle, is one of those slow processes. From the moment one plays the first note, there will always exist musicians more accomplished than oneself, as well as those lesser so. In continuing the endeavor, one practices and repeats first the simple steps, then gradually more and more complex ones. They begin to realize the fruits of their labor-- songs that had previously just been a goal or a dream, are now classified as belonging in one's repertoire. Tune by tune, this repertoire increases, at first with simpler songs, followed later by those with increasing degrees of difficulty. As one's love for the music solidifies and confidence grows, so does one's desire to learn more. Expanding horizons-- striving to master the next piece-- and most importantly, maintaining that constant effort.

The old cliché, “practice makes perfect” ironically harbors a myth-- there is no “perfect”-- only improvement. Everyday changes are slight and hard to see, until all at once, something “clicks” and one is rewarded with that sense of accomplishment. All of which serves to whet one's appetite for bigger and better things-- fueling one's passion to strive to achieve more-- envisioning greater and grander goals-- a self-perpetuating, uplifting cycle.

“The taste of a little success is the greatest motivator,” an expression I first heard over a decade ago, rings exceedingly true in this, and many other, spheres. So, relish the pride of your achievements-- you've earned it! And keep in mind that just like the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, so does the realization of a symphony commence with a solitary note.

Author's Note: This column was inspired by all the “beginner” fiddlers whose musical growth I've had the privilege of observing over time, and among them in particular, that of John Boles. I shall never forget the ecstatic glow upon his face the first time he played Turkey in the Straw up to “club” speed.