

Challenge no. 1: Be Present

“I challenge you to give your child the gift of your full attention during lesson and practice times, even when it feels really hard to do so”

Christine Goodner, *Beyond the Music Lesson*, p. 37

“The greatest gift you can give your child is your presence. For children, this is really the greatest reward: more of your time ... You are showing them that they are worth your time and attention.”

Alice Joy Lewis, *Beyond the Music Lesson*, p. 42

“ If you are just starting out, you are at a bit of an advantage. You can make it a habit right from the start to give your child your full attention during practice and lessons. Your practice sessions will likely be very short and you can build the habit of being present from the start in the small bursts of time that are your daily practice sessions....

If you’ve already started and have not been particularly paying attention to this part of your role as a Suzuki parent, it may take some work to create new habits...Start by challenging yourself to stay extremely focused and engaged for a few minutes to build this new habit, and then gradually extend the time you stay fully present during your child’s practice sessions.”¹

There are many popular articles that assert that it takes 21 days to form a new habit. The truth is more complex than that, as the number of days varies depending on the complexity of the habit you are trying to establish. [<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/02/how-long-it-takes-to-form-a-new-habit/>] However, let’s take 21 days as a convenient short term goal for this exercise, just to get things started in developing your awareness of where your attention is when working with your child.

The Challenge:

Here is a chart with 21 boxes. Initial each box for each day that you give your child your full attention during practice or lesson, even if you don’t do so continuously. Ideally, aim for 21 *consecutive* days, but don’t give up if you miss a day, just pick up from where you left off.

Student name:

Parent name:

¹ Goodner, Christine. *Beyond the Music Lesson* pp 42-43