

We Need You Now More Than Ever!

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Not to state the obvious, but we are experiencing “most unusual times.” Could anyone have ever written a script that would compare to the COVID-19 landscape? As shared with a friend, “This isn’t more than I think it is, but it is more than I can think.”

With that said, we are all navigating uncharted waters as we make every effort to maintain our band cultures. ’Tis quite an uphill climb when (for many directors) there is not the wherewithal to be with the students in the normal band setting, to deliver the curriculum in the traditional fashion, or to enjoy the annual schedule of events the students enthusiastically anticipate. These are the key benefits that come with and from BEING IN THE BAND. We face a new set of circumstances and, for certain, we are challenged to make the best of what we have. When our students witness our sense of purpose and mission, they come to the forefront to join us to be—if you will—caring-sharing members of their band families.

If there was ever a time our student musicians needed a positive role model, it is NOW. You are to be applauded for going far above and beyond the call of duty to create THE BAND EXPERIENCE in any and every fashion possible within the given parameters of today’s shifting tides. The benefactors are the young performers who are the heart-’n-soul of your school band communities. THANK YOU!

Having been on countless airplanes, I’m familiar with the flight attendant’s well-rehearsed message, “Should the

cabin lose pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the overhead area. Please place the mask over your own mouth and nose before assisting others.”

In other words, if you run out of oxygen yourself, you can’t help anyone else. And so it is with all of us; we must help ourselves before we can help our students.

With that in mind, there is one thing we can control in all this uncertainty—our ATTITUDE. A healthy recipe of OPTIMISM and REALISM is certain to nourish our band programs as we continue to discover new avenues of communication to keep our students engaged in every possible fashion.

Humans are members of the animal kingdom. One of the greatest distinctions that separates us from our fellow primates is that we control our behavior by choosing our ATTITUDES. While we do have inbred instincts to protect our survival, we also have the gift of CHOICE.

ABILITY is what we are capable of doing. MOTIVATION determines what we will do. ATTITUDE predicts how successfully we’ll do it.

Our lives are a reflection of our attitudes, and in the words of Henry Ford, “Whether we think we can or whether we think we can’t, we’re always *right*.”

Excellence and high level achievement are, in great part, a reflection of our attitudes.

As band directors, *who we are* is contagious. For certain, our students will get what we’ve got! Congratulations to you for making sure they will mirror your genuine

unparalleled commitment and dedication. As the students say, “YOU ROCK!” In adult terms: YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Perhaps all of this is best explained in the poignant bit of advice handed down from the shared wisdom of our ancestors:

An old Cherokee Indian was teaching his young grandson about life as they sat by the fire.

“A battle is raging inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One is evil...he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. But the other wolf is good...he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.”

“Young man,” he continued, “This same fight is going on inside you and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson peered into the flames of the fire and thought about this for a time, then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

The title of this article is *We Need You Now More Than Ever*; it might be best amended by adding: *We Need ONE ANOTHER Now More Than Ever!*

With that said, it’s time to:
STRIKE UP THE BAND!