

Defining Success

Jeremy Spicer

Author and visionary thinker Simon Sinek famously quoted the following in his wildly popular 2009 TED Talk: *People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it, and what you do simply serves as the proof of what you believe.*

HUMAN CONNECTION

The benefits of marching band participation are vast, and exhaustive conversations have occurred regarding its merits and value. At the foundation of this dialogue lies the most powerful aspect of the activity.

Marching band serves as a vehicle for our students to CONNECT and CREATE with each other in a manner unlike any other art form.

HUMAN CONNECTION and the ability to CREATE are where the true value of this past season lies. We reignited passions that sat dormant in the virtual classroom. Humans thrive on the ability to engage with one another, and this engagement will, over time, begin to heal the negative impact of the past two years. A renewed sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging has provided happiness, self-worth, and confidence to those in our communities that may have felt lost or alone. Connection to one another is a fundamental human need that must continue to be at the forefront of all we do.

Showcasing students' abilities to CREATE with their friends and colleagues has produced a "joie de vivre" in band halls around the country. "Joie de vivre" is a phrase used to express an exuberant enjoyment of life. Marching band has once again provided a vehicle for

students to display individual and ensemble artistry in music, dance, and performance with a variety of equipment. This combined with the physicality of marching drill, and we have a perfect means of expression for high school students. This "instrument" of expression (pun intended) created an exultation of spirit in band rooms around the country.

Students thrive on their ability to CREATE and perform. As a father of a freshman and sophomore, clinician for programs around the country and a huge fan of the activity, I was able to witness first-hand the value and positive impact this marching season had on kids. It was the "small victories" that seemingly meant the most to the students:

- "I got my feet in time all the way through the intro..."
- "I played on the move and it sounded good..."
- "I finally mastered the challenging measure in our woodwind feature..."
- "I kept my horn to the focal point through the entire rep..."
- "I LOVE this part in the closer...I can FINALLY do it"
- "Check out this choreography our guard director wrote for us...I am so excited to perform it every day..."

At face value, these seemingly minor accomplishments actually express the true value of participation in our activity. While students like competitive success, the biggest indicators of the organization's health are born out in the daily interactions through thoughtful, student-centered rehearsals. How we manage the highs and lows of the rehearsal atmosphere

allow our students the opportunity to experience success and failure in a way that will open doors for individual growth and development. This is the true WIN that could never be measured or adequately rewarded via a trophy or medal.

I work to live by the Sonia Johnson quote: *We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference, and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history.*

Music students, directors, and the communities they serve are the **small group of determined people** that will help us heal and most certainly change **the course of history**, not only for our individual music programs, but more importantly, for society as a whole. We are creating lifelong lovers and supporters of music that understand HUMAN CONNECTION and our ability to CREATE are what makes us unique and special. ...and for that, we have all WON!!!

Jeremy Spicer is a Magna Cum Laude graduate from Texas State University and owner of SASI, The Leadership People, LLC. SASI is a student leadership consulting firm focusing on the empowerment of young leaders. SASI believes that students become empowered to succeed in their organization and their personal lives when they are properly equipped with a deeper knowledge and understanding of people, organizations, systems, and processes. Mr. Spicer is the former Director of Bands at Vandegrift High School. Prior to his appointment at Vandegrift, Mr. Spicer spent eight years as a member of the staff at Cedar Park High School. Mr. Spicer has also been very active in DCI, beginning his drum corps career playing mellophone in the Santa Clara Vanguard. After performing, Mr. Spicer has been on the brass staffs of the Carolina Crown, Southwind, Boston Crusaders, and Santa Clara Vanguard.