



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
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**Happy, Not Satisfied: Creating and  
Maintaining a Positive Culture in  
Your Program**

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# HAPPY, NOT SATISFIED

**CREATING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE CULTURE IN YOUR PROGRAM**

**DANIEL MORRISON  
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# WHO AM I?

- DANIEL MORRISON
- DIRECTOR OF BANDS, RONALD REAGAN HIGH SCHOOL
- 10 YEARS AT REAGAN, 5 YEARS AS HEAD DIRECTOR
- APPROXIMATELY 400 STUDENTS IN PROGRAM
- MARCHING BAND, 4 CONCERT BANDS, 2 JAZZ BANDS, CHAMBER MUSIC PROGRAM, 3 WINTER GUARDS





# BACKGROUND ON CLINIC

- INITIALLY ASKED TO PRESENT ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
- WANTED TO ZOOM OUT MORE THAN THAT AND DISCUSS HOW TO AVOID MANY OF THOSE ISSUES
- POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAM CULTURE IS KEY TO SUCCESS IN ALMOST ALL FACETS
- SOMETHING I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT
- EASY TO GET STUCK IN THE “WEEDS” AND FORGET ABOUT CULTURE





# The Desire For Success

- Human Nature leads us to yearn for success in and purpose from what we do professionally and personally.
- That looks different for everyone. Running a restaurant, playing a sport, opening a business, ***leading a school music program***, etc.
- The desire for success, fulfillment and happiness is the same.
- When I say success, I do not necessarily mean winning things.
- Creating beautiful music is a version of success, feeling joy from helping someone is fulfilling, seeing our students thrive makes us happy.
- The specifics of what success, happiness and fulfillment look like are irrelevant. Acknowledging that we desire these concepts in our lives (as do our students), is what is important.



# So, how do we create this for ourselves and our students?

- Infinite answers to this question exist. “More than one way to skin a cat”.
- In my experience as Director of Bands at Reagan, I have found a specific mindset and approach.
- We apply it to each rehearsal, day, season, and school year.
- It has been the underlying factor that fosters a culture of positivity, success, fulfillment and happiness for the students AND staff.
- So...what is it??



**HAPPY, NOT SATISFIED**



# What Does It Mean?

- Finding joy and contentment in our daily lives through the process of growth and development in all areas- professional and personal.
- Accepting the fact that there is no “end”, and if we wait until we are on the other side of a goal or achievement to be happy, we will consistently be let down.
- Gradually shifting our mindset to understand and believe that happiness COMES from not being satisfied.
- We GET to continue to grow and improve. Surrender to the process.



# Overview Of How To Implement

- Deemphasize the competitive result.
- Exude positivity.
- Reframe goal setting.
- Develop and refine routines.





# Deemphasize The Competitive Result

- Competition is part of what we do.
- Can be anything from Middle School UIL Contest to BOA Grand Nationals to anything in between.
- How we frame competition for ourselves and our students can make or break the culture of our programs.



**“We’re all winners in life”**

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# Competition Continued

- We do not have control over competitive results.
- Competition is a tiny sliver of what we actually do.
- Focusing on the “result” diminishes the impact and importance of the process and journey.
- Can potentially lead to disappointment, resentment and behavior issues.
- Creates stress and anxiety for students and for yourself.
- I spend a very significant amount of time framing competition and reemphasizing results to students.
- Human nature will give your students more than enough competitive drive.



# Exude Positivity

- “You are what you eat”. Your students will adopt your disposition and they know if you are being genuine.
- Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond.
- Fight against addiction to misery.





# Positivity Continued

- When a sense of positivity permeates the program, it will eventually become the overwhelming default for the members, staff and even parents in an organization.
- Even if a program is currently overwhelmingly negative, fractured or dysfunctional, a relentless sense of positivity will eventually prevail.
- Requires mental toughness and a strong will from YOU.
- If you are not the head director, you can still affect change in students and become a beacon of positivity for them.
- It is our job to lead the way with positivity, even on difficult days.
- You can't be the teacher students talk about as being "moody".



# Reframing Goal Setting

- This relates back to competitive results.
- “Unsupervised” goal setting can lead to anxiety in students and ourselves.
- Must be within our control.
- Think smaller.
- **PROCESS OVER PRODUCT**





# Goals Continued

- Focusing solely or mostly on end result is a gamble, and the risk-reward does not work in your favor.
- At worst, you don't achieve the goal and you and your students are disappointed.
- In addition, weeks or months passed by that you did not enjoy or relish in because of your focus on the result, not the process.
- You were trying to find happiness by “achieving” a goal, instead of by seeking growth and improvement each day and relishing in the opportunity that endlessly exists to get better.



# Goals continued

- I am not suggesting you stop setting goals.
- I AM suggesting you set goals for yourself and for your students that you have control over.
- This would include how hard your program can work during rehearsal, how many minutes a student can practice in a day or week, how we choose or choose not to be positive, how our organization treats others, how well attended rehearsals and events are during a season or semester, and so on.
- Examples of unproductive goals: “Win a contest”, “make finals”, “get 50 kids in the region band”, “Beat our cross town rival.”



**RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS ARE  
BYPRODUCTS OF THE PROCESS**



# Goals final

- If you buy into this mindset, you will start to discover the joy in each moment AND you will likely find more success.
- As soon as I surrendered to these concepts, our program had more “competitive success.”
- Happiness does NOT lie on the other side of success.
- Approaching what we do this way is like being a drug addict. Always looking for the next “high” and then feeling the let down.



# Routines

- Developing and refining routines is truly where the “magic” happens.
- This is where we have ultimate control.
- A perfect place to never be satisfied but always find joy.
- Implementing and keeping routines will help minimize discipline issues!





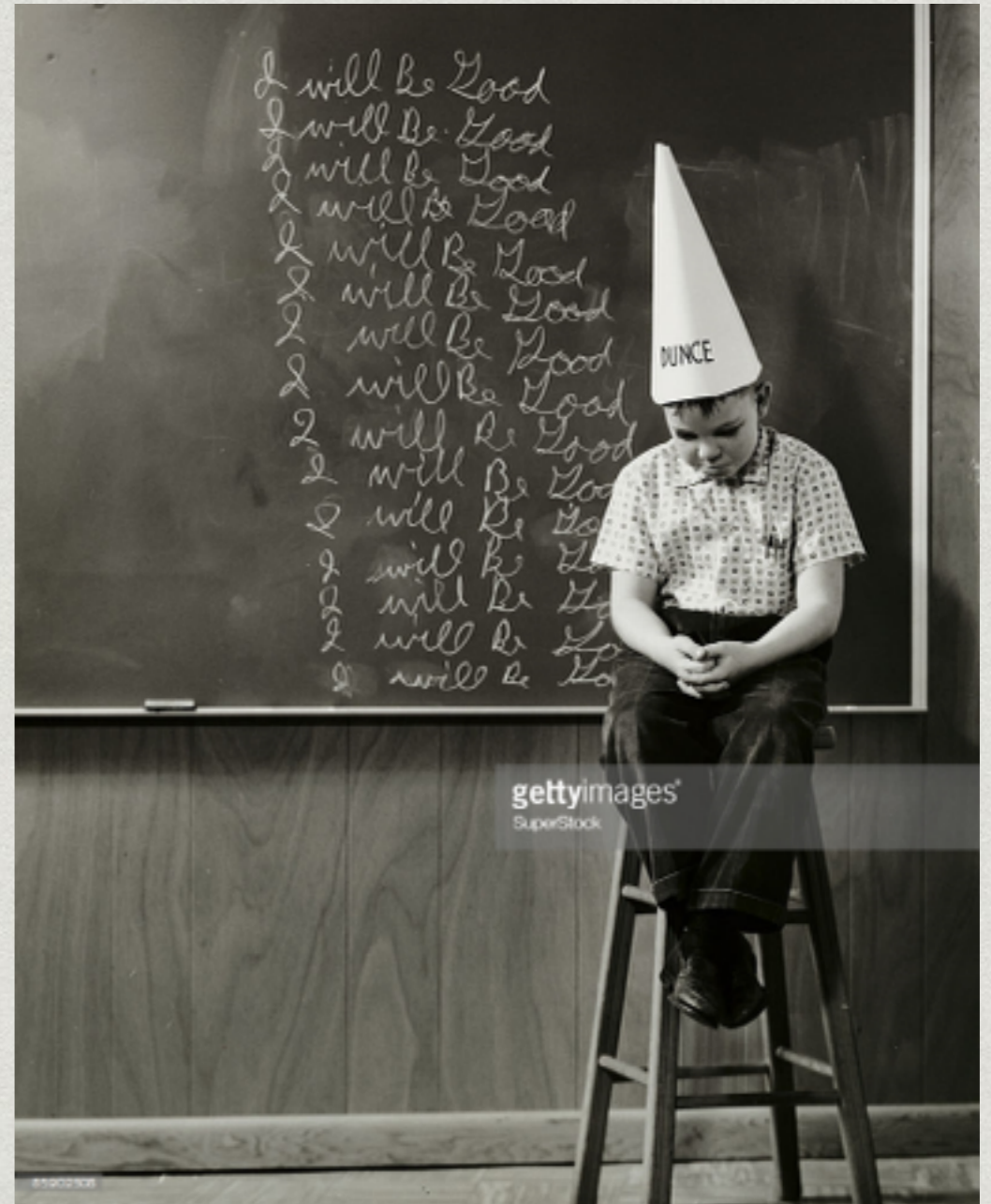
# Routines Continued

- We are able to load buses from the band hall at Reagan in less than 5 minutes with 350 students.
- This was not always the case.
- Established a routine years ago and stuck with it, but were never satisfied.
- Routine is streamlined now, but still not satisfied! Always looking for ways to improve, but happy with what we've achieved.
- Students know what to expect, less confusion leads to less down time which leads to less behavior issues.
- One of dozens or even hundreds of examples of routines.



# Classroom Management and Discipline Issues

- Instilling the happy, not satisfied mindset into your program will help you AVOID classroom management issues.
- When there is a culture of positivity and self-improvement, you will be amazed at how your behavioral issues diminish.





# Classroom Management Continued

- It took a few years of consistently talking about and showing students how to be happy, not satisfied, but I feel it has really taken hold within the organization, and because of that, discipline issues have tapered significantly!
- We are at the point now where students have internalized the mindset, and as a result, they are focused on improving for themselves and the program through each moment of rehearsal.
- Because of this, they are focused on maximizing growth and potential, not on getting distracted, distracting others or diminishing the effectiveness of rehearsal.



# Issues That Still Arise

- You could be the most positive teacher on the planet with happy, not satisfied fully ingrained in your program and you will still have some discipline issues.
- First of all, find peace in the fact that this is normal.
- You will even have issues that never fully resolve. That's ok!
- Develop systems in your program that you can fall back on, document issues that occur, and don't get bogged down by the few outliers.



# Issues Continued

- Intervene as early as possible.
- If you have student leaders, empower them to talk to you when something doesn't feel right.
- It is easy for issues to fester and become much bigger than needed.
- Have clear guidelines set out that you can follow unemotionally when issues arise (Band Discipline Plan).



# The Proof Is In The Pudding

- \* “Throughout my four years at Reagan, you’ve taught me about character, grace, and humility. One thing I especially appreciate was the **multiple times you called me into your office to talk to me about setting a better example through my actions.** Although I didn’t like it very much in the moment, I look back on those redirections and wish to continue to carry that out, even if I’m not a leader in whatever I go into. I’m also thankful for all of the speeches you gave during marching season about **being happy but not satisfied, and how winning isn’t everything.** I feel like the world that the other seniors and I are about to go into doesn’t care very much about those ideals, and I’m so very grateful you instilled those in us at every competition and after every achievement we reached.”  
-Excerpt from a letter from a graduated senior



# Happy, Not Satisfied In Your Personal Life

- In my experience, to truly develop this culture within our programs in a meaningful way, we must live by the mindset in our personal lives.
- I was guilty of focusing only on goals, not relishing in the process (personally AND professionally).
- I made a conscious effort to shift my mindset and approach in my personal life, and it completely changed my career.





# Personal Life Continued

- For a long time, I did basically the opposite of what I've talk about today in my personal life.
- I have a hard time remembering my early years of teaching, it's a haze of stress and anxiety because my focus was on making finals, or getting a 1.
- It was unpleasant for me (and those around me, ask my wife).
- I was less effective in my job because of it.



# Personal Life Continued

- When I got better at living my own life through the lens of being happy, not satisfied, achievements and milestones occurred more frequently.
- I can say for certain, however, that those accomplishments were byproducts of the process.
- When I shifted my personal mindset, my connection with students grew exponentially (I never used to receive letters).
- Kids are smart. They knew I was stressed and negative. I couldn't fake it. And now they know my joy is genuine and it's created a more positive and productive environment.



# Personal Life Final

- This transformation for me happened when I decided to focus on my personal wellness and growth through proper nutrition, daily exercise, developing new habits such as reading, etc.
- I became so much clearer mentally, which made me a better teacher and a better leader.
- I took Happy, Not Satisfied and it applied it to ME, and that trickled into my career and students.
- In the teaching profession, we are generally very bad about self care. I could give an entire presentation on this, but starting by acknowledging this is crucial to moving forward productively.



**@DANIELDMORRISON**



- I LOVE TALKING ABOUT THIS.
- DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO ME WITH QUESTIONS VIA EMAIL, ON INSTAGRAM, ETC.
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