



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
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**Swipe Right! How to Nurture a Long  
Term Relationship with Your Job**

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**Sponsor: Phi Beta Mu**

## **Title: Swipe Right! How to Nurture a Long-Term Relationship with Your Job**

**Description:** Our distinguished panel of three, each of whom are at different stages of their careers, will discuss the challenges they have encountered over the years and how they have used these to strengthen their commitment to music education. Building and nurturing relationships, embracing opportunities for growth, and defining success on their own terms are just three concepts this panel will address. Audience members will have an opportunity to ask questions and will leave with specific strategies to implement during the good and the challenging times.

1. Relationships within the band director community
  - a. Katie
    - i. You are not alone, seek fellow music educators outside the four walls of your band hall
    - ii. Seek out colleagues in the same age range as you for social hour
    - iii. Don't be afraid to branch out into developing relationships with other fine arts teachers and core subject teachers
  - b. Corey
    - i. Foster relationships with your team of directors
    - ii. Do some team building!
  - c. Kerry
    - i. Attend conventions, region meetings, etc.
    - ii. Ask questions of other colleagues
    - iii. Volunteer your time/space for UIL and TMEA events. Give back to your community!
2. Work/Life Balance
  - a. Katie
    - i. Whether you are single, in a relationship, are a dog dad, a plant mom, still make time for yourself. Don't view your lack of "accepted responsibilities" as a reason to not have time for yourself away from work (and don't let others take advantage of you either)
    - ii. Try to leave work in the band hall. Make your home a space separate from the all encompassing world of band
  - b. Corey
    - i. Give yourself license to grow both personally and professionally
    - ii. Where are you in the grand scheme of things: Are you working to live or living to work?
    - iii. Increase your enjoyment at both home and the band hall

- c. Kerry:
    - i. Family. I am fortunate to have a spouse who is also a teacher - and an ex-band kid. She totally understands when I need space, when to listen and when to provide a boost. My siblings and friends are also ex-band kids who understand what we do.
    - ii. Separate work and home lives.
    - iii. Find hobbies/activities outside of teaching that are valuable to you.
3. Mentorship: How to get support and information to help with your job challenges
- a. Katie
    - i. Lean on those college professors you learned so much from before. Just because you graduated doesn't mean you can't still reach out to them
    - ii. YBDT and other organizations
    - iii. Find a teacher you can go to at your school (doesn't have to be a fellow band director) that you can vent, ask questions or just get away from your office for a few minutes
  - b. Corey
    - i. Get out of your band hall and see what is happening elsewhere
    - ii. Be a blessing to others by being a sounding board for younger teachers (older ones, too)
    - iii. Connect with those mentors who have great character, who have availability, are positive, honest, and are great communicators.
  - c. Kerry
    - i. Build and nurture relationships with people with similar challenges
    - ii. Ask, observe, research
    - iii. Develop a strong mentor relation with 2-3 people who have experienced your challenges
4. Competition: How to navigate the competitive band world (UIL ratings, invited performances, Honor Band and marching band)
- a. Katie
    - i. Many young teachers are typically assistants so you don't necessarily get to call the shots in terms of what competitions you partake in. You do control how you react and the example you set for your students
    - ii. Have a reality check whether things go your way or not by stepping outside of the band world and realizing the average person does not know or care about a Bands of America placement or UIL rating.
    - iii. Don't sink all your net worth into how middle school or high school age students perform on a given day. You are so much more than that!
  - b. Corey
    - i. What makes you and your students sign up for band year in and out?
    - ii. Don't let comparison become the thief to your joy
    - iii. What does the culture of your band program look like?
  - c. Kerry

- i. Focus on the education of the students and the art of creating music together. Are you going to compete because it's good for your ego, or does it better the education/experience you are providing the students.
- ii. Limit how much you do - you risk burning out your students, community and yourself!
- iii. Remember-you are in control of setting your own definition of success absent of other's viewpoints and expectations.

5. Relationships within our school community (colleagues, staff, admin, parents)

a. Katie

- i. Everyone has something to contribute to your band program. Learn to be gracious, open minded and also filter...if you are young or new, chances are you will receive more advice than you ever asked for
- ii. Admin are key to fighting small battles such as rehearsal space, if a parent is upset about a student's placement in an ensemble, and getting permission to travel. Befriend them & let them know you are on their team
- iii. Parents are some of your greatest resources. They have hearts of gold and always want to help. Use them! And never forget how much you appreciate them

b. Corey

- i. Remember it takes a village to raise a band program
- ii. What does your (and the band program's) visibility look like on campus and community?
- iii. Don't be the best kept secret in town!

c. Kerry

- i. It's ALL about relationships.
- ii. Respect every person and value their role/contribution
- iii. Everyone wants to be part of a community, let them be part of your.

6. Last words of wisdom

a. Katie

- i. It's easy to get burnt out. It's easy to doubt yourself. It's easy to compare. Focus on your WHY, put on your blinders & get to work. Our job is incredibly unique - don't waste your time thinking about others or letting your mind snowball negative thoughts out of control, you get to do what very few ever get to experience

b. Corey

- i. Remember that life and work coexist. Maintain a *healthy* balance between the two. You're a human first... then a director.

c. Kerry

- i. Why did you become a band director? Keep your answer at the center of every decision you make in order to build a healthy future.