



Setting up **Conditions & Routines** is a Stage-Manager or Composer part of your creative practice

Part of the creative process is creating *conditions* that are most conducive to your *getting to* and *getting through* your routine, whether it's musical practice, marketing, exercise, meditation, cooking – or whatever routines you've committed to.

Your routine is a guideline for action. It's like a chord chart in that it's simply a *structure* that *supports* your activity. Creating both your conditions and your routine is an ongoing process. That process follows 3 steps:

Stage 1: Set Conditions, Routine & Expectations –

- **Conditions:** Set up your studio in the way that most delights you and makes you feel like practicing *using the resources you have right now* (ie don't hire builders to rebuild your studio right now – save that for later)
- **Routine:** Try to follow the same routine including practicing in show order
- **Expectations:** Be aware of your expectations

Always have your **work binder** with you when you practice. In each practice session write down distracting thoughts as they come to you. At first you may barely make it through the session because of all the distractions from "I'll never do this!" to "Crap! I forgot to call Bill!" Just write them down and go back to your practice.

Stage 2: Practice/Rehearse

Every day you want your routine to combine warm-ups, technical development (working on the parts of the work where you get tripped up or stuck – or parts you simply need to learn) – and run-through. From the very first session, you should take at least 15 minutes to run through at least one minute of each piece in your program as *if you could play the whole thing*. At least once a week, you need to run through the whole show as *if you can already play it*, videotape it, watch it and take notes.

Stage 3: Re-assess your conditions, routines & expectations – and Reset

After each session, improve ONE THING in the conditions. If you want to improve more, go ahead, but don't spend more than an hour doing it. Don't avoid practicing by 'perfecting' the conditions. But do improve the conditions.

YOUR MINDSET for Stage 3: What can I do to make it EASIER for me to practice or execute my routine? Go completely into the mind of parent or teacher making it easy for a child to do or remember something; or of a facilitator making it easy for the President to do the work or make the decisions she needs to make.

The first 10-15 times you practice or rehearse, you should expect to re-assess, reset & redocument your practice routine and conditions between each session. That might be as simple as shifting a chair, adding a lamp so you can see the music better – or as fundamental as changing your studio location, buying video lights, or adding a backdrop curtain.

Your goal is to create practice conditions that:

- Are as much like the theater or venue you'll be performing in
- Will look best on video

Assume that you'll continue to tweak ... and that you'll likely need to compromise.