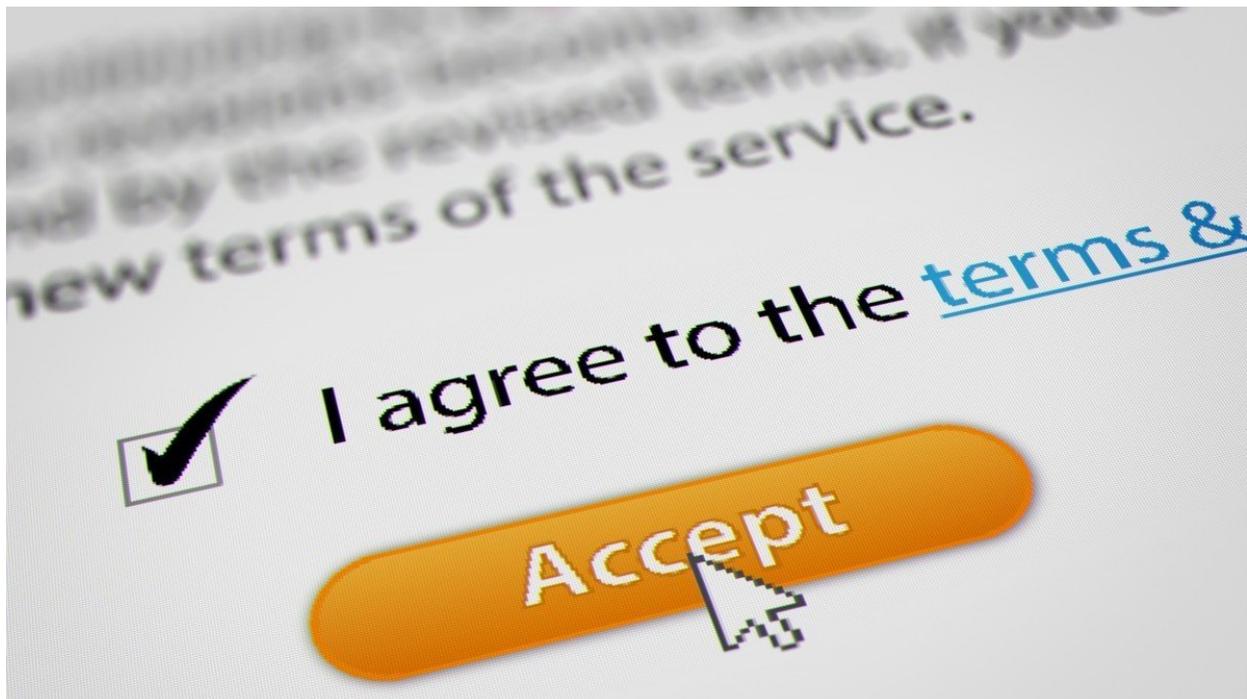


Read the Fine Print

All of us are familiar with the ubiquitous “Terms of Service” that accompany many software downloads and online memberships, but I am going to go out on a limb and say almost no one actually reads what is contained within the agreement. For all you know you could be consenting to surrender a kidney immediately upon your 5th download of a Taylor Swift album. Although this example is (hopefully) extreme, we are in such a hurry to get to the “fun” that we eagerly click “accept” without a second thought.



REAL Deliberate Practice

It may not come with a box to tick, but any professional pursuit or aspiration of excellence comes with its own set of “terms”. Clarity and acceptance, rather than avoidance and ignorance, are your best assets to navigate the sometimes frustrating and non-linear process of becoming really good at something. Thanks to the work of author Malcolm Gladwell in “Outliers”, popular consciousness is aware of the “10,000 hour rule”. This “rule” proposes, through a series of studies and anecdotes, that it takes 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to achieve mastery of a skill. Most people focus on the time element of 10,000 hours, but many misunderstand what deliberate practice actually means. First, the word “deliberate” implies that the practicing must be done with intent and purpose and not just mindless repetition. Repetition is the “Mother of Skill”, but only AFTER desired result has been achieved.

Purpose and intent, however, do not fully describe the key component of deliberate practice that is frequently lost in popular descriptions of the technique. Mastery requires 10,000 hours of deliberate practice AT THE EDGE OF YOUR ABILITY. This means that the path to excellence is paved with significant time examining your shortcomings. Frequently, practicing can be what I would call “type 2 fun”. “Type 1 fun” is fun while you are doing it (performing a concert, going to the beach, parties, etc.). “Type 2 fun” is fun after the fact based on the reward of the satisfaction of the outcome that the activity yields (practicing challenging repertoire, running a marathon, studying). I find that the best practice is always balanced between the two types of fun: too much type 1, and you are destined for amateur status; too much type 2 leads to burnout and saps motivation. One way to help achieve this balance is to celebrate every little triumph. Talk to yourself the way that you would talk to a peer in a Master Class setting. You praise their successes and growth, and then offer observations and suggestions for improvement. Believe me: if telling someone that they sounded like garbage (as we will wantonly do to ourselves) was the quickest way to help them improve, I would do it. It would save me a lot of time, but part of managing your practice is to be flexible with your approach. Sometimes when things aren’t going your way you need a hug, and sometimes you need a swift kick in the ass.

At the end of the day, it is crucial to remind yourself of one simple fact: YOU signed up for this. Failure is necessary for improvement. Understand that the ups and downs of growth are inevitable, unavoidable, and in fact desirable. You can also choose to adopt the creed of exceptional performers: Love It All. This is a choice and a discipline and does not always come easily. It transcends mere acceptance. The Stoics have a phrase that embodies this perspective: Amor Fati. In English this translates roughly to “Love your Fate”. It is used to describe an attitude in which one sees everything that happens in one's life, including suffering and loss, as good or, at the very least, necessary. This is more nuanced than the commonly repeated phrase “everything happens for a reason”. It is the purest form of the understanding that worry and regret are abuses of imagination, and the only thing we have control over is how we contextualize and internalize experience.

For me, it is helpful to think of the pursuit of excellence as a relationship rather than an activity. Any successful long term relationship requires both parties to accept each other as they are, and not an idealized version or a work-in-progress to be molded and changed. As comedian Chris Rock so eloquently states, “You’ve got to love the CRUST of a motherf-er.” Not just tolerate: LOVE. Once you can embody this understanding and welcome your pursuit in its entirety, you are truly ready to click “ACCEPT”, knowing that you are entering the contract with your eyes wide open.

Or not. Stay ignorant. Someone needs to keep Tay Tay supplied with organ meat.



FRACTAL FRIDAY TOPICS!

Please submit comments or suggestions for future topics to davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com

NITEHOOD Coupon!

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FRACTAL FORUM: Friday Forums are on “pause” for the moment

NEXT FORUM:

SPECIAL GUEST Robin Kesselman on “Bow Speed Geometry”

1/31 10 AM PT

We will continue our multi-week “deep dive” into Fractal Fingering on February 7.

Every SUNDAY on Zoom at 10AM PT!

Visit www.fractalbassist.com to get the invite(s). Everyone is welcome.

FRACTAL BASSIST Channel on YouTube (Coming Soon!)

This invite-only YouTube channel will be a continuation, development and place to share these ideas and principles. Although the entire Fractal Fingering course and samples are available online and at DiscoverDoubleBass.com, this channel will provide a forum for more in-depth content and to address questions on a more individual basis.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas you'd like explored, or inspiration you'd like to share please email: davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com.

With Love,

D