



Episode 55: Motivation, Movement & Health

with Dr. Hannah Murray

Today's we were speaking to Dr. Hannah Murray, violinist of Active Violinist and Corpsonore I first connected with Hannah through Instagram, I believe, and I was immediately drawn to both how knowledgeable and how real and relatable she is with everything she does.

In this conversation we're going to talk about the important roles teachers have in their student's lives, How her motivation changed from a young musician to her time at Interlocken. We cover the benefit of movement as musicians and the importance of creating structure for students who need it as well as the importance of creating spaces where it's safe to share how what we're doing affects us, so that our teachers can help us find better ways.

I feel like we just scratched the surface of what we could have talked about, so I'm excited to have you listen and also to invite Dr. Hannah Murray back so we can talk more. Enjoy!

Christine Goodner:

Welcome everyone. I'm excited today to be here with Dr. Hannah Murray. And Hannah, I was hoping you could start by introducing yourself and letting people know what you do in the world of music.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Hello, I am Dr. Hannah Murray, and I'm very excited to be here talking with you, a teacher and musician in the world that I greatly admire. So it's an honor and a privilege to be here, number one. Number two,

I am based in Los Angeles, and I think for the most of my career I've worn equal hats as performer and teacher and under the teacher hat, I think it divides into several hats. It's a very complicated hat wearing process where I teach young students. (laughs) I have private studio and I also teach professionals how to upgrade and enhance and optimize what they're doing through Timani. And recently, I took on the job of being an orchestra director at an all-girls school. So that is my newest hat in the collection.

Christine Goodner:

You do have a lot of different roles there, which is exciting. I'm excited to talk about practice with you today.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah.

Christine Goodner:

Let's just zoom back to when you first started playing music and learning music. How old were you and did you start on the violin or what did you play first?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

So I did. I started on the violin. My mom tells the story that we had a block party. I was like four or five. We had a block party and somebody on the block brought their niece to play violin and she was sitting there or standing there playing. And apparently I turned to my mom and I said, I want to do that. And my mom was like, okay. And so she went up to the girl's mom, and the girl's mom ended up being a violin teacher, and that was my first teacher. And I loved her to the ends of the earth. I just thought she was the best thing ever. And I actually still reflect on that relationship as a teacher myself because it was so foundational for me in why I loved music and why I could push myself through the hard parts of doing music.

Christine Goodner:

I love that - there was a research, I don't have it memorized where we saw it at, but I've read research that the relationship between the student and the first teacher, it's really about how that teacher makes a student feel even more than their training or their playing the ability of their selves. I remember a colleague who had her doctorate was like, this sort of feels wrong, but also that feeling the student gets that makes them love music.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

I totally agree with that. And I find that I do have a doctorate and I have a lot of parents who are like, oh, she has a doctorate. She's going to be the best for my 4-year-old. And I'm like, maybe not to take my students away, but it really is finding that magic connection to get them. Her name was Jana. She lives in Seattle. She's still alive. I think she still teaches, I'm not sure, but she just made me laugh in every single lesson, hysterical laugh. I just thought it was the most fun. Her analogies were so funny about how to do things right with the bow arm, and she never squashed my competitiveness at that age. She let it thrive, but she didn't let me turn into a maniac. You know what I mean? She never squashed it, but she kept it in check. So it was so much fun. I think about it a lot, especially with little students.

Christine Goodner:

I think that's really key that we want teachers who know a lot about what they're teaching, of course.
But

Dr. Hannah Murray :

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Christine Goodner:

Think nurturing that relationship with your child and their teacher,

Dr. Hannah Murray :

You're

Christine Goodner:

Saying you remember that for a lifetime as a student?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yep. Oh yeah. Absolutely.

Christine Goodner:

Well, do you remember what you felt about practice at that time? It sounds like you were very competitive, so maybe that fueled some things, but

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yes.

Christine Goodner:

Did you love it or was it hard or a combination?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Well, my mom at the time was like, this is so cute. I'm going to buy a violin and we'll practice together. And so little, I was a Suzuki kid from the get go, from my first lessons, I believe my mom had a violin and was trying to practice with me, and she said she quit. She had a really mean teacher because in our practice sessions, I would turn around and tell her she was doing everything wrong and she just felt really defeated. So that practice strategy didn't work for a while. My parents had, I think I had to earn my TV time through practice. So we had little poker chips and I got a poker chip per maybe 10 minutes of practice or something. And in my mind at that time, those young years, I kind of had like, okay, so I like to watch this on Friday and that's 30 minutes and I like to do this.

So I kind of had it calced out that I had to get my minimum to watch all my shows and get all my chips. So I will say that for years when I was younger, I needed a lot of external motivation. I needed to be getting things to make it happen. And then I do remember, I think it's very common, I run into this with my own students around 11, 12, 13, where they want to quit and they're just like, I don't want to do this anymore. It's not fun. It's hard. All my friends are out going to the mall or do people go to the mall anymore? I don't even know. But they're doing the contemporary equivalent of going to the mall and you lose a lot of momentum. And I remember that being a really hard part of my musical journey was

that period where I was, I was good, but I had no motivation and to push through it, I don't even remember what it was. My mom kept saying, if you want to quit, just quit. I don't want to every do this. Then I was, I don't going to prepare for them, and I should ask her what got us through that period. But I do remember the sense of it was hard for both of us. It was hard for her. It was hard for me, but I'm really happy that I didn't give up.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah, thanks for sharing that.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

No, I find this with a lot of my parents and students where they're like, it's just a chore to get her to practice. It's just this, just that blah, blah, blah, so hard. And I always tell them, it was the same for me. It was the same for me. I struggled so much with it. When you get to the other side of it, you're going to be so happy you got there and good luck. I also run into so many adults when I'm outperforming who say, oh, I played violin, or I was an orchestra, and then I quit. And they regret it. Every single one of them regrets it. And so at that 11, 12, 13 age, when you give them the choice to quit, you have to also know that they could be walking up to a professional at a wedding ceremony going, I wish I'd never quit. That's the momentum to get across that bridge.

Christine Goodner:

Yes. I was thinking that as you were speaking, that even if I just go to the doctor or anywhere and people say, what do you do? And then I tell them what to do, they're like, oh, I wish my mom hadn't let me quit. I wish my parents hadn't let me quit.

And in their mind it was like, why? But it's probably because they were begging to quit or these arguments were going on. Or the parent is saying, I don't want to fight with you about this or pay for this if you're not doing it. And I too would say to people, I always see the students that stick with it come out the other side, and sometimes they come out the other side at the beginning of high school and sometimes they come out the other side their senior year in high school. And I've had a few years where I'm like, should I keep teaching this student? But they always come out the other side,

Dr. Hannah Murray :

And I have colleagues. We're all the same. I think every parent, in my experience, every parent goes, it must not be like this for professionals if you're good. It's always been easy. They've always wanted to do it. No, I have so many colleagues who were, like, my parents told me I couldn't go play with my friends until I practiced, so I just stood there and cried. And there's the whole spectrum of how we all got through it, but we all when we hit that patch, for sure.

Christine Goodner:

Yes. I think it's so important to talk about. That's part of why I do this podcast, in fact, because I think it can feel like, oh, well, if they're meant to do this, they don't hit these roadblocks or go through these down periods. And it's probably something about child development and brain development and like you're saying, motivation comes from outside of us and then suddenly we have to figure out how to have it come from within for it to get us through the rest of the way.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Totally, totally. If you're listing parents, don't give up.

Christine Goodner:

Yes. If you take nothing else from this conversation, know that you are doing something good for your child to keep going. But I think also we can think about how do I help spark that internal motivation for my child? It's not like we're just going to be miserable forever, but are there things we can do to spark that and help them with that? Do you remember, even though I know you don't remember what got you out of that particular period, do you remember what started to motivate you as you got older?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Well, I remember that there was a lot of ego involved in that era of my life and that I was good in my group or at my school. I was kind of the only violin player who was that accomplished. And so I was definitely motivated by the like, well, I got to keep up appearances. I got to still be the best. But then when I went to high school, I really wanted to go to Interlochen, which my parents were like, well, then you have to practice because you can't just go if you're average, you have to get accepted. And I think that was a big motivator to push me out of it. And when I was there, it certainly was. You look around and you go, whoa, there are really good. I'm at high school with really, really good musicians. And now for me, it felt like I really had to keep up. I was no longer a star. And that was definitely very motivating.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah, I love that. I think that to me, speaks to the environment we're in

Dr. Hannah Murray :

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Christine Goodner:

Really motivate us. Sometimes as parents and families, we can think about what environment can I put my child in or along with our teacher's advice to help that happen? Because in a way that's still external motivation. It was still

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Like,

Christine Goodner:

I want to be part of this thing outside of myself.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

And I will say I have students who I find they don't thrive in, if they're only in private lessons, they might've started in private lessons and they hit that 11, 12, 13, 14, and they're just kind of like me. And then you enroll them in youth orchestra and all of a sudden their whole social circle is in orchestra. And then they're like, oh, well now Betty Sue is practicing every weekend, so I'm going to practice too. And then they want their friends to be in their studio with them. So it becomes kind of a nice recruiting tool too sometimes. But also all of a sudden they're motivated because they have to show up on Saturday mornings or whenever and their friends are there and it's more fun, the social element. So I think, but

then I have students who do that and they hate it. It's just not their cup of tea. So it's just really finding the things that really resonate for the students. I think.

Christine Goodner:

I agree. And there is that social peer piece that's really common for teenagers that I think 11, 12, suddenly that developmental shift happens and practicing with us as their parents at home is not enough anymore.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

So lame. It's so lame. It's hard as a

Christine Goodner:

Parent to grapple with, but it's healthy for them to want that social environment. So I love that.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah, definitely.

Christine Goodner:

Do you remember anything in particular being hard about practice or say when you were at Interlochen and suddenly you're like, okay, I know I need to work hard to be here. What did practice feel like at that point? Do you remember?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah, practice. Well, so, so I was in Seattle when I first started violin, and then my dad took a job overseas. So I went from being a Suzuki kid hardcore and really thriving in that to Royal Academy, RBSM or whatever, which is a totally different approach to learning music that is very heavily focused on reading music and a lot of music theory. And I was nine when we moved, and my playing was much better than my reading, and that was really hard for me. And then to go from that to Interlochen was another big transition in how they were teaching. So I wasn't ready. And I think every student's really different with this. I wasn't ready to do a lot of the self-analysis of my playing and my practice at a really high and sophisticated level at that point in high school, I think I was still kind of struggling with all of the changes and transitions of teaching styles and all of that.

And my teacher at Interlochen was, I don't remember what he'd give me, but the scale system I used in England for instance, was not what he used. So then I had to learn a whole different way to play scales, which I never even thought you had a different way to play scales. I thought the scale was a scale and then welcome to being a violin player. So all those transitions were really hard for me. But when I got to college, I had a teacher who I love, love, love, love, love, and she was super structured and she structured your practice time in a very organized way. You do this and then you do this, and then you do this, and then you do this, and then you do this, and this is how much time it should spend and this is how much you should.

And that helped me so much because I felt like I could look at every practice session and feel like I had accomplished something. Did I practice that? Yes. Did I do that? Yes. Did I spend enough time? Yes. Before it felt like kind of a nebulous. Did you do your three hours or did you practice your scales? Well, yes, I practiced my scales, but then I went to a lesson and you didn't do them, but I'd worked really hard on them. So then it was kind of confusing. And so I am a person and I'm relearning this about myself

with this new job. I'm a person who thrives with structure, schedule, structure, practice, structure, whatever it is. It's got to be a lot of structure so I can look at my day and go, did I accomplish something? And can I build in enough time to have that extra? But that to me has to come after checking a couple boxes.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah, I think that's really interesting to think about. And there could be students, if you're listening to this, your own child for example, that too much structure is hard for them. There's students on either side of that. But it's great. You found a way to practice where you felt like you knew you had done what you were supposed to have done.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

And I think the knowing is a payoff. I feel like if you worked really hard and then you get to a lesson and you're just told, no, that's not right. The confusion level of that can be really disheartening. I feel like you should have a win in every lesson for a student. I really try to do that for my kids when I watch them play, when I'm like, I thought I said that so clearly. And they come in and they play it, not how I said to play it. And I'm like, I don't understand, but I need to give them a win in this so that when I send them home to practice this again, they feel like they can do it, but also they know more clearly what they're supposed to do.

Christine Goodner:

Well, I think some of those experiences make us a better teacher. We realize what we needed and then we can give that to our students.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yes, yes. For sure. Yeah, and it's amazing to me. When I was a student, I just thought teachers were teachers and you just went and they were them and you were you and whatever. And then as a teacher, you're like, every student, I'm a different person because I have to be a little chameleon to get the best out of them. Some students love to be told no, or keep your guardrails really tight so they know where you are. And some kids love to be able to feel really free. They can dance around in a lesson and then walk out and tell their parents, oh, we didn't do anything, but I danced to Twinkle Twinkle little story. You have to be able to do the whole thing so seamlessly. And I used to find that really exhausting. But now you look at all these little people and it's just, you kind of marvel at it that you could have four students in a row playing the same thing, and the way you're going to teach it to them is going to be very, very different with the same result. It's kind of amazing.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah. Yeah, I agree with that. I think it keeps what I do. Interesting. I can never be bored because it's never the same. People say, don't you get tired of teaching twinkle over and over? And I'm like, oh, I don't even really think about, oh, here I am teaching Twinkle again. I'm just teaching that student and trying to figure out those things you're talking about.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

What is it that makes you tick? Right? Yes.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah. I find that exciting sometimes as the parent practicing with your child, just knowing that we have to do that with every student we teach, and we've been teaching a while also, we need to do that with our own children. We're practicing with them. Sometimes the teacher says, practice this thing, and then you have to really rack your brain and be creative to get them to do the thing at home.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah. Yes.

Christine Goodner:

And that's just so normal.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

So normal. Just want to put that out there. So normal. And sometimes I have, and I think the other thing is always, especially when they're little in Suzuki, you want the parents involved. So the parents are in the room watching their kid do something that they're like, why are they mooring at you? Or why are they doing something that the parent finds it to be like, oh my gosh, no, no, no. Behave. Stand in line. And you watch this kid put a straight jacket on trying to do what their parent thinks is right for that lesson. And it's, again, I go back to when I don't remember ever moving at my teacher doing anything like that, but I never want those kids to walk out of a lesson going, that's not a fun environment. So if we have to be Simone Biles while we play Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and do the splits, as many of my little girls needed to do this summer during the Paris Olympics, we're going to do it.

Christine Goodner:

And I think as the parent that they can feel like a lot of pressure because we want to show that we've done a good job at home with the practice, for example. I remember feeling that pressure. So I can see the parent's side of that. And I think just getting to know your teacher and see what your teacher's comfortable with, but I don't need the student to stand perfectly still and have no silliness for me because I actually kind of enjoy seeing what makes them excited.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Same. Exactly. Yeah. We're going to have a whole violin division of the Olympics in 2028, I think, because I had so many little students who were so inspired by the gymnastics. Yes.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah, absolutely. I love that. I love that. Well, was thinking as you were describing all the different hats that you wear as a musician and in your world. Now, we could talk about a lot of different areas of your own practice now in the current day, but what are you excited about or thinking about most with your own practice, especially I love reading about your yoga background.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah, so let's see. When did it start? I started a timani certification, which I'll explain a little bit more about in a second, in about four years ago. And I just finished up all of the requirements and whatever, and timani is a modality of addressing musician issues and problems, but also technical upgrading. I would say that's really where I love it specifically for musicians, by musicians. And it really goes deep on the anatomy of what we're asking our body to do at any given point from what are our hips doing and

the muscles in our hips to what are my hands doing and what are the muscles in the hands? I felt like timani gave me permission to inhabit my body in a really freeing way as a musician that instead of technique being something that looked a certain way, technique was something that accomplished certain things.

And for a long time, I felt like I was trying to look a certain way. My fingers needed to bend here, and they needed to hold like this. The rules said this, and then I started to go, but that hurts, or it's really uncomfortable for me, or I can't do that and do whatever the bow stroke was or whatever. So after completing all of the things I had to do, I had to give a lot of workshops and I had to give a lot of lessons and do a lot of reading and all the stuff. After that, I decided, well, I really want to go back into a self-study and I want to take this to my pedagogy, to my subject, and to my flesh and to my gian, and really start to glue them together. So my practice right now looks a lot like video myself and watch it and analyze what I see going on in myself and then add some timani exercises to it and then reevaluate. And for me, this has become a really fun process because I am actually my own teacher now.

I am the expert. I have a lot of insight into what I want things to look like, and I also know what it feels like as I'm videoing it, and it's easier to teach other people how to do it when I'm more comfortable with the difficulty of trying to embody it myself. So this has been a lot of my practice. There've been techniques, I dunno about you, maybe you're a better person than me, Christine. But there have been techniques in my life that I'm like, well, I'm not good at it, so I'm just going to try not to do it in public. Playing thirds, that's one of 'em. Apo, staccato, definitely another one. And I just try to avoid them in repertoire if I'm going to be kind of highlighted and now I just feel like I'm like, you know what? No, I have so many more answers and interests and approaches to these types of things that I just felt like I couldn't do. Now the question is, well, why did I think I couldn't do them? And so what can I do to do them? And that's where my practice is right now. So I'm still practicing all the nerdy violin things, but with a very different lens. I think,

Christine Goodner:

Oh, I love that, a real growth mindset. Or now I have some tools that I didn't have before,

Dr. Hannah Murray :

But also now I'm ready to shine the mirror on myself in a way that I didn't like to do before, which for a long time I resisted. I was like, I don't want to. It's not fun to look in the mirror every day and see that thing that I don't like every single time. And so I felt like I had to get to a place where I was like, okay, I'm ready for it. I'm ready to do this. It's going to be ugly. It's not going to be cute, but I want to fix it. So that's my practice.

Christine Goodner:

I love that. I think that kind of encapsulates what's hard about practice no matter what our age, somebody's going to see all my flaws and they're going to be just right in my face, and I have to deal with that. It's hard.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

I know. Yeah, it'ss funny because there's been times in my life where practice has felt like meditation. It's something I have to do every day to make myself feel settled and grounded. And then there are times where practice feels like I don't want to know myself that well. I don't want to have to look at myself like this. I just want to do the things I'm really good at and be in that zone. And actually, my teacher in college, Sally O'Reilly, she teaches at University of Minnesota. She's fabulous. And she gave

the same talk. I still remember this. She gave the same talk to me and one other student within the same day. And she told me we were doing subject bowing exercises or something, and she said, Hannah, these exercises are like your daily meditation. You'll feel so much better after you do them. And I was like, oh, okay, I can do that. And then two lessons later, she told somebody, I forgot who this is. Brushing your teeth, you have to do it every day or you'll get cavities. Both are true. I thought that was great.

Christine Goodner:

Both are true. Yeah. I think I could see that if we want to kind of ride the edge where we're improving all the time, we want to have some of both the meditative feel that we just love experiencing and makes us feel good. And then the part where we're seeing what needs improvement. And there's probably a balance that needs to be had there to keep improving and to love it.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Definitely. Yeah. And I think in athletics, well, specifically marathon training, I think too specifically, I have a colleague who is really into this 80/20, have you heard about this? Where 80% of the time you're doing 20% effort, 20% of the time you're doing 80% effort. It applies in practice too. I think our stamina for growth and that we can't do it a hundred percent all the time, every practice session. I can't go in there and be like, oh, this feels terrible. This feels terrible addressing my flaws. Here I go. I don't have the endurance to do that every time. So it's a balance of where can it be easy and where can it feel very comfortable and where can I then have this 20% of discomfort? But I'll say I try to share some of this practice on my social media page so that people can really see practice this stuff.

The glamor of thumb exercises, for instance. But I was practicing this last week. I'd been doing a bunch of thumb exercises and a bunch of hand exercises, and then I was playing this horribly, definitely something that I would never want to play for fun Road 23 in case anybody wants to look it up. It's just all the things I don't thrive at. And for weeks, I had just been practicing this being like, wow, that I just am not inspired by my own playing. And then this last week I picked it up and I was like, it clicked. Things finally clicked. Oh my gosh. And it just felt like I'd given myself a gift and I was skipping around the halls and just put me in a great mood. So if you do the hard work, if you put it in one day, it'll just, you'll wake up and it'll be there. Your body just has to catch up with your goals.

Christine Goodner:

I love that. Thanks for sharing that. I think that's really, sometimes we have to take that longer view. And Dr. Molly Gabriel came on recently and talked to us about neuroscience in the brain, and one of the things she was talking about is just how it's like the in-between time that your brain's actually working on the changes it needs to help you actually learn the thing. And sometimes we see the results later and not in that moment when we feel like we're doing that 80% effort, 20% of the time, it's like later it's like, oh, it came together, but it can't happen instantly just because of the way our brains work. Oh,

Dr. Hannah Murray :

She's fabulous.

Christine Goodner:

Isn't she great?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Right. Yeah, exactly. So part of, I think there's a little bit of hope and a little bit of just the hope that it'll pay off and the knowing that it will. So you sit there in these really uncomfortable moments with yourself going, this sounds terrible and it feels terrible, and I hope one day it doesn't. Also, knowing if I do this enough, it will those two together, and then it might be next week, and it might be the next day. I will say I've been practicing that 18 for three weeks, and every time I pick it up, I'd go, this sounds terrible until this week. And then I was like, oh my gosh, the album comes out next month. No, I'm just kidding. The A two album.

Christine Goodner:

I love it.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah, the Etude album.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah. Yeah. Thanks for talking about that. I think if you're a parent or family member helping a young student practice just working with your teacher to talk about if you're feeling that way about some particular assignment, maybe your teacher has different ways you could practice it and new ideas of how to help you get to the other side of that. And also they can probably give you some reassurance how normal it is that it takes a while. And I think that's very helpful to hear when you're helping a young student through.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Definitely. Definitely.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah. Well, and then I definitely want us to share in a moment where people can connect with you and find you, but I think when we're talking about all this hard work or discomfort and everything, it's important to talk about the health of our body and mental health and add that piece in because what we're not talking about is being in physical pain and powering through that for 20% of our practice. So let's address that before we wrap

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Up. Yes. Well, yeah, physical health is something, I mean, even now I teach an orchestra class. I have middle school and I have upper school or high school, and I make all my students warm up every day and they look at me. Some of them come into class and they go, this isn't fitness class. I expect a call from you in 20 years with a big old thank you. Okay, you might not want to do it now, but this is it. And I think that in music, it's really hard for us to understand the nuanced relationship of our nervous system and our physical body and the anxiety it takes to get on stage or the anxiety to put yourself in a new situation where you feel like you're going to be judged or you feel in some way unsafe, but you're walking on a concert safe.

There's no tiger out there who's going to eat you. But that relationship of tension in the body and safety and security in the nervous system is kind of an essential component of education and learning. And we need to create an environment where that can actually happen. And it's very hard to cultivate that in a situation where people are stressed and very tense. And I know this from personal experience

especially, but I'd also know there's a lot of research on this. And when we're talking about the health of our young musicians, I think that we could talk about really specific things about how much protein they need every day and how much this and how much that. But for me, the biggest part of the health conversation is that students feel safe or comfortable enough to say, this hurts or this is uncomfortable, or My body can't do that, or whatever it is about the way they feel because then you can have a conversation about it.

If it's stifled, you don't even know where they need help. And then from there, there's all of the kind of basic things I tell my students all the time, and I feel like my violent colleagues are like, don't encourage your students to do sports. They need to be serious musicians. But can I just tell you, sometimes I will tweak a shoulder or a neck playing a lot of violin, and then I'll go play pickleball for an hour with my husband and I'll feel so much better. There's an element of moving in ways that are not your normal static position of your instrument that are so beneficial for actually just holding that static position. So whether you have a kid running around in your backyard, burning off some steam with a ball, or they're on a track team or they play basketball, all of these things are so good for your development of your body awareness, your proprioception, your heart health, all of the health things.

These really come back to thriving as a young musician, that competition, how to help students have a healthy sense of competition without feeling like they're going to die on stage or that they're going to, it's the end of the world if they don't win. All of these things are really important, but they hit on two levels. They hit on a nervous system level or a psychological level and on a physical level. And the other part of this is that with the timani training I've done and the work I've done with professionals as well as I use it with my students, they usually give me all the eye rolls and I start going, did you know your elbow is a hinge joint? And I'm like, oh, here she goes again. But then later on they feel like, oh, well now if I have this issue in my pinky hurts all the time when I do this, I know where my resources is to get more answers and solutions, or I know the point or this finger shouldn't actually do that.

So now I know what not to keep doing. And that to me is, I think for myself, that is the chef's kiss of what I do. I want my students to know as much as I can teach them, but I also want them to know where they can get more answers or they know something's not right. And I think with teaching young people, there's only so much you can give them or teach them in a lesson or so. It's all about resourcing them around the experience, whether it's what orchestras are in your area that you can join, what chamber music programs, what concerts are going on that you can go see what physical therapists can help you. Really set yourself upright, can help who has an eye for whatever it is. And that really is what I'm passionate about at this point, is just making sure every little person is a inner circle of a bubble that's just resources all around them and they're just bumping into each other and sharing resources and up leveling everything together.

Christine Goodner:

I think that conversation's really important. I know sometimes the sports conversation's hard because at least where I am, it seems like the intensity of how many days that sports are practicing, it makes it hard to get your practice in. So I can see why some teachers feel frustrated by that fact. But what you're saying about moving your body and we're in a physical body that also helps us produce our music and we want to take care of it, I think that's so

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Important. And the lessons you learn. I run a platform, musicians Health and Wellness called Course, and I'll tell you more about that in a minute. But we had a great physical therapist in Australia come on and say, professional musicians should count working out as part of their practice time because you

have to maintain your levels of physical health in order to be a musician. And I was like, I can go to the gym and count 30 minutes, like check. I will do that. But it's so important because how are you going to make music if you can't make music? It's an essential component of what we do.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah. And I think that piece of the nervous system, psychological side is not, I mean, I guess it's just now being talked about more that I see related to music students. And I think maybe sports has been talking about it

Dr. Hannah Murray :

In

Christine Goodner:

The sports world that maybe they've talked a little bit about the psychological side longer that I've been hearing. But I am so happy to see more resources for teachers to think about how do I talk through this with my students?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah, I think it's really important. And I also find that my students, because I'm a millennial, cringe in their eyes and they're all Gen Zs and now I teach Gen Alphas, they expect it and quasi demand it from their teachers in a way that I would've never thought I could. So it's part of their expectation of education, which I appreciate.

Christine Goodner:

I do too. I think it's a healthy thing for sure.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Me too.

Christine Goodner:

Well, thanks. This is such an interesting conversation. How can people connect with you if they want to find out more about what you do or hear more of your ideas?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

So I run a platform called Corino, C-O-R-P-S-O-N-O-R-E. And it's all about musicians, health and wellness. We are developing our next offering right now. So we have a podcast which has been on hiatus for a hot second and a newsletter with articles from leaders in the wellness field. And we are also on social media under that handle at cor Soor. And then if you want to watch me practice as a violin player and watch me get really nerdy, I'm active violinist on social media and I talk a lot about anatomy and violi things and just kind of the struggles and perspective sometimes of weird things I hear or see or don't make sense or really upset me. That's where I'm probably my most candid.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah, I love that. I think that's how we first connected was on Instagram from what I remember. So

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yes, definitely. And your book review is up on Corino, so if anybody wants to go read what I thought about Christine, good news book, then you can do it.

Christine Goodner:

Thanks for doing that. I appreciate it. I hope people, if you're listening to this and these ideas really connected with you and you want to hear more, I hope please connect with Hannah and follow some of her resources because even just getting on that newsletter and reading some of these ideas, I think helps keep it fresh in our minds

Dr. Hannah Murray :

And Oh yeah. I mean, I feel like sometimes you don't know what you don't know until you know it or see it and go, wait, am I supposed to know that? Or Wait, why would that matter? And then all of a sudden you can't turn back. So that's my whole mission.

Christine Goodner:

Yeah, thanks for sharing that. And we'll put some of those links in the show notes so people can find them easily.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Perfect.

Christine Goodner:

Well, before we go today, I always like to leave listeners with a practice tip that they can use this week as they're thinking about their own practice. It can be something we've already talked about today, but what would you like to leave listeners with this week?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

This is my favorite tip. I tell it to everybody because it transformed my experience. When you breathe in and you take a big breath when you're playing, when you're not playing, can you also feel a lengthening up your spine as well as an expansion out to the sides?

Christine Goodner:

I'm feeling myself breathing right now.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

I know everybody goes like, I don't know, can I? And if you can feel it without your instrument, can you then take that experience to the instrument? So when you pick up your violin, can you start to feel your lungs expand in your back and your shoulder area as well as in your chest? And that would be my tip.

Christine Goodner:

I love that. Can you say a little bit about why you think that's so important?

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Yeah. So for many reasons, number one, your lungs are actually bigger in the back than they are in the front. The way the diaphragm is shaped the separator of your gastrointestinal tract and your respiratory, it actually kind of dips down at the back. So you get these little extra pockets of lung at the back of our body. And if our posture isn't actually set up really effectively, it's very hard for us to access that part of our lungs. So that's number one. If you can't access it, it means that your posture too far forward, too chesty and not enough expansion in the back. And then number two, it also gives you access to the experience of connecting in a very positive and soothing way to a very emotional muscle in your body, which is your SOAs. And your SOAs connects your spine. It's the only muscle in the body which connects your spine to your legs, and it's thought to be a fight or flight muscle. It can be very emotional. It also interacts with your diaphragm, so it's very connected to your breathing. So if you can take these big, soothing, expansive breaths in the back of your body, you are sending signals through your system that you're in a very safe and relaxing place and it can take the load off this tension that can build up and bubble into our shoulders.

Christine Goodner:

Wow, what a great tip. I don't think anybody's given us such a, I dunno, a tip before. I love it.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Well try it and let me know what you think. That's always my check-in and grounding when I feel anxious or when I feel overwhelmed or scattered. Just to take those types of breaths really bring me back to square one. So

Christine Goodner:

I love that. Yeah. Well, thank you. My pleasure. It's been a pleasure to talk to you today and lots of good food for thought and lots of experiences I think a lot of people listening can relate to. So thanks for speaking with us.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Well, it's been an honor, so thank you for the invite. I'll come back anytime. I would love

Christine Goodner:

That.

Dr. Hannah Murray :

Thank you.

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