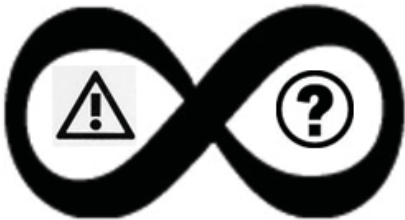

Notes from the Other CoEditor: An Examination of Conscience

Chris Trinidad

At the end and beginning of every school year I take some time to recollect and review. At a young age, my father nurtured me to think in broad terms and to try to see a bigger picture. As a young person in high school, my teachers taught me to dive for deeper meanings in order to become an effective future agent of change. During my undergraduate studies, I was blessed to encounter a philosophy professor who regularly engaged me to think critically. These experiences have taught me to avoid complacency and to stay aware of my thoughts and actions.

The following, then, are some of the questions I ask myself at the end and beginning of a school year. It's remarkable how some responses change depending on my frame of mind. Certainly, during the hustle and bustle of a busy school year it is difficult to engage in any kind of accurate assessment. That's why it is important for me to 'check-up' at the finish and at the start. To me, it's necessary to ask these questions to make sure that I am still on the right track and that my professional goals and objectives are still in alignment with my personal aims and intentions. I feel that these questions help to keep me honest and humble about my practice. I find that every time I engage in this examination of conscience I am reminded that I control the capacity to change my thinking patterns and habits of mind. I am in command of my actions. In a way, it prevents me from becoming cynical about any of the negative situations which may have occurred during the year.

These aren't the only questions to ask, of course. Each of us work and practice in different situations and if we take the time to look inside, I'm sure that the intuition of our hearts and the logic of our minds would honestly reveal which questions we'd need to ask ourselves. And so, I submit these questions here, with honesty and humility.



Did I wake up in the morning excited for what the day might bring? Was I simply going through the motions?

Did I enjoy the company of the people I worked with? Did I get along and work harmoniously with fellow faculty for the betterment of the students? Did my physical surroundings and workspaces keep me healthy or did they keep me from being healthy?

Was I open to new teaching ideas and theories? Or, did I readily dismiss these things and appeal instead to my experience? Was I entrenched in perceived 'tried and true' methods? Or, was I always experimenting with ideas to the detriment of 'what works'? Could I see the benefit and value of learning from fields apart from music? Was I balanced in my pedagogical approach?

Was I regularly involved in school life? Did I balance my school related activities with my personal responsibilities? Did I neglect myself and my personal goals in the activities of teaching? Did I continue to nurture my personal relationships? Did I have the time and energy to live a personal life at the end of the teaching day? Or, does the school consume me? Did I make time to make my own music? Did I find ways to continue developing my artistry?

Have I honoured and validated the gifts that each student-musician brings to the music classroom? Did I take care of both the talented *and* the trying? Could I see the joy in the eyes of student-musicians who discovered themselves while making music? Did I notice the confidence that exuded from the grins on their faces when they perfected their parts? Do I remember my own transcendent musical experiences? Did I remember to share these special moments with my student-musicians?

Do I still love what I do? And, at the end of every question are added questions to be asked: If not, why not? And if so, how so?

Chris Trinidad loves to question answers and answer questions. This endless and infinite cycle of pondering is one of the reasons why he continues to live an eclectic, rich, and varied life as a musician, teacher, scholar, and producer. When not engaged in any of these activities, he returns to completing his master's thesis while listening ever so intently to Pat Metheny's Question and Answer.

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