



Marketing: Mission & Message

Or...It's no longer 'Just piano lessons'

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What is marketing? The American Marketing Association defines it as:

The activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.

Casually, we may think of marketing as

Getting the word out about our studio

A way of finding students

We may believe that to get students, we need to

Run ads

Create a sales page

Print and distribute flyers

Build a website

While all this may be true, at its essence, marketing is the art and science of connecting your purpose with the people who need it most, so they can say yes to a better version of their lives.

No matter what route you take, **you must be able to articulate your mission through an authentic message that connects with your ideal client.**

We're going to some work right now, so grab a pen and paper.

1. Why do you do what you do, beyond money or survival?

-> Free-write your answer (2-3 minutes).

2. Now distill it into one sentence using this format:

"I help [who you help] to [what transformation you guide them through] so they can [deeper benefit]."

Example: "I help adults who want to improve their brain health through music learn to play the piano with joy and ease."

Worksheet Part 1: Define Your Mission

1. Who are you here to serve?

-> Be specific: age, stage, mindset, need.

2. What problem/issue do they face?

-> What do they feel stuck, confused, or discouraged about?

3. What transformation do you offer?

-> What changes for them after working with you?

Worksheet Part 2: Clarify Your Message

1. What do you want them to understand (deeply) about what you offer?
2. What story can you tell that shows your mission in action?
-> Personal, client-based, or metaphorical.
3. What invitation do you want to extend to them?
-> What's your call to action-what should they do next?

Worksheet Part 3: Put It Together

Use this sentence to start your message:

"If you're [struggling with X], I get it. That's why I created [your offer]-to help you [achieve Y], and become someone who can [Z]."

Example:

If you've always wanted to play the piano but stopped playing because you didn't think you had the talent or ability, I get it. That's why I teach the Simply Music method - to help you realize your dreams of playing and become someone who loves to play.

Revisiting Your Mission & Message

Let's pause for a minute. While you're off to a great start, let's consider the message of Neil's book, 'Music on Mars'.

Neil makes a compelling case that as technology reshapes humanity, creativity becomes more essential than ever, and music, especially the process of learning to play music, is a powerful vehicle to strengthen that creative capacity.

Creative capacity isn't limited to our musical creativity. It goes far beyond being self-expressed on the keyboard; rather, creative capacity is our ability to see opportunities, problem solve, create, plan, and execute ideas and concepts.

Why does this matter? If you're paying attention, you are aware of the exponential growth of AI around us. It's not only the power of the phone in your pocket, it's the advancements of (as cited by Neil in Chapter One):

- Global Connectivity
- Solar Energy
- Clean Water Access
- Cultured Food Production
- Vertical Farming
- Transportation
- Manufacturing
- Robotics
- Space Exploration
- Lifespan Extension
- Etc...

As Neil states, 'One certainty is that humanity needs to become the most creative version of our species ever –Human 2.0–described by Professor Hugh Herr of the MIT Media Lab as 'an era where technology will merge with our bodies and our minds to forever change our concept of human capability.'" (page 31).

Finally, if you're still wondering what this has to do with your mission & messaging, consider this. Neil states:

"This is where music enters the picture in a surprising and powerful way. Think of music as a gym for creative capability. Musicianship develops the same fundamental capabilities required by an entrepreneur adapting to market changes, a parent solving a family crisis, or a community addressing new challenges. These capabilities–pattern recognition, real-time adaptation, creative problem solving, collaborative thinking, and

innovative implementation—are universal tools for navigating an uncertain future.” page 48

Thinking about this statement, how might this impact your mission statement?

In his book, Neil goes on to discuss ‘Music as Critical Neurological Nutrition’ (Chapter 4). If you would like more fuel for your mission statement fire, consider this:

Neil asks, “ What if learning to play music could do for your brain what physical exercise does for your body? Imagine the impact: Just as running, weight lifting, or practicing yoga builds muscle, flexibility, and endurance, musical learning acts like a mental gym, activating a full range of cognitive functions.” page 57

Further, “ As science dives deeper into the effects of musical training, we see that music learning engages the brain in three primary and powerful ways:

It provides vast, multi-regional brain engagement, where auditory, motor, and executive functions work in sync.

It expands the brain’s neural connectivity and creates the pathways essential for cognitive health.

It enhances connectivity-driven creative capability - boosting the brain’s capacity to connect ideas, form novel associations, and engage in complex, creative problem-solving.” Page 57

For much more on this topic, read the book! The appendix of the book is devoted to Neurological Research, which will help you develop talking points for your specific target audience.

With this in mind, let’s take a few minutes to reconsider our mission statements. We want to be relatable, and we have the opportunity to be forward-looking educators who educate the right clients and enroll them in new possibilities. What could piano lessons mean to their child? What advantage might learning to play the Simply Music way give them?

For adult students, how might providing their brains with critical creative nutrition benefit them? What would it mean for them to be relevant, sharp, have great recall, and be open-minded?

For parents of children, what might this mean for their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment? How might this prepare their brain for an uncertain future?

How can you articulate this in your conversations - both verbal and written?

Where do you start?

I suggest: listening to Neil's TED Talk
 listening to Neil's Oxford Talk
 reading and referencing Neil's boo

If you want to set yourself apart in the vast world of music teachers, speak to the possibilities of the ever-evolving future.

It's no longer 'just piano lessons'. The stakes are higher and your mission, if you dare to accept it, is about developing Humans 2.0.

For more reading check out the Appendix at the end of 'Music on Mars' or check these out to begin your own research.

<https://simplecapacity.com/2015/08/playing-music-benefits-the-brain-more-than-any-other-activity/>

<https://www.inc.com/john-rampton/the-benefits-of-playing-music-help-your-brain-more.html>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10605363/>

<https://www.savethemusic.org/blog/research/benefits-to-the-brain/>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/why-is-music-good-for-the-brain-2020100721062>

<https://www.quittingculture.com/music-teachers-coach-2025>