

# **Helping Lawyers Manage Stress Through Creative Expression and Engagement**

**Creativity - Expression - Engagement**

**MUSIC**

*Why Music & Tips on How*



**But first.. A little about me,  
“professional destiny” and  
how we can apply creativity to  
our careers**

# Background and Artistic Work

- **Boston Conservatory** - BM in Vocal Performance
- **Indiana University** - MM in Instrumental Conducting
- **Nashville Symphony** - Nine Years on Conducting Staff
- **Zelda & National Geographic** - International Touring Productions
- **Guest Conducting Major Orchestras**
- **Teaching**
- **Intersection - Artistic Director & Conductor**
- Lullaby Project

# Wanting More, Rumbblings Inside and Pushing Back

**Curiosity**

**Feeling Contained and Isolated**

**Many Interests**

**Seeking Continual Growth**

**We are more than our work or status**

Our value is not defined by the number of gigs we have or our job title

**We get to decide what we want our careers to look like**

We don't have to follow existing paths and expected models

# Public Health

- **Path to Public Health** - The science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities (CDC)
- **Health equity** is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.
- **University of Alabama at Birmingham** - MPH Health Behavior
- **Health Behavior**
- Health behaviors are actions individuals take that affect their health.
- Social Scientist working in the **Music Cognition Lab** at Vanderbilt University Medical Center

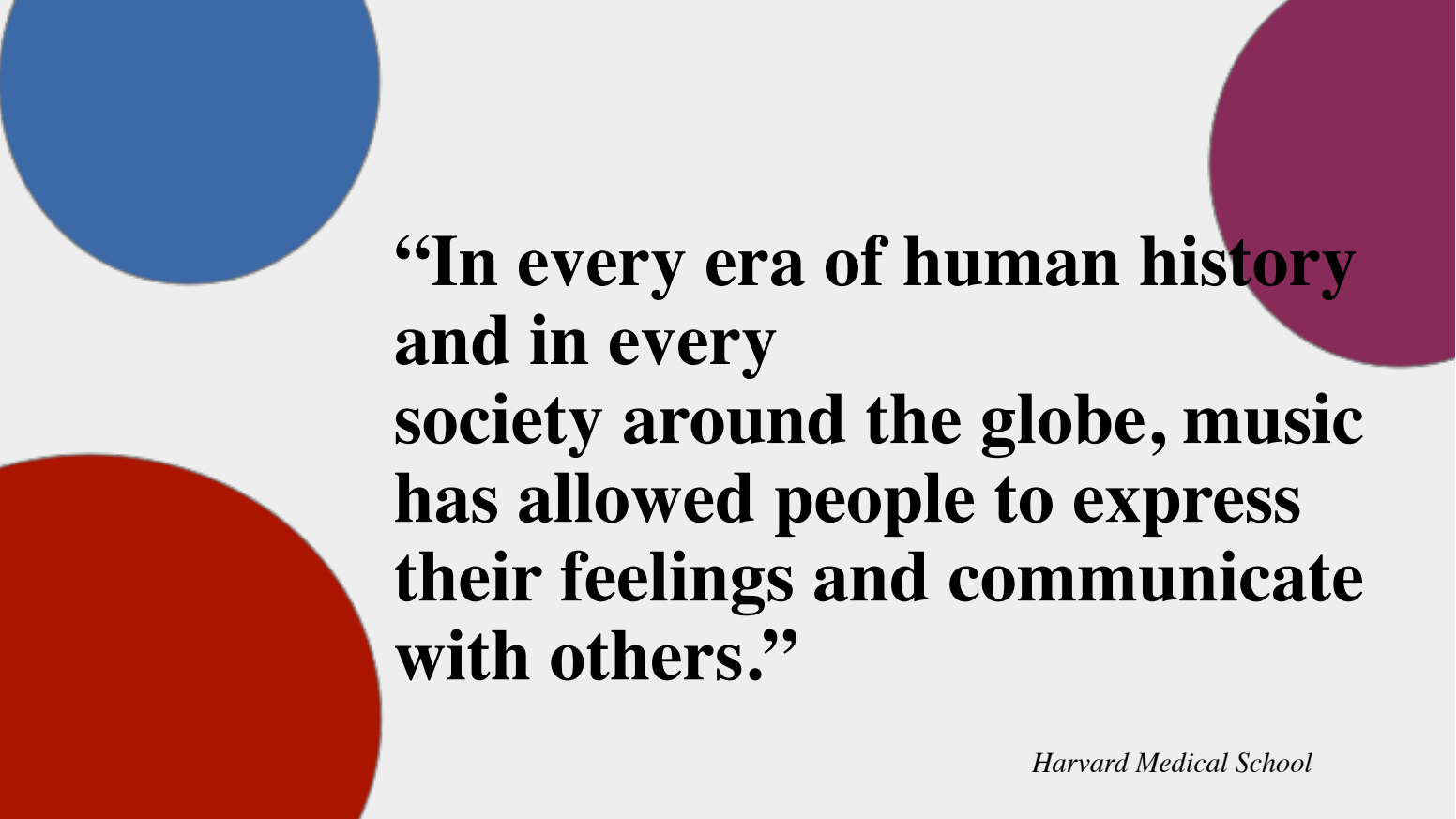
**You are many things**



# **Music and Health**

**The Power of Music to Impact Stress  
and Our Emotions**



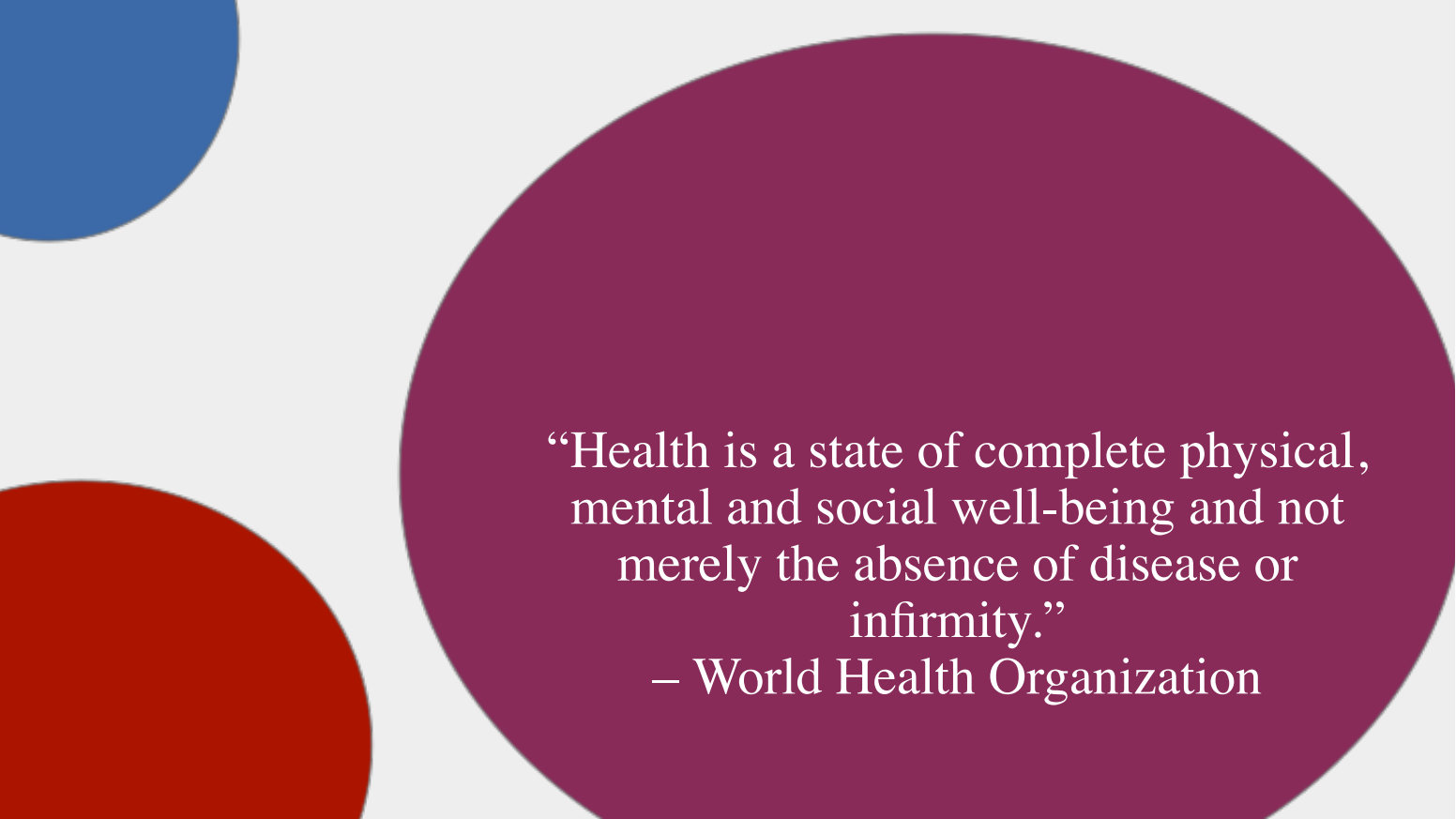


**“In every era of human history  
and in every  
society around the globe, music  
has allowed people to express  
their feelings and communicate  
with others.”**

*Harvard Medical School*

**Our Connection With Music is Personal**

# **Music Cognition Lab**



“Health is a state of complete physical,  
mental and social well-being and not  
merely the absence of disease or  
infirmity.”

– World Health Organization



## Musicality

How we interact and engage with music,  
from our genes to our brain to our  
behavior



We are all musical!

Musicality plays a role in all of our lives – whether we are performing, listening, practicing, or creating.

**What's Happening in the Field Today**  
**What We Know**  
**What You Can Do**

Musicality is an **essential part of being human**

Musicality is extremely **nuanced and complex**



The study of music and health is made **special by its interdisciplinary nature** - drawing from neuroscience, genetics, psychology, epidemiology, music performance, many fields of medicine, allied health professions, social science and more.

# The Broad Field of Music and Health

- Sound Health Network - An NIH - Kennedy Center Partnership
- BRAMS – International Laboratory for BRAIn, Music and Sound Research
- Center for Music in the Brain - Denmark
- Johns Hopkins Medicine Center for Music and Medicine
- Berklee College of Music Music and Health Institute
- NeuroArts Blueprint

# Fact Sheet from the NIH on Music and Health



# Physical Wellbeing

## Pain Reduction

- A 2016 review looked at 97 studies (9,184 participants) of music-based interventions for acute or chronic pain associated with a variety of health problems and medical procedures. **The overall evidence suggested that music-based interventions may have beneficial effects on both pain intensity and emotional distress from pain and may lead to decreased use of pain-relieving medicines.**
- A 2017 review of 14 randomized trials (1,178 participants) of music-based interventions for various types of chronic pain found that the interventions **reduced self-reported chronic pain and associated depressive symptoms, with a greater effect when the music was chosen by the participant rather than the researcher.**

# Mental Wellbeing

## Depression

- A 2017 review looked at 9 studies (421 participants) of music-based interventions in adults or adolescents with depression. There was moderate-quality evidence that adding music-based interventions to usual treatment improved depression symptoms when compared with usual treatment alone. **Music-based interventions also helped decrease anxiety levels and improve functioning of people with depression (for example, their ability to maintain involvement in work, activities, and relationships).**

# Mental Wellbeing

## Stress

- In a 2020 review with 104 studies (9,617 participants), investigators looked at the effects of a variety of music-based interventions on measures associated with stress, including both **physical measures (heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of stress-related hormones) and psychological measures (anxiety, nervousness, restlessness, and feelings of worry)**. **The music-based interventions had a small-to-medium sized beneficial effect on the physical measures and a medium-to-large beneficial effect on the psychological measures.**

# Social Wellbeing

- The US Surgeon General recently raised the alarm on the **epidemic of loneliness and isolation facing Americans**, with 58% of US adults experiencing loneliness.
- Social connection is known to be a protective factor for a range of health conditions including cardiovascular disease, dementia, anxiety and depression.
- Engaging in arts activities has shown a clear dose-response relationship **improving social well-being and flourishing (a state of positive mental health)**
- Music activities such as attending concerts, group singing, songwriting and composition positively impact cognitive health, social connection and mood, self-esteem and cultural inclusion. (Dingle et al., 2021)

# Emotional Regulation

How individuals manage, control and influence one's own emotional state

Engaging in music in daily life has been shown to be an effective tool to manage stress supporting the two primary methods of coping: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.

Music may provide

- Escapism
- Active-coping
- Self-distraction
- Acceptance
- Positive Reframing



# What You Can Do

# Engagement and Expression

## Active

- Singing
- Instrument Exploration
- Songwriting (Lyrics - Journaling)
- Movement
- Digital Music Creation

## Receptive

- Listening to Music (intentional focus or background)
- Guided Imagery with Music
- Playlist Creation
- Music Conversation and Reminiscence

# Engagement and Expression

- As we perceive music, we respond to repetition, rhythm, tones and tunes
- Tempo matters - music and mood!
- Sometimes we want to match our mood, sometimes we want to pull ourselves to another mood state.
- Music is personal!
- Know yourself! What role has music played in your life thus far?
- Observe and respond.

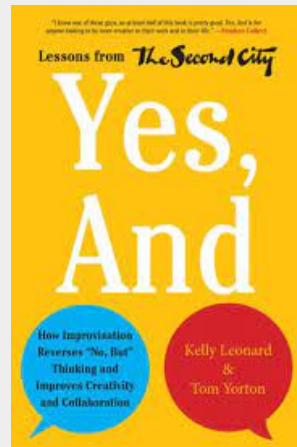
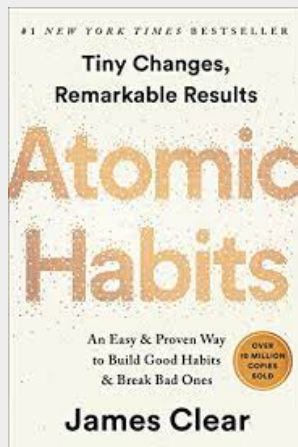
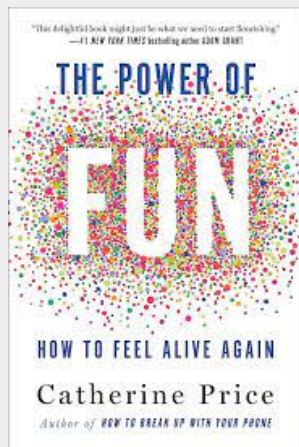
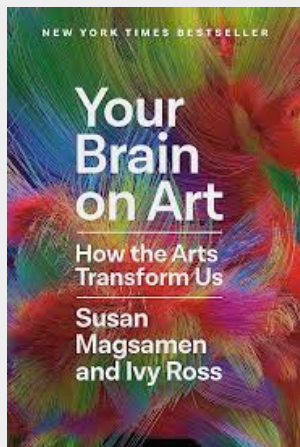
# Engagement and Expression

- Creativity - Creation of new ideas, physical objects or experiences.
- How can we creatively approach the role of music in our lives?
- What are our limiting beliefs about music and creativity?
- How can we be in an improvised state where we turn off self-judgement?

# Considerations - How do we make physical and mental space for music and creativity

- **Time Confetti - Microdoses**
- **Fun (Creative) Magnets**
  - **Activities**
  - **People**
  - **Settings**
- **Cues to Action**
- **Solitary vs Social Pursuits**

# Books



Music, an essential part of our daily lives, provides an accessible, inexpensive opportunity to respond positively to the stress in our lives, with no known adverse effects. By utilizing the potential benefits of music on health, we can be better equipped to respond to the demands of our professions, respond to burnout and better serve communities.

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