

**Clinic Presentation**

**By**

**Gregory H. Wing**

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*Before I begin this presentation, I would like to give credit where credit is due. Most everything I will be talking about in this clinic presentation reflects the many years of studying under Mr. William Adam, Professor of Trumpet at Indiana University. (Retired) Mr. Adam is a master of teaching the trumpet and for the past twenty four years has been one of the most influential persons I have ever met. I have taken many notes throughout my years studying with Mr. Adam. I have transcribed numerous audio and videotapes to be certain that my presentation is as close to his as possible. I know that everything we will be talking about is accurate and has unquestionably been responsible for me being a effective educator and working professional in the music business. However, this is only one of many approaches to playing the trumpet. I am encouraging you to use these concepts in your own playing and teaching. If it works, obviously you'll want to continue to enjoy the benefits received. If it doesn't seem to work for you, thanks for keeping an open mind and giving it a try.*

### *1. Psychology - Two Minds: The Conscious Mind and Sub-Conscious Mind; how they affect our self confidence and ability to concentrate.*

We call the Conscious Mind our SENSORY MIND; meaning that part of the mind which is aware of our five senses; what we see, hear, feel, taste and smell.

We also call the Sub-conscious mind our CREATIVE MIND. As people and especially educators and performers, we must be very careful what we feed into the creative minds of our students and ourselves because anything we put into this mind will be believed, whether it is true, false, beautiful, ugly, good or bad. It is important that we only put the things into this Creative Mind that will help us to become better human beings, educators and performers.

Sometimes, we can be our own worst enemies by the way we think of our fellow teachers/students and ourselves. Too often, we are judgmental and critical of others and ourselves. If a criticism is given to boost one's ego, we must let this pass through one ear and out the other. On the other hand, if the criticism is given nicely and it is going to help us, I think it is a pretty good idea to keep our emotions out of the way; put what has been said "out on the table", so to speak, and then make a judgment whether you think that the criticism will help you or not.

The reason for mentioning this is that if there is one emotion that does not cause tension to our systems, it is the concern for our fellow man. When you feel good about a person and that person feels good about you, and let's say you disagree about something, it sure is better to be able to resolve your differences without getting your ego's involved. If you get upset by that person taking a crack at you, the first thing you know is that you have tension in your systems; (body). This tension has a GREAT affect with our abilities to play our instruments and perform or to do anything in life as far as that goes. It is better not to let your ego get involved. So in review, letting your ego get involved is an emotion that causes tension.

Another emotion, which causes tension, is ANXIETY. Any emotion that causes tension destroys the action of the Creative Mind (Sub-conscious) to work towards a natural physical response. What we are trying to do is to become the most natural as far as our physical responses are concerned so that we do not have any tensions in our bodies which hold us back when playing trumpet and brass Instruments. Most of the time, anxiety sets in because of the lack of confidence in what we are doing.

FEAR also causes tension. Worrying about what this person or that person is going to say about us or about our performance destroys our concentration. We are then concentrating on what that person is going to say about our performance instead of concentrating on the end result that we are trying to achieve; which is beautiful music!

What is one of the biggest sins in the world? (Taken out of the religious context) *Feeling Sorry for Ourselves!* Other sins in this context are: *Hate, Greed and Jealousy.* All of these things cause tension which has a tremendous affect on our abilities to achieve the results we wish to achieve. *These Emotions which cause tension destroys concentration! The ONLY way we can Concentrate is through a Peaceful Mind.*

## 2. *Isometric and Kinesthetic Responses - Explanations and their Difference's through Demonstrations*

**(Demo) Point your fingers around the room like this.** What are you doing? Answer: You're pointing your fingers around the room. Isn't that right? BUT at the same time, were you aware that your wrists were moving, arms bending, shoulders swaying, head bopping up and down, etc.? Probably not! All of these muscular responses were responses from *kinesthetic muscular activity*. In other words, just by you pointing your fingers around the room; your sensory mind, (conscious mind) has put one card into your computer (your mind) and all of these muscular things happened because of you thinking of only one thing; pointing your fingers around the room.

If we had to do all of this arm moving, head bopping, etc. by thinking of each physical movement, then we would have set up what is called *isometric muscle activity*. Our minds can create a Isometric activity or it can create a kinesthetic response from a thought.

*(Demo) Now I want you to hold your fingers like this and very slowly make your fingers come together.* What we have just done is brought our fingers together through a isometric action. We have dictated through our sensory mind to our creative mind that we are now going to slowly bring our fingers together from individual muscle action necessary to bring our fingers together. Anytime we have muscle working against muscle like this, we have an endurance problem and have a problem with muscles wearing out. We can only do this so long before becoming fatigued. Now getting back to our fingers, there is another way to get these things to come together. So one more time, point your fingers at me, forget that you have any fingers at all, and say with me:

*"My fingers are coming together; my fingers are coming together; my fingers are coming together, etc."*

*What Happened?* Answer: ...fingers came together.

This is an example of a kinesthetic response which was dictated from our conscious (sensory mind) to our computer with only ONE card going into our minds at a time with the result of our fingers coming together. This pertains to all brass instruments by having us learn this mental concept through *kinesthetic (automatic responses)* so we do not play with tension.

### *3. Breathing - The Paralysis of Analysis and Demonstrations of Breathing as a Result from a Kinesthetic Response.*

There are so many books written on how to play these wind instruments but unfortunately most have their Causes and Results mixed up when it comes to how to take a breath. The authors mean well, but more often than not, the books do not help the students like they should. *There is too much analysis!* As one great trumpet player was quoted as saying, "Analysis is Paralysis." There is ONLY ONE WAY to breathe and that is to take a *Big, Natural Breath*. Caution should also be taken because too much air in at one time also causes isometric muscle force. All you have to do is to take in as much air as you can, *Naturally!*

All my life as a trumpet player, I have been hearing and have had teachers who have written the words "Diaphragmatic Breathing" or "Diaphragmatic Support" in my methods books. Too often we are told to push this way or that way while playing to support the air, etc. This is certainly Isometric tension activity. Your diaphragm is an involuntary muscle. It is going to do its function whether you think about it or not.

The following is a demonstration of how we can turn our thinking of the diaphragm from a isometric action into a kinesthetic response. **(Demo)** Let's Stand Up and put our hands together on top our heads. Now we're going to imagine that our mouths are between our fingers and the top of our heads and that we are breathing from here. Take a big breath and notice how *high* the air is in our chest. -- Now let's put our hands under our chin and imagine that our mouths are between our fingers and our chin and that we are breathing from here. Take a big breath. Did you notice how the physical action is different? -- Now let's put our hands on the base of our sternum and imagine that we are breathing from here. Take a big breath. What did you notice about your abdominal wall? It expands and moves, doesn't it? It feels alot different then when we had our hands over our heads and under our chin's. What you have just experienced is the *resultant factors* that allow us to breathe this way from a *kenesthetic response* rather than from a *isometric muscle action*. The same activity has taken place with the lower abdominal wall moving without the isometric activity.

As brass players we also have to be aware that sometimes Strength is our weakness and weakness is our Strength with regards to our breathing, embouchure, fingers, etc.

**(Demonstrate my hand on student's shoulder to illustrate the strength we sometimes have by staying loose, relaxed with a peaceful mind. Student tries to bend my arm)**

This illustrates that if we stay loose without isometric muscle activity, we can take advantage of the full muscular activity in our body. It is truly amazing how much strength we will have if we keep our muscles loose. *Any tension or muscular activity in breathing will destroy the breath and everything which goes with it.*

We can only think of one thought in our mind at a time but aware of all of the other physical activities, too, without destroying our end result. That one thought we are always interested in when playing our instruments is that of a Beautiful Sound. Did you notice that I mentioned beautiful SOUND? When we see the notes on the page, we are not reading notes, but reading and hearing sound.

#### 4. *The Tongue - It's function*

Can anyone tell me what you have when you press your tongue against your teeth? Everyone do this, please. Press your tongue against your teeth. What do you have? Answer: A mouth full of Tongue! It is very important that our minds are not thinking about the tongue.

The tongue is a muscle just like anything else we have been talking about thus far. If you get your mind stuck in your tongue, you are setting up isometric actions again and your tongue will become slower and slower. I always suggest to my students that they say the word "too" when pronouncing the sound and forget about it through concentrating on the sound. It's that simple. Just pronounce the sound the same way as if we were talking to each other.

### *5. The Physics of Brass - A Basic Practical Application*

I would like to spend just a moment to talk about exactly how these brass instruments work in a very basic, practical application. It is quite different than most people believe to be so. If I take my trumpet and tap on the end of the mouthpiece, what do you hear? You hear a sound. That sound is a Pedal C. If I continue to tap the mouthpiece with each one of remaining bugles, that being the 2nd valve, 1st valve, 1st and 2nd valve, 2nd and 3rd valve, etc., you will hear the pedal B, Bb, A, Ab, G and Gb. These are sounds, but how were they produced? By tapping the mouthpiece starts the energy and activates the molecules inside the instrument. The trumpet and other brass instruments have nodal points and anti-nodal points. Nodal points are points of maximum compression and anti-nodal points is the area where molecular activity takes place that creates vibrations necessary to make the trumpet sound. The sound stays in the instrument for all practical purposes and what happens is a transfer of the molecules from in the instrument to outside the instrument to our ears. To visualize this, think of what happens when we have a whole bunch of dominos stacked up on their ends and we knock one down. What happens? We see the motion of all the dominos being knocked over but the first domino remains to be the first domino. The second domino is the second, etc. The sound we hear coming out of our instruments is produced the same way through what is called "*Molecular Displacement*".

### *6. The Embouchure*

I know we were all taught to buzz the mouthpiece. I did and alot of you probably still do to this day. But if we base our decision to buzz the mouthpiece to produce the sound, it would certainly be very contradictory to what I just said about the basic principles of how we produce a sound to begin with. Remember tapping the mouthpiece. There were no lips buzzing or mouthpiece buzzing during that demonstration was there. So now we know that if we buzz our mouthpieces, we may be causing some unwanted or unnecessary tension, agreed? I have been asked many times to illustrate what kind of a sound I get out of my mouthpiece. I show them. I just put it up there and blow. Of course, nothing comes out but the sound or the air being blown through the mouthpiece. Next, I have the student hold my trumpet while I blow the mouthpiece and have them position the trumpet back onto the mouthpiece carefully not to upset my blowing.

Out comes the sound of a Trumpet based on the principles which I have been discussing. Pretty interesting theories, huh? *Keep in mind that we want to remain loose and free of tensions. You blow through the mouthpiece and the lips will vibrate sympathetically with what is going on with the molecular action inside the horn. Once again, keeping our minds out of what we should not be thinking about and on that of producing the most beautiful sound possible.*

### *7. Other Physiological/Psychological Information*

There is another "term" we use when discussing the trumpet and how to blow this thing to our advantage. It is called being "*In Phase*". Anyone who has ever built his own speakers or knows anything about speakers understand that to have them sound the best, they must be "in phase" with the room. In other words, the molecular activity inside the speakers has to be compatible with molecules in the room. When we play the trumpet, we say that we have to be "in phase" with the trumpet. In other words, the molecular action on the inside of our bodies has to be the same molecular action as outside. Without getting too specific, when we distort/disturb the airspace that we have on the inside of us by using excessive pressure or by isometric muscle action, we become "Out of Phase" with what is in the instrument. If the isometric muscle action is partly in it, it starts to destroy and distort the tone. A lot of people say that we are overblowing. We are not overblowing, but rather muscularly distorting the cavity inside us which is working against us, not with us.

We hear so often for students to play with an Open Throat. This, too, can sometimes cause more tension by the muscular activity needed to open the cavity in the back of throat exceeds the natural way. We would rather say we think of playing with a *Relaxed Throat*.

It takes great energy, electrical energy from our systems to make this beautiful sound happen. There are a lot of funny things which happen to us when we play these instruments; all of which should happen to us as a *result of hearing and playing the most beautiful sound we can Imagine*. Our sound is continuous and always *FLOATS ON the AIR*. We believe that it is the music that makes what happen to us, *Happen to Us*, and if we turn the causes and results around, we get into trouble.

There is another quotable quote of Mr. Adam which I want to share with you:  
*"You can search the world over for the beautiful and never find it unless you have the beautiful in your heart."* It is our imaginations which control this. Just think of the beautiful sound and forget about how to do this or that.

Bill Bell use to say; "You know what that student's problem is? He doesn't have the mind of a Trumpet player." *As teachers, we have to lead the student around until he/she starts thinking like a trumpet player. You really can't learn how to play these things, but what you CAN do is make the trumpet an extension of you; a extension of your thoughts.*

I sincerely believe that if you start to use these concepts in your teaching and playing, you will notice a tremendous difference in your attitude towards your fellow colleagues, your own playing, your performance and teaching abilities.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share these thoughts with you.



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