

# A “Good” Impression

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I remember that it was on my seventh birthday, my mother and I sat down around the table. All lights were off, except for the shining candles on my birthday cake. My mother was in a black dress with white patterns. I noticed that she even wore her only gold necklace. When I was young, I dreamed of becoming a famous musician. How wonderful it would be to play the piano or the violin in front of hundreds of people on the stage!

Before blowing out the candles, I finally told my mom that I wanted to study music. Incredibly, my mother agreed to my request, making me too surprised to say a word.

“Now let’s choose an instrument to buy,” my mother said, with a smile on her face. “A piano? A violin?”

“Maybe a violin. It is cheaper than a piano.” I knew my mother would buy me a piano if I chose it, but I wanted to save her some money.

From that moment on, my journey in

the music world began.

On an otherwise unremarkable day, my mother took me to my violin teacher’s home. I felt nervous because I didn’t know whether I could make a good impression on my teacher. I was brought up in an environment where most people thought first impressions count, so I kept thinking how to communicate with my new teacher. If my memory serves me right, I was not good at communicating with strangers, which worried me a lot. However, as a little kid who was easy to be distracted, I soon forgot my concern, and started to explore the surroundings along the way. The air was filled with the faint fragrance of winter jasmine. There were some birds singing on the trees, which made me feel very comfortable. Everything I saw along the way seemed vibrant. Green grass swung in the wind. Lovely clouds moved slowly in the blue sky. Even an unnoticeable little stone could reflect the bright sunshine. We soon arrived at the apartment where my teacher lived.

“I’ll pick you up at five this afternoon,”

my mother told me. “Go upstairs! Your teacher is waiting for you.”

I went upstairs alone. When I knocked on the door, a strong feeling of tension came over me again. “How to spend these few hours with a new teacher? Will this teacher yell at me if I make some mistakes, like some strict teachers I have met in my school?”

After a few seconds, a young lady opened the door and led me to a room filled with music stands and chairs. I noticed she wore glittery earrings and a delicate silver necklace. In my eyes, she was so noble and elegant. Later I knew that this young lady was my teacher. As soon as I took my violin out of the case, the teacher started to teach me some basic music knowledge. I listened very carefully in case of missing something important. Her gentle voice took the tension out of my mind. Then, the teacher took out her violin which was bigger

than mine, and seemed much more expensive. It looked like an artwork, rather than a normal instrument. She showed me how to press the string and use the bow to create different sounds. Under her guidance, I learned how to play a song called “Little Star”.

“Now I’ll give you some time to practice what you have learnt,” my teacher said to me. “Try to make some progress.”

In the next two hours, I practiced the same piece more than a hundred times. I didn’t take a rest or drink any water. I wanted to let my teacher know that I was a diligent boy. I wanted to make a good impression on her. Unfortunately, I began to feel dizzy. It felt like my eyes couldn’t see clearly, and my ears couldn’t hear clearly. It turned out that I was too tired. After drinking some water and eating some candies offered by my teacher, I felt better.

“Among so many students I teach, you



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are the first one who practiced so hard in the first lesson. However, you need to know that things will develop in the opposite direction when they become extreme. To become an excellent violinist, you need to combine exertion and rest,” my teacher said to me earnestly.

I nodded.

When I was thinking what I wanted to say to my teacher, she said, “That’s all for today’s class. You can ask me any questions if you want to, or just chat with me until your mother comes to pick you up. But it seems like you don’t like to start a conversations.”

I nodded again.

After about half an hour, my mother came to take me home. She chatted with my teacher for a while, and thanked her for spending nearly half a day teaching me music. I didn’t know whether I made a good impression on my violin teacher, but I did know that I was her first student who practiced the same music piece so hard and continuously that eventually, I showed symptoms of hypoglycemia.

Now I am a grown-up man. I have met numerous strangers and communicated with different kinds of people. I admit that making a good first impression is still important for me, and it usually happens between strangers. The most annoying part of communicating with strangers is that although you try your best to make a good impression, the final result is sometimes out of your control. Just like an old Chinese saying goes: a watched flower may not bloom, but an untended willow may thrive. You never know what impressions you will make on others until the last moment of the conversation. Perhaps that is why I still think communicating with strangers is extremely challenging for individuals in a lifetime.