

JONATHAN SARAGA

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Transcriber | Copyist
B.M.\M.M.\D.M.A. | www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003

The Art of Humility, and it's Role in the Life of an Artist ~ AN INTRODUCTION ~

(The study of the consideration of humility within the context of artistic contribution, and how it applies to the goals and pursuits of an artist)

9/14/2015 | *edited* 1/1/2020

Socrates once said that "true humility is knowing that you know nothing," and the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines humility as "the state of being humble." If we can agree that modesty, and respect for others, and oneself as well as the submittance to a grandeur of creation larger and more important than ones physical frame are concerned, are major facets of having humility, I believe we are off to a good start. Additionally, I believe that this word's application can be investigated further, and expounded upon, and actually may reveal much more than we may have imagined. We as professional artists should take an interest in this, and see how we can apply a concept as rich and vast as humility to our idea of success.

If you are reading this, you are most likely a human, which means you came into this world the same way we all do; and if you are in fact human, you have been, whether it be consciously or unconsciously, perceiving reality through your own body and mind, and are faced with the idea, (a very convincing one may I add), that you are an individual, with your own body, and are indeed a separate entity from all others. This duality that comes into view rather immediately upon conception can be a source of both love and of fear, and can be used in both positive and negative ways. It is up to the individual (another paradox is created) to choose for him or herself how to utilize this information. Since you are reading this, you probably are interested in either the topic of humility, the topic of art, both, or are simply curious. Either way, the pursuance of any of these constructs will lead you down the

JONATHAN SARAGA

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Transcriber | Copyist
B.M.\M.M.\D.M.A. | www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003

path of learning. Even if you are reading this to see if I am wrong about what I am discussing, then this is definitely for you!

As I alluded to before, as humans, we are faced with a dualistic reality: the idea of oneness, (we all come from the same source, and are made of the same elements), and the idea of separateness (we all exist as individual beings, and our own personal survival is paramount). In contemplating these basic truths, and how they relate, (I will soon get to what how this all applies being an artist and to humility), as I said earlier, I realized that both perspectives can be perceived and utilized in fear or in love, (another duality). In so realizing this, it dawned on me that perhaps it is possible to “sit” at the bridge between the two, or to hover above them, and simply observe each one as being an equal and integral part of a whole. That way, we can see that the whole is dependent on the existence of the halves, that the halves depend on each other in order for oneness to occur, and neither is subservient to the other. Further, there is no agenda for either aspect; they are simply neutral components of an even greater neutral component (part of an even greater neutral component... ∞)

At this point, you may or may not have noticed through contemplating these ideas, that your consciousness has already begun to take on the shape, if you will, of the vibratory structure of this phenomenon. Have you begun to see how these constructs apply to your life in practical ways yet? Let's begin with a very basic application: The title of “artist.” Whether you are self-proclaimed or have otherwise been branded as such, you have, whether willingly or unwillingly, consciously or otherwise, allowed yourself to be labeled as a term that not even most artists themselves can define. Immediately we see the duality in action here. Our title can be seen as very limiting to some, and to others, it possesses infinite possibility. But, before we choose which side we will take, let's look at both, and see if we can use them to our advantage, and maybe even to the advantage of others as well (a further

JONATHAN SARAGA

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Transcriber | Copyist
B.M.\M.M.\D.M.A. | www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003

example of using a dualistic idea to unify).

Contrary to what you might expect, the perspective that a person who is viewed as an artist, (the definition of which is restricted to a specific set of qualities), can actually serve us and our audience fruitfully, as we can use the fixed definition as a means of relating to others who also use that definition. It does not have to mean that we *only* believe that we are what others may define us to be, as “artists.” It simply means that we are open to finding ways to reach people, by showing them that we understand *them*, and that we understand how they relate to *us*. It's practically conversational in nature, and actually for many artists, this means of interaction is desired, and even preferred over the separatist approach, where the artist views his or her art as *his or her* possession, and will not share ownership of it with those who may happen to take interest in it. In addition, by channeling the definition of art in this way, one's work may even end up reaching and expressing itself in ways that it wouldn't have otherwise, if proposed from a place of ambiguity (which we'll explore shortly).

On the other hand, having a narrow-minded view of what one's art is or is not, or more-over, what art itself is or is not, may prove to actually prevent ones work from reaching audiences whose influence may actually help to improve and add depth and meaning to the creative process of the craftsman. It may also hinder the artists ability to collaborate with others, and may detract one from involvement in artistic communities and groups, where a more universal view of art is being recognized and explored.

Now, let's look at the perspective of those who view “artist,” (actually for this purpose, I will use the word “art”) as a word that has no true meaning, and who's energy contains all the information of past, present and future, and who's existence is not dependent on human influence at all. Of course, with such an obtuse angle on the meaning of the word, and more specifically the purpose of an

JONATHAN SARAGA

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Transcriber | Copyist
B.M.\M.M.\D.M.A. | www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003

individual's contribution with their art, one's work may find itself directionless, and lost in a pool of information, depending on chance and the alignment of specific starts to reach an audience. Even if the intention is clear in the artists' mind, if he or she is hesitant to define it publicly, it may prove to be difficult to find a receiver. However, the inverse can also be true. Many great artists have made names for themselves through their ethereal almost directionless presence. They have created an image which conveys the idea of freedom, and non-conformity. In a world where there is so much structure, rules, and boundaries in place, it can be extremely moving to be touched by artwork that has no clear indication of its own purpose; it can simply be up to the observer to interpret, and use as he or she desires.

Within these examples we see that either perspective can be utilized to create the exact opposite of their implications, or to conform to them. We also see that either perspective can both advance the work and career of an artist, as well as stifle them. The major point that should be taken from this is that when one approaches art from this point of neutrality first, it gives them the chance to appreciate anyone's artwork, (it doesn't mean you have to like everyone's artwork), or at least learn from it in broader and more applicable ways than ever before. This opening process can assist in not only the actual creating, sharing, and selling of one's art, but it can free up one's perception of and create more direction in the involvement with other participants of the art world, including colleagues, club owners, promoters, marketers, buyers, funders, endorsers, and the list goes on. In this next section, I will briefly touch on this aspect.

As you may have anticipated, having the awareness we are exploring applies not just to the physical manifestation of one's creative palate, but this knowledge can be of great assistance in the business and social aspects of being a professional artist. The way in which we interact with colleagues

JONATHAN SARAGA

Trumpeter | Flugelhornist | Composer | Arranger | Educator | Producer | Transcriber | Copyist
B.M.\M.M.\D.M.A. | www.jonathansaraga.com | jonathan@jonathansaraga.com | (347) 574-2003

and audience members on a personal level, not just through the vehicle of our product, is of vital importance, and more often than not will determine who we will work with, (and who will want to work with us and buy our product). By approaching one's thoughts and actions toward others from the place of equilibrium and unification that we have been exploring, we may find that we are less quick to judge, and more prone to handling an interaction or a business or personal scenario with more poise, confidence and intention.

When looking at our species as a whole, we see that it would not be the global network of limitless potential, without the components which comprise it: the inventors, healers, entertainers, and honest, hardworking, creative beings that express their truth through our collective consciousness each day. To have the opportunity to examine one's place within this matrix, and to be able to both broaden and zone-in-on one's understanding of a relationship, a business strategy, or even their understanding of their own art, is a gift that should not be taken for granted. Within the center, where we have been diverging from, lies infinite potential, which we each have the opportunity to access and infuse into our being, into our life, and into the lives of those we touch. After all, “Love's gift cannot be given, it waits to be accepted.” - *Tagore*

I wish you many happy returns to the realm you have been exploring with me today. The potential that exists within it can be used toward your art, and your pursuance of whatever it is that you want in life. It is the basis of humanity itself. It is your *humility*.