

Humility: The Universal Medicine

Michael Sawyer

I just stood there with my mouth open, and I knew the sounds coming out were totally wrong. Three pairs of eyes bored into my soul. For the first time in my prestigious acting career since fifth grade, I slowly, internally, started to freak out. A single bead of sweat trickled down my forehead.

“Something’s not right,” I said after the third try. I walked over to the pianist and glanced at the sheet music I provided her with. Suddenly, it all became clear. “Oh, I’m so sorry for the confusion, I wanted to start my song there,” I said as I pointed to a spot marked by pencil several measures earlier. *So she had started playing the piano in the wrong place*, I thought to myself. *I’m not crazy!*

For the fourth and final time, I began singing “If I Can’t Love Her” from *Beauty and the Beast*. It sounded okay, but I forgot a word halfway through. As soon as I was finished, I thanked the judges for their patience and quickly exited the room, which I swore had gotten thirty degrees hotter since I came in.

Ten minutes later, I was in another room, this time with more people.

“Step, step, step and turn, step, touch, turn, step, step, step and touch, step-ball-change, step-ball-change, jump, touch,” the instructor said as he did the moves in quick succession with perfect precision.

This is way more serious than any dancing I’ve ever done, I thought to myself as I poorly replicated, with much effort, the moves he had just displayed. What came next would solidify my new-found insecurity.

“Alright everyone, we are going to go out onto the stage where I’ll divide you into two groups, so no one can hide. You’ll be performing the dance in front of the judges. “

There was nothing I could do. I just had to do it. We filed into the auditorium and onto the stage, which seemed to grow as we climbed onto it. This room was not hot, but cold, dark, and deeply unsettling.

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You've been on stages before, Michael. Calm down. "No, I've been on *one* stage several times," I retorted to myself quietly. "This is totally different!"

"Okay, everyone from him to her are group one. The rest of you are group two."

What proceeded to happen in the next ten minutes can only be described as torture. I stumbled and fumbled through the dance steps, trying in vain to keep up with the rapid-paced soundtrack. I put on my best performance face, and made a fool out of myself. I felt like every pair of eyes was on me, mentally calculating just how many moves I had completely butchered. After what seemed like hours, the time was over. I quickly exited the stage and took a seat in the audience. They said we would hear about the results in twenty-four hours. Twenty-four hours later, I read the list. To my complete lack of surprise, I was not on it.

My audition for Newsies really stunk. Over six years of musical experience could not save me from the bomb that was that audition. But going in, I felt really good.

Surely I will at least get an ensemble part, I had told myself. You're *overqualified for this, Michael!* As it turned out, my overconfidence was my weakness. A large dose of humility is never easy to swallow, but it ensures that you do not choke on your own pride anytime soon.