

HOW TO WORK EASILY, WITHOUT HAVING TO STRUGGLE

When you watch virtuosos at work and play, you'll notice one thing; they make what they do look easy.

This is not just an illusion.

When they make it look easy, it really is easy.

The obvious reason is that they've completely mastered the task.

If you know how to do something, it immediately becomes easy.

But there's another reason why it's easy for them.

It's easy because they *make* things easy.

Many people do not realize this; they think all virtuosos are blessed with some superhuman ability, and can somehow do whatever they want.

But virtuosos are just like everybody else; they have their limitations too.

The difference is that virtuosos recognize their limitations and work with them.

When things get hard, they'll simplify it and make it easier. If it's not a significant element of the task, they'll even throw it out.

If there's one thing about virtuosos, it's that they're eminently practical individuals.

They realize there's no reason to make something harder than it has to be.

Too many people worry about doing things "right," and about following "proper" procedures.

They forget that the only thing that matters is whether we're accomplishing our goals.

When I was young, I too was obsessed with doing things right.

I would try to play every note in the music faithfully because I didn't want to "cheat."

It was only much later that I found out that the players I admired so much didn't even play those notes. They had taken them out.

That was my initiation into the subtle art of virtuosity.

The discovery was liberating.

I learned to simplify, to take out unnecessary and redundant notes, I learned to re-finger entire pieces to come up with the easiest ways to play them.

I did it not only in my guitar playing, but also in my life, in my studies, and later in my work.

It's all about efficiency, coming up with the simplest and most efficient ways to achieve your goals.

The basic rationale behind this is, it's not about the effort you put in, but the effect you're trying to create.

In this regard, perception is everything.

As a virtuoso, you don't have to do every move as long as the perception of having done that move is there.

It's a kind of magical sleight of hand.

You can rearrange notes, even take out others as long as the perception of the notes is there.

But do it with care. If you take out too much, you risk diluting the experience for your audience.

Is it trickery? No, I prefer to think of it as artistry.