

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE

Compiled by Helen Spielman, Performance Anxiety Coach | [PerformConfidently.com](http://PerformConfidently.com)

**Performance Anxiety: A Workbook for Actors, Singers, Dancers, and Anyone Who Performs in Public** by Eric Maisel (Back Stage Books, 2005)

The best, most complete all-around book on performance anxiety that I've seen. Excellent, comprehensive information about all aspects of stage fright including many thoughtful exercises and further resources. Unfortunately, it is out of print. You might try to get a copy through interlibrary loan.

**Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind** by Kristin Neff. HarperCollins, 2011.

The best book on self-compassion I have seen. Based on research, it is nevertheless very readable. Probably the most popular book among my clients, "Oh, this book was written just for ME!", I highly recommend it for those working to heal performance anxiety and for almost any human being.

**The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness** by Gerald Klickstein; Oxford University Press, 2009

A highly excellent book, one third of which is dedicated to fearless performance. Written in a conversational style, the organization, detail and scope of this publication is highly intelligent, written by someone who has "been around the block." In addition to the superb material on stagefright, which is not covered in quite this way in other books, topics include injury prevention, preparing for performance and stage deportment, musical collaboration, and more. The companion blog is also recommended: [musiciansway.com/blog](http://musiciansway.com/blog)

**Performing in the Zone: Unleash Your True Performing Potential!** by Jon Gorrie; [www.thezonebook.com](http://www.thezonebook.com), 2009.

This volume is filled with a myriad of basic and innovative techniques to conquer performance anxiety, presented clearly and thoughtfully. The Performance Arousal Diagram is one of the most valuable offerings. The discussion on visualization lacks information on the relaxation component, and I caution readers to understand that some people take much shorter, and others much longer, to gain confidence in performance than the twelve weeks he suggests. Nevertheless, a highly recommended book for techniques.

**Performance Strategies for Musicians** by David Buswell. MX Publishing, 2006.

An excellent book which contains some wonderfully useful strategies and exercises.

**Performance Power: Transforming Stress into Creative Energy** by Irmtraud Tarr Kruger is an excellent book that takes a more psychological view of performance anxiety than most books. Although Dr. Kruger tackles the subject in depth from her point of view, the text is readable and understandable, even without a psychology background. The translation from the German is excellent. The address of the English edition publisher is:

Summit Books, PO Box 26850, Tempe, AZ 85285-6850. If you have trouble finding it, remember you can always try interlibrary loan from your public library.



**The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be by Jack Canfield; HarperCollins, 2007**

Not specifically about performance anxiety, but the most comprehensive book I've seen, written in a straightforward, easy-to-read, inspirational style about many ideas helpful to all those wishing to transform their lives to a higher level. Includes information about taking responsibility, visualizing goals, getting rid of fear, asking for support, dealing with obstacles, cultivating perseverance and positive relationships, and much, much more. Packed with stories of successful people and further resources within each topic.

**The Perfect Wrong Note: Learning to Trust Your Musical Self by William Westby; Amadeus Press, 2006.**

I highly recommend this book for any flutist: professional, teacher or amateur. I saw Dr. Westby speak at the National Flute Convention and was ignited by his dynamic presence and innovative and healthy ideas about the study of music. This easy to read book offers wonderful insights into childhood musical development, practicing with passion, and performance anxiety, and is filled with references to other disciplines as well.

**You Are Enough: Always Have Been....Always Will Be by David J. Walker; DeVorss, 2007**

This small, easy-to-read book spectacularly illuminates the difference between the essence of who we are as lovable and worthy beings as distinct from what we do as performers, which is one of the key concepts for anxious performers to "get." Very highly recommended. The first half of the book has a light spiritual (not religious) bent.

**Present Perfect: A Mindfulness Approach to Letting Go of Perfectionism and the Need for Control by Pavel Somov; New Harbinger Publications, 2010.**

This is an extraordinary book that contains compassionate, useful information about becoming free of the need for approval, as well as a vast array of insightful, reader-friendly explanations and helpful exercises regarding perfectionism.

**The Fine Arts of Relaxation, Concentration, and Meditation: Ancient Skills for Modern Minds by Joel and Michelle Levey. Wisdom Publications, 2003.**

This is the book I recommend to learn these skills because it is easy to read and includes a large number of exercises from a wide variety of perspectives. It is more comprehensive and user-friendly than most similar books.

**Working Out, Working Within: The Tao of Inner Fitness Through Sports and Exercise by Jerry Lynch and Chungliang Al Huang. Tarcher, 1998. and Thinking Body, Dancing Mind: Tao Sports for Extraordinary Performance in Athletics Business, and Life by Chungliang Al Huang and Jerry Lynch. Bantam, 1992.**

Both have useful ideas and tools applicable to overcoming performance anxiety.

**Positivity by Barbara Fredrickson. Crown, 2009.**

Fascinating book about the positivity ratio and the myriad ways that positivity is important in life.

**Running Within: A Guide to Mastering the Body-Mind-Spirit Connection for Ultimate Training and Racing by Jerry Lynch and Warren Scott.**

Another of those sports books that seem as though they could have been written for musicians. In fact, this book left me with the question, "why don't more musicians write books like this?" Filled with excellent, positive ideas for using affirmations, visualization, preparing for competition, controlling fear, flowing with fatigue, and so much more, the wisdom in this book presents a profoundly meaningful approach.

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