

## Me and Jerry Garcia



I haven't always been a big fan of Jerry Garcia and I never quite understood what all the "Dead Heads" were so enthralled about. That changed during the mid 90s when I discovered the "Not For Kids Only" cassettes by Jerry Garcia and David Grisman.

In the early 90s, I was writing and performing Children's Music. Raffi was my idol and entertaining young kids and their families was my passion. When I first discovered the "Not For Kids Only" it was love at first listen; the combination of Jerry and David's song choices, along with the duet of acoustic guitar and mandolin got me!

From there, I began exploring more of David Grisman's mandolin music and technique, as well as Jerry Garcia's music; including the Grateful Dead. I have much respect and admiration for both musicians.

Recently, I listened to some podcasts, read some articles, and watched videos of Jerry Garcia. I found that he and I have more in common than I realized. Here are some of Jerry's quotes ...

**MUSIC TAKES YOU PLACES ...** "Playing guitar turned out to be more fun than I thought it was going to be. It's also lasted a lot longer than expected and it's taken me to places that I never thought I'd get a chance to go."

**HUMBLE BEGINNINGS ...** "The Grateful Dead was started as simply a bunch of friends making music together and having fun."

**JAZZ MUSICIAN BRANFORD MARSALIS SAYS OF JERRY ...** "He experimented without being too overly technical. Jerry was a marvelously gifted melody maker. His solos were very musical. It was fun to play and listen to him! Jerry never let technique get in his way."

Just like Jerry, express your musical ideas as a whole body experience; not just from your brain.”

**KEEP THINGS OPEN ENDED** ... “ Once you have your act down, stick with it, because that’s the reason that your fans became your fans. That’s why they come to see you. However, continue to push the boundaries. Keep things open ended. You never want to see the end in sight.”

**MUSIC AS MEDITATION** ... “It’s a good thing to have something personal to work on daily that you can improve upon. It’s your own energy and work that pushes you forward.”

**BE PATIENT WITH YOUR MUSICAL IDEAS** ... “Sometimes we may make the wrong decision about a song, but stick with it. It’s okay to change things around. Many times the changes and tweaks can be for the better.”

**ALWAYS APPRECIATE YOUR FANS** ... “Our Grateful Dead shows are never the same. When we finish a show we are done with it, but when our fans tape the shows, they gain ownership of that moment in time. It’s a memory for them! They are the ones that keep us going. We don’t exist without our fans.”

**ALWAYS BE A STUDENT** ... “What turns me on is being a music student and always pushing forward and developing.”

I love all of Jerry’s philosophies, but always being a student is the one that I love the most. There are no limits! Also, the beauty is that musicians are musicians. There really is no hierarchy when one musician (no matter what age or how famous) is playing with another. When I hear Jerry speak, I don’t hear the icon, the legend, or the famous one. I simply hear a man who loves music and who loves being a musician!

... Jimmy Rossi