

# THE CONSTANT LEARNER

By Dom Famularo

The mind once stretched with knowledge never returns back to its original size!!! This is growth at its best! To move the music industry forward we need people with vision, boundless energy and who are driven by never ending passion! You are that person!

Each and every one of us shifts music forward with a strong desire to learn. As you improve ... so does the music community! It is your desire to accept change. This happens with an open mind and a strong passion to grow ... always!

As you read this you are involved. You are a force to spark this music business in a positive direction! To embrace change means you want to learn. Learning means growing, and this leads to you discovering more new fresh ideas. This is the fun journey! I so enjoy The Australian Ultimate Drummers Weekend because I get to hear so many great players to open my mind with new ideas. In a weekend, I learn for a lifetime!

As you share your new discovered expression, people are moved to a higher spiritual level! Amazing! You have the power! One of my many teachers and mentors was the great Joe Morello. I was always impressed with each lesson. He showed great excitement in what he taught me. As he grew older and was in his early 80s he would still ask questions about the music I was playing. He showed great interest and involvement. I spoke with Joe a few days before he passed, and told him, "If I knew 10% of what you had forgotten, I would be a better drummer." He laughed so hard, and I was serious! Joe was a constant learner. I believe this was his message to all of us; this was part of his plan for success. Another inspired teacher and mentor of mine was Jim Chapin. For the over 40 years I knew Jim, he was always in a motion of learning. He was aware of all the latest players and what they were doing. I could see how he constantly asked questions of any drummer to try to learn something they had that Jim wanted!



Jim Chappin, Joe Morello and Dom

The last time I saw Jim, he was in a hospital in Florida. I flew down from New York to visit as often as I could. When I arrived, his doctor met me at the entrance and told me Jim was not doing well and did not have much time to live. I was just overwhelmed. Jim was just short of 90 years old and his body was declining. I suggested we go up and see him together.

We exit the elevator on Jim's floor and from his room I hear someone playing a practice pad at a ferocious pace. Just killing rudiments ... a solo that any drummer would be proud of! I said to the doctor, there must be one of Jim's students here playing for him. We walk in the room, and it is Jim! He is sitting up in his bed with a drum pad on his lap ... wailing away! I mean, he is playing like a 29-year-old ... not an 89-year-old! I turned to the doctor and asked, "This is a guy close to death?" The doctor was shocked! I walked over to Jim and asked, "What are you doing?"

Jim said, "Practising! And my left hand is getting better!" He was in top form. He said he was working on his matched grip soloing!

His passion to push himself was inspiring and another great lesson for me. We talked for about an hour and then I saw he was getting tired. I kissed him on his forehead, thanked him and let him know how much he meant to me, and so many people globally! His drum set independence book, '*Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer*' is a classic written in 1948. It is a must for every drummer to learn. Jim was called the Father of Independence! I left and headed back to the airport arriving in New York late that evening.

The next morning on July 4, 2009, Jim passed away. What amazed me was 'The Father of Drumming Independence' died on America's Independence Day! His message was clear ... he was a constant learner!

Now let's talk about a legendary contemporary artist, Dave Weckl. I have had the great pleasure to perform with Dave at many clinics, camps, master classes and drum festivals globally. He is a great example of a constant learner: always willing to take in new ideas and new ways of thinking. I believe this is one plan as to why Dave always sounds great. Dave researches, reads, listens and studies whatever he can tap into. Recently Dave has started an online school sharing his inner deep thoughts about how he has achieved the skill



Dom with Dave Weckl

and musicianship he always displays. Check out his online learning school at [www.daveweckl.com](http://www.daveweckl.com). Step into his world of expanding ideas. I had the chance to visit his studio and record a few hours of technique history with Dave. I have recommended many drummers who are subscribed to his page and they are excited about what they are learning. This is a way to grow, learn, challenge yourself and experience artistic expression at the highest level. Join the wave of constant learners!

The mind is like a parachute ... it only works when it is open. Once open, you can absorb, adapt and adopt new ideas. This helps you to open your doors of expression. Stepping into the mind of a legend. That is what you will be doing! When you watch Dave's lessons, I suggest to make sure the seat you are sitting in at your computer has a seat belt! Think about learning the deepest rooted drumming ideas delivered to you from a top master of our instrument.

I want you to step into the world of constant learning. Become a major push for the drumming art form in the 21st century!

Become a part of the wave...

**Dom Famularo**  
Drumming's Global Ambassador  
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