



WORKSHOP GUIDELINES

Aug 8, 2014

OUR GOALS:

To help songwriters write the song they want to write, not the song we want them to write.

To help songwriters become the songwriter they want to become, not the songwriter we want them to be.

HOW TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

DO

- **Be constructive**, honest and helpful. If you like the song, tell us why. Be specific. If you have a suggestion to improve the song, explain the benefit as you see it.
- **Be concise**. The songwriter has a limited time for feedback. Please focus on the *songwriting*: melody, lyrics, hook, concept and/or composition. Avoid repeating comments that have already been made.
- **Raise your hand**, and wait to be called on by the songwriter or the workshop facilitator.
- **Take it easy on newcomers** - especially new songwriters.

DON'T

- **No personal comments**. Respect the writer's privacy. Songs can seem very personal and yet are not autobiographical.
- **Avoid excessive, unqualified praise**. Though well-intended, it is not all that useful and may be experienced as 'insincere'.
- **Don't 'pile on'**. Even enthusiastic comments, one after another, without a chance for the songwriter to digest or respond, can be overwhelming.
- **Don't digress**. Let's avoid personal philosophies, stories about other songs or songwriters. If you feel it is really necessary, please keep it short.
- **Don't critique the performance**. Avoid critiquing the singer or the recording. Suggestions on 'how to make the song easier to sing' are fine.

HOW TO PRESENT SONGS & GET FEEDBACK

DO

- **Present songs you have written** or co-written. (Songwriters can have someone else perform their song as long as the songwriter is present.)
- **Take charge**. Call on participants you want to hear from. Let us know if you prefer 'no feedback.'
- **Listen**. Let us tell you what we hear and how your song affected us.
- **Understand** that anything we say is based on a single listen. Impressions often change after repeated listening. Let criticism inspire you to work harder, or let it go.

DON'T

- **Don't apologize**.
- **Don't worry about mistakes**. If you make a one, just keep going.
- **Don't explain** or give us a lot of background on what the song is about. While some background information can be interesting or relevant, it can color and limit the value of the feedback you get.
- **Don't feel obliged** to call on someone just because they raised their hand. *If a comment makes you uncomfortable, don't feel obliged to respond.*
- **Don't let us pile up on you**. Raise your hand if you need a break.
- **Don't make negative assumptions**. If you didn't get the kind of response you were expecting, don't 'fill in the blanks' with negatives. *Focus on your song, or your writing and what changes you think would be most effective.*

FAQs

Need To Leave Early? We'd like to have as many as possible present for every song, but we understand there are practical considerations that make it difficult for everyone to stay to the end. So it is fine to come late/leave early, but *please do not enter or leave while someone is presenting their song*. It's very distracting!

Song of the Month: At every workshop, we vote for the "Song(s) of the Month". The rules are simple:

1. Vote for as many songs as you want (or none).
2. Yes. You can vote for your own song.
3. You don't need to sign your name
4. If possible, tell us why you voted for this song

Hand in your ballot before you leave. The winner(s) will be announced online, and at the next meeting.

Suggestions or complaints can be taken to the Workshop Facilitator and/or Director (may be submitted online).