

# Solo Class Lecture #27

## “Letters of Recommendation”

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As a Faculty member and Private Teacher, I am asked several times through-out the year to write letters of recommendations for my students. These letters are used for college admission, summer programs, scholarships and full-time teaching positions. In addition to writing these letters, I also review and consider letters for potential students written by their references.

The content and tone of these letters provides a great deal of information about the potential candidate and often can make the difference in the final decision process.

Letters of recommendation are often geared toward character elements, because the transcript tells the academic story. A building principle, potential college studio teacher or any potential employer wants to know if a candidate is: responsible, well prepared, talented, shows up on time, completes tasks in a timely manner, takes direction well, self-motivated, takes pride in their work, able to work along side other people, honest, of moral character, strives to improve their skills, interested in the quality of the overall program (not just their specific area), willing to do more than the minimum, and has a heartfelt motivation for the position they are applying for.

I look for letters of recommendation that contain the adjectives: outstanding, excellent, exceptional, gifted, talented, leading, and trusted. The people described as: capable, average or standard do not get a great deal of positive attention. At times, letters of recommendation can contain negative descriptors (e.g. argumentative, lazy, below average, difficult, not suited and distracted).

A good letter of recommendation is honest, to the point, believable, and from a person who has credibility.

Some actual samples from my file:

#1) *X has been a private student of mine for the past three years and is one of the finest high school students that I have ever worked with. She is very dedicated, talented, focused and loves music. X is solid in all elements of her playing and has had a great deal of experience outside of the High School environment.*

#2) *X is a fine musician, a serious student and very intuitive about music in general. He has been a pleasure to work with. He is always well prepared, dedicated, intelligent and has a passion for music. I believe that he will do very well in his performance activities.*

#3) *I have know and worked with X for the past few months. I believe that he does have potential; however he is often unprepared and makes excuses why he has not practiced. X is a nice young man, his heart is in the right place, but he needs to assert himself to really know and demonstrate what he is capable of achieving.*