

## SHORELINE

## 7/29/11 He's got rhythm: Yankee legend Bernie Williams in Madison

Playing jazz and in the major leagues

By Lisa Reisman  
Special to the Times

Ever wonder how to become a critically acclaimed guitarist and songwriter? How about realizing your dream to play in the major leagues? As it turns out, the two pursuits have a lot in common.

Bernie Williams, it's safe to say, is an expert at both. The Yankee legend and jazz recording artist will appear at the First Congregational Church in Madison on Thursday, July 28 to discuss "Rhythms of the Game: The Link Between Musical and Athletic Performance,"

co-written with musicians Dave Gluck and Bob Thompson, in an event sponsored by R.J. Julia Booksellers.

Here, in the form of eight simple tips to excel on the field or on the stage, is a rough preview of what the four-time world champion and Latin Grammy nominee has learned over the years:

(1) View challenges as familiar or unfamiliar rather than difficult or easy. That way, you'll assume that you're unfamiliar with the challenge because it just hasn't become easy yet.

(2) Face your fears. Take action and move in a positive direction past the fear. Practice doing the things you fear in small, progressive steps.

(3) At the same time, know that the fear will

never go away as long as you continue to stretch your capabilities and expand your comfort zone.

(4) Be relaxed, be focused, and always sit next to someone more experienced than you. As a musician, as soon as you tense up, the ideas stop flowing and you cease to be creative, just as you would in the batter's box.

(5) You can only reach the heights of excellence if you've honed the fundamentals. The greatest athletes, entrepreneurs, musicians and scientists emerge only after spending at least three hours a day for a decade mastering their chosen field.

That's 10,000 hours. The countless hours spent practicing alone—whether in a practice room or on the field—are like deposits in a bank that accumulate over time to be drawn upon in those moments when you're summoned to perform at the highest level.

(6) The next time you walk off the field or stage having struck out or given a less-than-stellar performance, remember that failure is actually a prerequisite for improvement and success. Literally. The definition of failure is an omission of occurrence—in other words, an outcome that was not expected. It is the very act of failing that

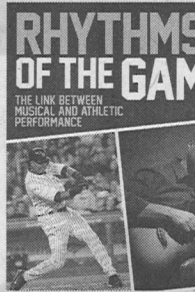
is at the basis of every great athlete and musician.

(7) Accept peaks and valleys as a part of the rhythm of life; all great players and musicians experience them. And know they are only temporary.

(8) If you're a ballplayer, consider learning an instrument. If you're a musician, join a softball league. That's because every bat is like a musical instrument that when hit with a ball, sings a different way. Which explains the four Gold Gloves Bernie won

as the Yankees' center-fielder. With his years of musical training, he could process the sound of the ball off the bat and get a jump on the ball more quickly than his non-musician teammates.

Bernie Williams will appear at the First Congregational Church in Madison at 7 p.m., Thursday, July 28. For more information, contact R.J. Booksellers at 203-245-3959.



The three authors from left to right: Dave Gluck, Bernie Williams, Bob Thompson.