

THE  
INNER GAME  
OF  
FINGERSTYLE  
GUITAR

HOW TO  
BLEND YOUR INTUITION,  
INTELLECT, AND EMOTIONS  
TO ACHIEVE GUITAR MASTERY



ADAM RAFFERTY

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**ADAM RAFFERTY**

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Paperback: ISBN 978-1-7345755-0-7  
Audiobook: ISBN 978-1-7345755-1-4  
E-book: ISBN 978-1-7345755-2-1  
Kindle Book: ISBN 978-1-7345755-3-8

Cover art by Damonza.com  
Layout by Damonza.com

Crescent Ridge Publishing, LLC  
323 Pipe Stave Hollow Road  
Miller Place, NY 11764  
[adamrafferty.com](http://adamrafferty.com)

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*For Mike Longo*

*Thank you for having taken me  
on as your musical apprentice.*

*I cherish your profound teachings, your wisdom, your humanity, and  
your humor every single day.*

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## Introduction

Congratulations on taking this next incredible step in your musical journey! The fact that this book is in your hands is no accident. You attracted it because you are ready for it.

You found this book, and it found you.

It is my hope that in the pages ahead you will find the perfect message to help take your musical and personal development to the next level. I will offer you my best ideas, guidance, life stories, and techniques to help improve your inner game and apply it to your music.

### **What is the ‘inner game’?**

The inner game is the game of understanding yourself. It’s everything other than the raw guitar information that you’d find in a textbook.

The inner game is the game of mastering your ego, emotions, cultivating your intellect, your craft, confronting boredom, frustration, developing discipline, and allowing things to unfold naturally.

When you become serious about any art, you start playing an inner game. Whether you’re learning to play guitar, paint with watercolor, or anything else, the urge to improve can churn up feelings of frustration, confusion, and maybe even despair.

That’s actually the ego at work. You feel this separate little “me” in the fight to improve yourself. Navigating through this maze, getting your ego out of the way, and allowing your art to flourish is all part of the inner game.

So mastering your art is actually a way of mastering yourself.

### **Is this book for you?**

Can you answer “yes” to any of the following?

- Your soul lights up when you play music, but you feel confused about what to learn or practice next.
- You feel that your musical instinct is right, but you're not sure about how to improve your technique, theory, and rhythm.
- You've read about things like modes, chord inversions, and theory but the ideas never stick or integrate with your playing.
- You have limited practice time.
- You experience self-doubt and nervousness when you perform in front of others, even though you can play perfectly at home.
- You are currently self-taught.
- You feel you are stuck in a rut, playing the same old stuff.
- You follow online lessons and have piles of DVD's and books but can't get momentum and a thread of learning started. It always feels like starting from square one.

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then this book is for you.

You are not alone. Years ago I was as lost and confused as you may be on every single point mentioned.

I can remember my dizzy days as a young music student. I'd be bewildered by random bits of information from guitar magazines. My practicing would jump from one idea to another, and I'd feel hopeless with big musical projects.

I'd attend concerts and see the enormous gap between where I was and where the seasoned pros were. And if I ever had to play solo guitar, I'd get unbearably nervous, almost to the point of vomiting.

Like you, I knew I had music in me, but I lacked a plan. I desperately needed a system to understand how my music, mind, and soul ticked.

## **When the student is ready, the teacher appears**

When I couldn't take these unanswered questions any longer, my mentor appeared, as if from nowhere.

And now this book is in your hands because you are ready for this information.



## **Imagine the future musical you**

For the next minute, I'd like you time-travel, and imagine the future musical you:

- You see yourself fully understanding the music you are playing, and you enjoy your delicious knowledge.
- You easily understand harmony and theory.
- You're practicing effectively, and enjoyably getting results.
- Your groove is impeccable.
- You're performing in front of others confidently with a smile on your face, and they are enjoying your music.
- You understand the blend of your emotions, intellect, and intuition as you play.
- The music is playing itself—through you.

Allow that vision to sink in for about sixty seconds. If you hold that vision, and continually come back to it, you will surely achieve it.

## **Who am I and why should you listen to me?**

My name is Adam Rafferty, and I'm a guitarist, composer, and teacher. I started playing guitar at age five and just turned fifty! (OMG, how did that happen?) So that's forty-five years of music study and playing, thirty years of teaching, and I am *still learning something new about music, guitar, and life every day*.

As a teen I had my first big challenge studying classical guitar. Following that, I played jazz guitar in New York City through my twenties and thirties. I still think of myself as a jazz player even though I've been playing mainly solo fingerstyle guitar for the last twelve years.

It was during my jazz-guitar period that I met my mentor, a world-class jazz pianist, composer, and arranger. He gave me musical and personal training of the highest order.

It was an intense master-apprentice relationship. Our minds melded. Many of my vague ideas became clear and precise simply through being around him.

Even though he was officially "just a music teacher," our lessons

went far beyond music. Music was simply the vehicle through which a deeper teaching was conveyed.

The concepts I will teach you started as lessons from him, but have since taken hold in my life as real experiences, which I now own. If I were merely “teaching the teaching” to you, the words would be hollow and convey nothing. That’s why everything I will tell you here is backed up by my own (sometimes painful) life experience. I have paid the full price of admission for any advice I will give you.

Using the concepts in this book, I have accomplished things far beyond what I dreamed would ever be possible.

For example, I have gotten to play thousands of guitar concerts and festivals all over the world in Germany, Austria, Italy, Bermuda, Russia, Kazakhstan, Singapore, USA, Scotland, England, Estonia, Finland, and Poland, to name a few. I’ve received twenty-million video views on YouTube, released ten CD’s, built a DVD instructional series, and built a successful and lively online guitar school. And most of all, I’ve enjoyed my musical life tremendously.

I’m not saying this to brag or show off. I’m saying it to inspire you, because you can do it, too. My achievements became possible because I learned certain principles, which I will now share with you.

## **What will you learn?**

Some of the ideas you’ll learn will be musical, designed to help clear up any misunderstandings you may have. No music reading is required, but we will address musical ideas.

Many more ideas will be related to the psycho-spiritual inner game of learning, improving, and mastering yourself, your productivity, and your practice.

It gives me great joy to pass this knowledge on to you and help you discover new dimensions within yourself.

Soon you’ll be able to see your way on the path more clearly, and watch in amazement as your practicing, playing, and life improve in leaps and bounds.

Thanks for inviting me to join you on this part of your journey.

Let’s get started.