

Some Notes:

Bowl Talk – Decisions, Decisions:

-Step 1 – Have a cup of coffee with your wood. (Tea works fine.) The important thing, especially when turning green, is getting to know the piece of wood you will use.

-Don't design in a vacuum. Always have a root source of inspiration. This can be... anything. Nature, art, architecture, other turned work, sports team logos, hairdos... anything. The important thing is to have some direction when beginning.

-Be open to changing direction. Let serendipity happen. Think long and hard about the bowl you want to make then make it without thinking too much. Sometimes the wood or our tools will assert themselves in unexpected ways. If so, let them.

-Less is more. In simplicity lies genius. A well-executed form with minimal detail can be far more powerful than too many details, no matter how well crafted. Know when to stop.

-Honesty, nobility, and personal satisfaction are what lie at the heart of creating a functional bowl. That's part of what attracted many of us to turning bowls in the first place. There's sometimes a pressure to go beyond the functional and get all "artsy." Don't give in... unless, of course, you want to.

-Take risks. Wood is a material of risk (there's no such thing as a "wood-stretcher", and sometimes it's hard to know what knots, inclusions, or wormholes are hiding beneath the surface.) Risk is what moves us forward. But with risk inevitably comes mistakes, so...

-Embrace your mistakes. Remember, "Screw-up is the mother of creative innovation." It is amazing how often the solution to a mistake leads to a piece that is stronger than the original idea.

-Make lots of work. Experience balances risk.

-Think of the visual and textural consequences every time you touch tool to wood. What level of collaboration between yourself and the wood are you after? How much will you assert your will on the wood? How much will the wood assert itself?

-Sweat the details!! Every detail. Trust your gut, but treat no decision casually from start to finish. Pay attention to paying attention.

-Be self-critical. Not every piece is going to be a success. When George Gershwin was asked how he writes so many great songs he said something like "I don't, at least nine of every ten end up in the trash." The trick is in knowing which are the good ones.

-Remember what Palmer Sharpless said: "If it can't hold soup, it's art."