The Process of Co-writing

Brian Johnson

Songwriting can be just self expression.  
\* There is no meter for how good it is  
\* This is your heart’s cry

Songwriting can also have that “spark” on it that you know that it could be something great.  
\* There is a process that should happen when writing this way

Co-writing:  
\* It can be difficult to give someone your baby and have them tell you that it’s not good/“that’s an ugly baby”  
\* There is a communication that has to happen if you want to co-write

It’s not about just getting with random people, it’s finding people who are strong where you are weak.  
\* Find the person that is better at lyrics than you or better at melody than you \* Be a little cautious with who you write with, you don’t want to get into something and end up having to settle for a song that is not right

There is a point where you have to let go.  
\* You are going to run into people who are better than you at parts of songwriting, letting them into the process of writing that song can be the best thing you can do.  
\* You need to be open to other people’s ideas

Lead your song live.  
\* It can help you feel whether or not it’s finished

Record a demo.  
\* It can help you hear more parts of the song and find where you want to take it

Make sure that you talk about songwriting splits, in case the song goes big.  
\* Figure out how money, acknowledgement, etc. will be split up  
\* You’ve got the chords, the lyrics, the melody and you need to figure out what “worth” you give to each part  
\* Some lyrics may mean more than others, it’s up to you to decide amongst yourselves  
\* Communicating up front or during the process is the best way to tackle this

If you want community, it takes work.  
\* It doesn’t come easy, it takes time to build

**Q &A**

Student: How often do you look for hooks?  
Brian: Every melody should have hooks. Every section should stand on its own.

Student: What is a fair split between music/melody and lyrics?  
Brian: As a general rule melody and lyric are 50/50. But, really, there is no general rule.

Student: If you write an entire song, and you’re happy with it, do you still share it with people for feedback?  
Brian: Absolutely. You never know what they may be able to add to your song

Student: What boundaries need to be in place when songwriting with the opposite sex?  
Brian: Doors should be open. Don’t write late at night, especially one on one.

Student: What do you do when you feel like a song is pretty good, but not the best it could be, and you’re not sure what to change?  
Brian: Try it out. Sing it for someone else, see how it goes. Sometimes the pretty good songs turn into the amazing songs. Over time, you fall in love with the song just as it is.