



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EP2: How & Why I Quit My Job 5x



Hello, and welcome to the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast, Episode 2!

So, this second episode is part of my *Lessons Learned Series*, where I dig a little bit deeper into my own personal experiences inside the music industry so that I can share with you some lessons I learned, one might say the hard way, so that you can take something from them and apply the lessons that I've learned to your own situation and maybe... hopefully not suffer quite as much.

So, this first episode, this first lesson learned, is about taking control of your life and having the courage to build your own path. A lot of the times we fail to listen to ourselves, even when we know what we feel is right.

Whether it's because we feel we're too young, or were too new to the situation or the industry, or that other people know better, whatever the situation may be, hopefully by the end of this episode you'll see that it's important to listen to yourself and follow your heart when you know the path that you're on is not the path for you.

This is a story I first shared about two years ago and it's originally from an experience I had in 2006, so it took me 10 years to feel brave enough to share it for the first time, and now I'm sharing it here with you with a bit

more of a deeper dive into what was really behind it, what was behind the experience and what really came from the lessons that I learned.

So, without further ado, I'll jump into the time I quit my job five times.

Yes, I quit the **same job** five times. I basically just kept showing back up for work the next day.

Now, if you listen to Episode 1, the introduction to this podcast, I briefly touched upon the fact that after graduating from Drexel University I took a job working for Astralwerks - I was their Midwest Sales Coordinator. At the time, there was only one person that was aware of the fact that I had quit five times {I don't think anybody else in the company was aware that I had done that}.

I had gone to my boss, somebody I had worked with closely for a number of years as their intern, as I I didn't know where else to turn, and I kept going back and quitting. Each time they had told me to stick it out and to not quit. I felt that they knew better. Who was I to question what they knew? I made it almost a year; I made it 10 months at Astralwerks.

And this has nothing to do with Astralwerks. As a place to work, it was a wonderful place. I loved the people that I worked with, but this was more about the job that I actually had to do, and what I was feeling, and the things that I was going through at the time, and it wasn't a good fit for me.

Hopefully you'll get something out of it, so let's jump in!

It's AMAZING how, in the moment, something can feel like the worst, most horrible experience of your life and years later be looked at as such a silly thing to stress over.

I was set to graduate 6 months early, which gave me a head start on the job search. A mentor of mine from Atlantic Records had offered me an opportunity to follow him to Astralwerks (EMI) and become the Midwest Sales Coordinator.

Others warned me not to take the job. They said I had been doing school at full throttle and should use the 6 months to "find myself."

I had always been an honor student in high school, I took college-level courses, I then barreled through school at Drexel - taking 8 classes a semester, or trimester as we had them.

I had worked three jobs simultaneously while I went to school, two of which didn't even pay, and I just did everything to the full max. People could see it on my face, they could see it in my energy level, or lack thereof, they could already tell that I was on my way to full-on burnout and they tried warning me, but all I could say was, "Yeah sure 'find myself,' 'figure out my why,' yeah, okay guys, you're crazy."

I had a JOB OFFER. Although it was before the crash of 2008, it was still insane at that time to turn down a job.

What did it matter if sales was the last thing I wanted to do? Who cared about my happiness? Certainly not me! I cared about proving to myself

that all of the hard work that I did in school leading me up into this point was not a waste of time. But once I started there were long days, nightly cries, a slew of panic attacks, and bouts of depression.

I got to the point where I would spend nights dreaming about making copies of SoundScan reports only to be woken up by my alarm and realizing my day hadn't even started. I am not exaggerating to when I say I cried daily.

I would wake up, take a two-hour commute from Long Island to the job, sit there and do the best that I could. The phone would ring and I would let it go to voicemail because I was terrified of picking it up. I did not want to speak to anybody, I didn't want to deal with anything.

It's amazing I didn't get fired.

I somehow still managed to do my job, but I lived in fear on a daily basis. I lived in my own fear, in my own doubt. I would run away to the bathroom during lunch and silently cry in a bathroom stall. I would then come home after a 15-hour workday, have some dinner, pulled myself into my pajamas and passed out only to get three or four hours of sleep, wake up, and do it all again the next day.

The first time I tried quitting my boss asked why and I just said it was too much. It was such an embarrassing episode. I literally broke down in front of him, hysterical crying and shaking like a leaf with this little index card I had written down with the pros and cons of staying at the job versus

quitting, and the cons list {the reasons I wanted to quit} just went on and on and on, clearly outweighing the pros to staying at this job.

But, what reason was that?!?

Didn't I want to make it {even if I didn't know what that meant to me anymore}? What did I expect, things would be easy?!?

So, after talking with him I felt that if I left I would let him down. I felt:

What else would I be doing?

What what would happen?

Where would I go?

Where would I work?

What else was I qualified to do?

I had spent years just waiting to get to this point, why would I walk away now when I was ahead of the curve? So, I showed back up the next morning and put one foot in front of the other.

Now, the second time I tried quitting my boss asked why and I think at that point I said it was about money, and while that wasn't untrue {I think I was making \$28/year, working tons of overtime just to try to pay the bills}, after saying it was about money it was like:

What did I expect?

This was the music industry.

Did I care about the music or did I care about the money?

So, suffice it to say I was back at work the next day.

The third and fourth times I quit I'm pretty sure I again said it was something about money because I didn't know how to explain all the fears I felt. After that first time I tried quitting, I felt so silly saying that I was fearful, or that I didn't want this dream anymore, or that I wanted something different, or that I was tired. I felt so ashamed to say that I was tired, to say I wanted a break.

I literally started this job two days after finishing college. I had my last test, I packed my bags, I moved home, I unpacked my bags, and then the next day after that I started at this job. There was no break in between for me to take a breather and even absorb what I had already just accomplished.

I did a lot during my time at Drexel, and I did it in three and a half years, and I didn't take any time to enjoy that. I simply put my head down and went to work. During the third and fourth times that I tried quitting my boss then said, "Okay, well you know what? I fought for you and you got a raise!"

And it was like "WHAT?!?" because they said they weren't going to give out raises, and I thought that was my *in* - that was my excuse that you couldn't argue with, you know? I needed a raise, you're not giving raises, oh well!

But, my boss fought so hard for me and when that raise came through I thought, "Oh my goodness, I didn't even *want* the raise, but how do I turn

that down? He went to bat for me, he believed in me. Who walks away from *that*?"

So, I continued working there for a few more months until the pros were a 110% overshadowed by the cons. It simply wasn't what I was built for and I was burnt out.

I had just turned 22 at that point and I truly *truly* believed my life was over.

My time in the music industry had come to an end and I would live a painful life as a miserable failure.

The fifth time I quit I wrote a letter to all of the supervisors explaining to them that I was taking a job as a paralegal. I did not do this by myself. I had gone to my mom in hysterics, completely desperate at that point, and she brought up a great point to me.

She said, "You know, if you wanted to leave the job where where would you go? You can't leave the job hoping to go directly into another job because you're never home! When would you look for interviews? When would you submit resumes? When would you do any type of research to find out what it is you wanted to do?"

So, we sat up all night talking. I told her that I was always interested in the legal field that I thought maybe I'd go to law school and study copyright law. I told her that I wanted to learn about contracts and how my college roommate and I really wanted to get our own business off the ground and

that I had hopes and dreams for that, but that I didn't want to do that without having a certain education behind me.

She said to me, "Listen, let's sit down let's think out a plan. Let's create a plan that you can't walk away from and it's time to follow through on it."

I figured there was no turning back from that. We sat down together at the kitchen table and she helped me write my resignation letter. I cried and cried and cried. As much as I was hopeful that there was a plan, that there was a light at the end of the tunnel, I was heartbroken. I felt like I would be letting everybody down, not to mention my boss who had fought for me time and time again - who had put up with me quitting time and time again - and I just felt like, "How can I even face him tomorrow?"

I'll never forget the look on my boss's face. I knew how badly I had let him down. It would be a few years before I would even be able to let go of that guilt.

In fact, I never publicly admitted this, but there was **no** paralegal job, at least not at that time. It would be another five months before I found a job as a paralegal because, let's face it, by that point it was 2007 and jobs were already pretty hard to come by, but I knew that I didn't trust myself to go through with leaving a job that I had convinced myself I did not deserve in the first place if I didn't have an ironclad way out.

Now, hindsight is always 20/20. At 33 years old, I can often look back at that scared lost 21/22 year-old and think, "It was a freaking job!!!! What the **fuck** took you so long?!?"

I laugh thinking about how life-threatening that situation felt at the moment. It truly felt like everything I had done in my life up until that point was on the line. You might be sitting there thinking much like I am right now, "Suz, it was a *job!* I know it might be hard and you want to pay the bills and not be on unemployment, but it was a *job!* Why would you stay there and just be that miserable?"

I want to dive a little bit more deeply and this stuff I did not share two years ago when I originally published my story.

I want to really explain the *real* reasons behind why I quit and the lessons I learned from the experience. I was in such a depressed place in my life and I was completely lost, and being an overachiever, being at the top of my class throughout high school and throughout college, I was not used to feeling that way.

It's not that I had never experienced depression or frustrations, but I always kind of knew, when it came to work, what *worked*. I knew how to figure things out, I knew how to succeed and do really well at things, even if personally maybe I didn't feel particularly happy.

But, here I was, struggling in both my professional life and my personal life and these are the reasons why I think it took me five times before I *truly* quit. When I *did* finally decide to quit, it really took my mother pretty much threatening me and saying how she wouldn't respect me if I didn't go in the next day and leave that job and put my two weeks notice.

It really it came down to not wanting to disappoint my boss versus not wanting to disappoint my own mother in staying at that job, so that's truly what it took. I don't think I left that job on my own accord. I don't think I was strong enough at that time to do so.

The reason it took me so many times was because I was terrified to disappoint my boss - this was somebody who gave me my first chance at my internship, this was somebody who had trained me and cheered me on and helped me at Atlantic when I would make mistakes and learn from them. We'd have talks about where I saw myself going in the industry and what I wanted from my life and why the music industry was so important to me. I would share things about my family and my struggles and what I was scared of, and I truly I opened up - probably more than I should have.

I became too attached - it was like that became my second family. Any of you ever watch *The Office* and know Michael Scott is maybe a little too attached to his job? That's how I felt about this job.

"Oh my goodness! This wasn't a job, this was my *life!*"

How could I disappoint my boss who believed in me, who hired a 21 year old out of school to take on this position? I think the next oldest person at that job was about six years older than me; they used to call me sorority girl. I was never in a sorority, so I don't know where that came from, but I definitely stuck out. I very often got mistaken for interns, even though I was training and hiring the interns, who were older than me, so it was a very weird situation to be in at times.

It made me feel like, "Wow, he believed in me so much to give me this position, how can I walk away from this and disappoint him like that?"

I also felt like, "What would I tell my friends?" I ran with, and I still run with, a very smart and overachieving group of friends - we've all been friends since elementary school - and they were so proud of me for getting out early and for having a job. They were all still finishing up school and I felt like such a badass, you know?

I wanted to impress them, I wanted to show them that, yes, I was a music major, but I'm working in Manhattan - how cool is that?!

I didn't know what to tell them. I had been working so many hours I had missed birthday parties, I had missed out on vacations they had all gone on together. Taking as many classes as I did at school, I would come home on breaks and just work and not see them, so I thought, "What was it all worth if I quit after all those times I blew off my friends and told them this was so important and that I couldn't make their birthday or their special event because I was working? What would all this mean if I just walked away from it?"

I also felt like a fraud.

I thought, "Who am I? How did I convince people that I could take on this job?" If I quit I would just be admitting to the fact that, "Yea, I don't know how I got over on you, but you probably never should have hired me because I suck and I don't know what I'm doing."

That's what I convinced myself of and I was also terrified because, like I said before, I had no other job to replace it. I hate lying to people, I pride myself on my honesty and my transparency, and how do I tell them I have another job when I don't? So that really was terrifying to me, especially being so young in the industry and this really being the first official job that I had had.

But, looking back, all of those fears - the feeling like a fraud, the feeling like I would disappoint my boss, and all those things - what I learned is that this all came down to my self-worth. It didn't matter about what my boss thought or what my friends thought about my decisions. They weren't living my life. They didn't have to go home and be in my head and have the thoughts that I was having.

Like I said, there was nothing wrong with the actual job, it's just not what I wanted to do, plus I was dealing with a lot of stuff, a lot of personal demons and thoughts. I had just started therapy that year, thanks to my boss telling me that he was worried about me and that he knew I needed an outlet.

So, thanks to him, I *did* start therapy, but that opened up Pandora's box and I was doing so much work in therapy that all of these emotions were coming up, so it was a lot. I still hadn't even taken a break from graduating college - all this stuff was happening and I was convincing myself that shame on me I couldn't handle it, I couldn't rise to the occasion.

I wasn't hustling. I wasn't grinding. I wasn't doing everything that they teach you in the music industry you *need* to do if you really want it.

I didn't believe in myself. I didn't trust that I knew what was best for myself and I had a very hard time accepting that my dream was changing.

That's something that I worked through in therapy a lot, even after I left this job. My therapist kept asking me, "Why are you afraid of being wrong? You were just wrong. You thought this is what you wanted and it wasn't and that's okay."

I always say to clients, "You don't know what you don't know until you know it." Since I was in junior high I had wanted to be the next Russell Simmons and I wanted to work my way up through the major labels and all of that stuff, but I never asked myself *why* and when I look back, my *why* was simply because that's all I knew about the music industry.

I just knew, "Oh, there were major labels and if you're not a performer you're at the labels and you're working your way up and you're paying your dues and you're doing jobs you don't want to do but you'll eventually get to where you do want to be."

That's what I convinced myself of, but it's okay for dreams to change as you gather more information, as you gain more experience, and you learn, "Oh, okay, this is not what I thought it was gonna be. I'm gonna do something different. I'm gonna pivot. I'm gonna figure things out."

I didn't have those tools at that time, so everything felt like it was just the biggest, most horrible thing to go through.

Can any of you relate to that?

Can you think back to something that you just couldn't believe how you would get past and now you look back and you're like, "Yeah, I totally got past it, what was I thinking?"

Or maybe you're going through something right now where you're looking at something and thinking, "I'm never going to survive this," or, "This is just the *worst* thing that could possibly ever happen to me."

There's no denying what you're going through might be really really bad right now, but you'll keep living, and keep putting one foot in front of the other, and keep reflecting and questioning your decisions and seeing if there's a way to infiltrate more happiness into your day-to-day.

Maybe you can start making plans to work a little bit less on the things you hate and work a little bit more on the things you love. Get control over your destiny, start listening to those voices inside and stop listening to all those other opinions that everybody else is going to have because they're not living your life.

Another lesson I want to impart with you today before we leave here is that it's also very important to have that work/life separation. And that is so hard to do in this music industry because it is a creative industry and a lot of the times, especially when you're a musician or creating music, your life is in your work, right?

A lot of the times it's hard to separate that, but it's so important to identify work as work and life as life, even if life does influence your work and even if work does influence your life. You still have to keep them separate and make time for both of them. I think that if I had practiced a little bit more work/life separation I wouldn't have been so terrified of letting my boss down because it wouldn't have been about him and it wouldn't have been about everything I had worked towards. It would have been more about what made me happy in my life.

Do what makes you happy. Maybe it doesn't mean quit your job, maybe it just means add more things into your daily routine that make you happy, whatever it is. It's important, at the very least, that you identify what it is that makes you happy, even if it takes you years to achieve it.

Know what that is, check in with yourself, listen to yourself, don't just put one foot in front of the other and ignore what your body is trying to tell you. Be present. Be responsible for your future and be happy.

Which brings me to my actionable for you here today: Declutter your mind.

Silence the fears; put them on pause. Take a deep breath in and exhale out the doubts you have about your current situation. Make a list of things that truly make you happy and start to find a way to implement more of those things in your daily routine.

It's hard to do that when you feel like your life is all over the place, so **I invite you to download my Get Your Mind Right Checklist** to help you

start the decluttering process. You can go to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep2 and download the checklist to start taking positive action steps towards leading a more fulfilling and centered life.

I hope you've been able to take something away from my very painful experience and lessons learned and I thank you for sticking with me and listening to my story today.

I invite you to check out the other lessons learned in my series that's now available on any podcast platform of your choosing, or by going to www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast and find the episodes there.

If there is any way that I can help you overcome some of your roadblocks, or help you get some clarity on what you're going through, I'd be more than happy to!

Feel free to email me at any time: suz@therockstaradvocate.com.

Until next time, Rockstar! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next Wednesday so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.