



# The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

## EP9: Are Pity Parties Helpful?



You're listening to Episode 9 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello, and welcome! You're listening to Episode 9 - Are Pity Parties Helpful? I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach to help freelancers or DIY musicians become full-fledged music-preneurs with sustainable careers in music.

A big part of my job is to help creatives find more structure in their day. You'll hear in future episodes how to create better routines, manage your time efficiently, and find a better work/life balance.

Usually, after working with a client, they experience high levels of focus, motivation, and confidence. But, at some point, they get knocked off their routine or derailed from their plans and tend to feel defeated and even hopeless at times.

I've given interviews before and spoken on panels and inevitably someone will ask me, "So what's the point of doing all of that planning and organizing when it can feel nearly impossible to maintain it?"

That concern isn't without merit. I get it. I understand that some feel that while structure & organization are fine in theory, the implementation can

feel pointless when life isn't predictable and schedules within this industry are anything but routine.

But, what I like to remind people is that it's ok to fall out of sync with your ideal structure. It's ok to get messy and not always be organized. I do this for a living and even I have days or weeks where I'm just going through the motions and waiting for the moment where I can take a deep breath in and regroup.

The purpose of having a structure or certain routines in place is so we have something to fall back on - something to ground us and come back to when things become too messy or feel too unpredictable.

Routines help take the guesswork out of what our next steps are and allow us to act rather than overthink.

When I help others time block and create structure within their week I do my best to make clear that this is what their ideal week will look like - that this is what they want to strive for each week.

Got kids? At least one of them is probably sick right now and I can guarantee you didn't block out "waiting for an hour in the doctor's waiting room" into your normal work week or set aside an hour for "catching a quick nap because my child kept me up all night."

Work another job? If you rely on public transportation or travel with rush hour traffic I bet you didn't anticipate a 3-car pile up that caused all buses and cars to be re-routed, adding 40 more minutes to your commute, caus-

ing you to work during your lunch break to finish what you needed to finish in order to clock out on time.

Just because setbacks or unexpected things happen to us doesn't mean we shouldn't work at maintaining structure and balance in our lives. It won't always zero-out, but when it does - man does it feel good!

So now that you know why all of this is important, and stay tuned next week because I'm going to dive deeper into how to create your own routine to help with your work/life balance, I want to address how to handle those moments when you feel like everything you've worked to maintain is falling apart.

First, I want to talk about pity parties and the role they play - should we even allow ourselves to have them? Then, I'll address ways you can stay motivated and make progress even when you feel hopeless about a situation. And, of course, I'll list out some Rocksources to help you get through it all!

**So let's talk about pity parties.** Feeling sorry for yourself. Many on social media would hashtag this #firstworldproblems because really, how bad can it be?

But, sometimes, it can feel reeeaaalllly bad. Especially when dealing with something you've created and poured your heart & soul into, the stakes can sometimes feel incredibly high and a disappointment can really take its toll.

I'm not one to shy away from a good pity party. I've learned it's better to acknowledge the feelings and face them head on than pushing them away and berating yourself for showing weakness or sadness.

That being said, my mother raised me with a good rule of thumb - 15 minutes. You get 15 minutes to feel crappy and worthless and ashamed, but then you gotta pick yourself back up.

Sometimes as a teen, after a stressful day of school or an embarrassing social moment, I'd be crying in my room and my mom would gently knock on the door, come in to rub my back and say, "ok, 15 minutes. Let it out."

**Giving yourself permission to feel crappy, even if the reality is not as bad as it seems, is ok.** Telling yourself, or letting others tell you to "stop your whining" or "stop feeling sorry for yourself" or "grow up" or "grow a backbone" isn't going to change how you feel, it's only going to add more shame to what you're already feeling.

As Gina Gallagher explains in [Psychology Today](#), allowing yourself to acknowledge what sucks at the moment and even finding others who "get it" can allow you to feel seen & empowered, and ultimately move forward as a stronger person.

And before you tell yourself what you're upset about is "stupid" or "unimportant" realize that there's a good chance you're not even upset about the thing you think you're upset about.

A “silly” situation most likely triggered feelings you may have had buried from another situation and you’re finally releasing them now. Release that shit. It needed to come out, so let it. If it didn’t, it wouldn’t have surfaced the first silly chance it got, right?

Fixating on why you’re feeling so shitty isn’t always necessary. Allow yourself to release the energy, no matter the cause or rationale. Not everything has to make sense or be figured out. The sooner you can release it, the sooner you can get back to what matters.

Just as I explain in Episode 4 - WTF Are My Pants - we’ve got to listen to what our bodies are telling us. There’s no point in chastising yourself for feeling crummy while continuing to work - you and I both know you won’t be working at your best and while you may have scared yourself back to work, the mind will still be elsewhere.

**We can all spare up to 15 minutes to let the feelings happen and then go back to work with more focus & confidence.**

If you’re worried the flood gates aren’t going to close once those 15 minutes are up, *Fast Company’s* Harvey Deutschendorf provides an awesome list of 5 ways you can leave your pity party when it’s been a bit too long.

A link to this list can be found in the Rocksources section of the show notes, but I’ll go through them with you now.

#1 is Step Away & Get a Reality Check. Now, this may seem to run along the lines of telling yourself to “get a grip & snap out of it,” but it doesn’t

have to be that harsh. After you've given yourself some time to purge the crappy feelings of self-doubt or disappointment, remind yourself where this moment stands in the grand scheme of things.

Harvey suggests asking yourself these questions: "Is there anything I can do at this time to keep the problem from getting worse?" "Is it possible for the problem to be worse than it is?"

The point of these questions is to realize that #1 maybe the situation is shitty and there ISN'T anything you can do to stop it from getting worse or undo the damage it's already caused. That in-and-of-itself is empowering, because you've accepted what you don't have control over and can then move onto what you can control.

Also, by asking if it can get any worse, you may realize it could get worse {as most things can}, but the likelihood of a "worst case scenario" is slim to none.

With #2 he suggests to Look for a Positive & Focus on It. We've obviously all heard of focusing on the silver lining, but maybe this particular situation doesn't feel like it has one {yet}. That's ok - find something you like about yourself, rather than the situation.

**It's important to remember we are more than the situations we find ourselves in.** Think back to the last time you accomplished a goal, or simply felt good about yourself. Take a few minutes to revel in that again.

This can be hard, depending on how badly this particular situation ravaged your self-confidence, so feel free to use this list I keep by my desk. It's from the website [Thought Catalog](#) and you can find the link in the show notes.

It's called "20 Signs You're Doing Better Than You Think You Are." It's a nicer way to ease out of a pity party rather than saying to yourself, "there are children in Africa starving, quit being a self-involved asshole." It's a list that reminds us we're doing the best we can, and that ain't half bad!

I like to glance at it as needed when I feel like I just can't do anything right!

#3 in Harvey's list is about that eventual silver lining. He suggests you Look Past the Situation. Take a moment and reflect on the last time you felt the world was ending. When was the last time you overcame something that, at the time, felt insurmountable? Clearly, you overcame it in some way, because you're still here.

**How did that situation help you? What did you learn from it? How did it ultimately end up serving you?** You may not be able to see the silver lining in this situation you're in now, but knowing there was one the last time you felt this way can be comforting as you wait to find it this go-round.

His #4 is Asking For & Accepting Help. This is a BIG one. So many of us suffer in silence. Talking about it or finding someone to help dig you out of a situation is not only empowering, as you're taking back control of the situation, but it's also allows you to get a fresh perspective that allows you to see things are fixable and overcome-able.

Lastly, in #5, Harvey takes after my own heart and advises you Develop an Attitude of Gratitude. As you may have heard me discuss in Episode 5 - [I Lost Everything. Now What?](#) - I was able to overcome the devastation of losing all of my belongings in a fire by focusing on everything I was grateful for in my life.

This wasn't difficult for me, as I have been used to practicing a daily gratitude routine for many years now. This isn't to say I didn't get sad at times. As I've said - I'm entitled to those pity parties! But my habits for gratitude are what help me get back up to fight the good fight.

So now that I've listed out my case for why pity parties are ok, and I've listed out some tools you can use to move forward, how can you ensure you won't beat yourself for wanting to RSVP or embrace the pity party so much you overstay your welcome?

**If you haven't known me long you should know that I'm a big fan of setting boundaries and expectations.** Doing so makes it easier when we struggle to give ourselves permission to do something or figure out our next steps.

Laying out ahead of time what you will and won't allow yourself to do when things get tough can be a helpful exercise in giving yourself some structure and realizing that setbacks will happen but don't need to define you or place a value on you.



As I said before, when shit hits the proverbial fan it's important to identify the control we have in a situation. While we may not be able to control outcomes, we can control how we react to the outcomes.

Additionally, just like any structure we set for ourselves, we may not always meet it. Sometimes you will talk yourself out of having that pity party and other times you may find yourself staring at the bottom of a pint of ice cream crying as you listen to Adele on repeat.

Hey, shit happens.

But this exercise I'm about to walk you through is to ground you and provide an example of what you want to strive for each time your plans don't go as planned.

**I invite you to download My Pity Party Contract** and make a promise to yourself to allow the feels to come, but not without a game plan for getting back in the, well, game. You can use this onesheet for a quick reminder of things you'll do to release the crappy energy and replenish the good shit.

You can go to [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep9](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep9) and download the contract, as well as find links to all the other Rocksources we've hit upon in today's episode.

First, I want you to acknowledge that you're entitled to this pity party. If you'd like, you can take it a step further and write on the worksheet what has caused you to take a moment for some self-loathing.

Then, I want you to acknowledge how it is you're feeling. Is it angry? Is it doubtful about your abilities? Is it embarrassment? Is it jealousy? It may be all of these things, or something else, but whatever it may be - own it. Own it all.

Next, decide how long you're gonna take & what you'll do with that time - 15 mins in a hot shower? 30 mins on the phone with your best friend? An hour to catch up on your favorite TV drama and forget life exists?

Also decide how you will monitor your time - an alarm? the end of a show?

Lastly, have a list handy of people you can call on for help in the event things *do* escalate to "worst case scenario."

Is the situation worse because of some malfunction {i.e. a crashed website, a no-show musician, a delay in merch production, etc} or because your feelings are stronger than you anticipated and you're not ok to jump right back into things?

Have a list of professionals you can call upon in a work emergency {your website guru, a fellow musician, the head supervisor at the manufacturing company} AND in a personal emergency {a family member, a medical doctor, a therapist}.

I'm not saying you need to fill out this worksheet each time you feel in the dumps. Hell, by the time you fill this out you may already be over whatever it was you were upset about!

What I *am* saying is that it can be helpful to go through this once or twice to get a feel for how you can handle future bumps in the road.

Again, having structure to fall back on ain't such a bad thing, especially when your emotions take over and you're not exactly thinking straight. Think of it as an emotional fire drill strategy.

If you're not one for worksheets, then I encourage you, at the very least, to print out the list of "20 Signs You're Doing Better Than You Think You Are" so you can gain a quick perspective refresh when needed.

I thank you for listening to today's lesson in navigating the ups & downs of being a music-preneur. We know the journey is never easy, but we can certainly learn ways to keep it from being harder than it has to be.

If you enjoyed what you learned today, you can access all current episodes using your podcast platform of choice, including iTunes & Spotify, or by visiting [www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast).

In the meantime, if there is any way that I can help you give yourself permission, come up with a plan to overcome a current obstacle, or get some clarity on whatever it is you're going through, I'd be more than happy to!

**Feel free to email me at any time: [suz@therockstaradvocate.com](mailto: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.