



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EP5: I Lost Everything. Now What?



You're listening to Episode 5 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello, and welcome! You're listening to the last installment of my Lessons Learned Series. You can access all episodes in the series, and from this podcast, using your podcast platform of choice, or by visiting www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast.

I wanted to end this series with a topic that I believe sits in the heart of what it takes to have a sustainable career - systems.

The lesson learned in this episode is about how having certain systems in place allowed me to damn near seamlessly run my first online summit in the midst of losing everything around me.

And when I say "lose everything around me," I'm not referring to my sanity, or anything intangible, although my sanity wasn't fully checked in during this time either.

I am referring to literally all of my physical belongings.

In [Episode 4](#) I discussed my hasty move to Nashville in January of 2016. This episode details my even more hasty move back home in April of 2016.

The good news was there wasn't any chance I was going to forget to pack anything on my way back to New York. The bad news was there was nothing for me to pack - as a fire had destroyed my apartment beginning at 4:15 am on April 16.

3 months after moving to Nashville, my apartment caught fire due to an electrical issue in the roof of the building and I got out with just the essentials. All other belongings - clothes, furniture, CDs, photos, keepsakes, jewelry, books, and more - would be lost forever.

It should also be noted that at 12 pm EST on April 16, that very same day, I was due to host a live Google Hangout with 6 music industry experts who contributed to a 3-day online music industry summit {The Rock/Star Summit}, as well as hold a live Q&A to address questions from all attendees streaming the live feed.

This would normally compound someone's nightmare and stress levels.

However, because my business coaches had prepared me with a strong foundation of systems, and I had spent years building up certain productivity habits, I was able to fairly easily pass on my role as host to a trusted friend, allowing the Summit to go on as planned while I handled more pressing matters.

I also, obviously, wouldn't have been able to pass on my role as host if said trusted friend did not voluntarily step up to the plate and offer her

support. So, to that end, I thank Cheryl B. Engelhardt of CBE Music & In the Key of Success for her willingness to offer her services.

I must admit, in the moments I spent standing outside in the cold, watching growing flames engulf the place I had just been sleeping in, I was ready to simply postpone the last day of my Summit.

While I left the burning building, gratefully, with my dog, Pepper, as well as my wallet, my phone, and my laptop in hand, I did not have my chargers or any of my notes. I also didn't know when I would get access to WiFi or where I would need to put my focus in the coming hours.

I also had 2 friends staying with me {more on that later} who thankfully got out with me, with all of their belongings, and my main concern was making sure they were taken care of and safely off to their next destination.

So when I emailed the 6 speakers, Cheryl included, I briefly explained the circumstances and asked when a good rain date would be. Cheryl called me to first and foremost ask how was I doing, and then said to me that she had learned a great leader is someone who doesn't allow themselves to become larger than the service they're providing {I'm paraphrasing, but that was the gist}.

What she meant was, this Summit wasn't about me, but rather teaching the musicians who had signed up to learn from it, and that the test of a well-put-together event would be if it could survive with or without me at the helm.

I couldn't have agreed more and because I had systems in place to keep files on my laptop organized, systems to easily locate passwords and website codes in past emails, and systems for organizing tutorials and protocols for keeping track of the microtasks involved in certain projects, I was quickly and easily able to give Cheryl everything she needed to carry out the Summit in my place {Thanks, Cheryl!}.

I also had systems for organizing past purchases and scanning receipts to my email account. When the insurance company asked for a rundown of everything I lost, you best believe they received one of the most thoroughly organized & itemized spreadsheets.

The adjuster actually called me a day or two later to tell me that they had never seen such a detailed collection and that they had decided to release the full value of my policy without further hold up, as I clearly was able to attest to the value I lost {Thanks MetLife!}.

Being organized with certain routines within my day-to-day life not only allowed my business to keep running while I was occupied elsewhere, but it also allowed me to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Humans do not respond well to vagueness. When disaster strikes, or even when life gets in the way and plans simply don't go as planned, our minds seem to gloss over when we can't predict what our next step will be.

Sometimes we need a moment to regroup. Once we have our bearings we're able to see more clearly and make the decisions we need to make in order to keep moving forward.

Systems give us our bearings and spell out our next steps.

Now, when I say systems I simply mean our ways of doing things, of carrying out a set of tasks. You can call them protocols or directions, whatever works for you. You can make a system for anything.

For instance, my system for making breakfast is to grab a bowl, pour in cereal, grab a spoon, pour the milk over the cereal, put the ingredients back in their spots, and sit down to eat. That's a system, and one I know quite well.

Our lives are made up of systems, however the more inefficient the systems are the further away we stay {or stray} from our goals.

Another crucial system I have is a daily routine for gratitude.

While I have had moments of tears and mourning, I NEVER had a moment where I thought, "Why me?" This is because for years now I have operated from a place of gratitude. It's one thing to be grateful in moments of elation, but to feel gratitude every day, in good and bad times, is so crucial for building sustainability.

When you're following your dream you've got to want it on days when you feel on top of the world, and on days when you feel that same world is falling out from underneath you. Gratitude allows that to happen.

When the alarm went off that morning, I had those two friends I mentioned staying with me. I rushed to wake them up, I threw on my glasses, grabbed a sweatshirt, my laptop, wallet, and phone {which I always keep piled together by my bed for safe keeping}, threw Pepper's leash on and we were out the door.

I was always someone who stayed calm in situations like this. I always assumed "there's time." Walking out my door, I saw smoke coming out above the roof. For a split second I thought, "hmm maybe there's time to run back in?"

20 feet later I looked up and the entire roof was engulfed in flames. I immediately became grateful that I had time to grab my glasses and that Pepper was with me, as well as my friends.

The gratitude that filled me, especially after my phone call with Cheryl and the other speakers I had lined up for the Summit, was just overwhelming.

I thought a lot that day about what Cheryl had said in regards to the Summit being bigger than me. The fire was the same way - it was bigger than me.

Sitting there complaining, "Why me?" or focusing on what I DIDN'T have wasn't going to help anyone and was only going to keep me in the past.

Creating a daily habit/ritual for gratitude enables us to breathe and keep moving forward. One of the firemen was kind enough to go back in and retrieve my fire safety box with some of my valuables and my hard drive and some of Pepper's things.

Everything else was gone, but I was able to keep going.

There will always be setbacks. There will always be hurdles. But when we base our days in gratitude, the future never looks as ominous as it does for those that never have enough; that's because we have enough now, in the present.

Everything else that comes our way is icing on the cake.

So whether you're looking to build out a daily routine to infuse more gratitude into your day, or nail down a more efficient system for growing your mailing list, it all comes down to getting specific on your intentions and determining your next steps.

You may even have a system for carrying out tasks or building relationships but you're looking to improve upon it. This still comes down to identifying the steps within the particular system. Knowing the steps will enable you to identify where the improvements need to occur.

Not sure where to begin?

I invite you to download the Next Steps Checklist and learn how to build a system by determining your next steps each and every time you get stuck or begin a brand new project.

You can go to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep5 and download the checklist to ensure that you start building systems that work for you and keep it moving by avoiding vagueness on your ToDo list.

As you begin to carry out more complex projects or tasks, anything that has multiple moving parts or an endless sea of micro steps, such as copyrighting your music or uploading your latest album to CD Baby, follow this checklist to reverse engineer the project and figure out what to do first.

Pro tip: even if you know what comes next, start documenting your steps for repeat projects. Not only will it help you in the future should you forget a step, but as you grow your business and look to expand your team you'll have already started building your employee handbook, enabling you to pass off other time sucking tasks to others, confident that they'll carry them out correctly.

Systems aren't the sexiest part of being in the business but they are crucial for expanding and growing your business in this industry, whether you're a manager, publicist, musician, or any other creative. If you want to build a sustainable career in music you must think like an entrepreneur building a business. These systems are your blueprints each time you add on another extension.

I thank you for sticking with me and listening to my story today.

This brings us to the end of our Lessons Learned Series, which I recorded as an extended introduction to this Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast. I hope you'll continue on this journey with me each week as we explore ways to get you thinking more long-term in your efforts while finding ways to be more effective with those efforts in the short term.

From apps to help you automate your menial tasks to methods on how to navigate the emotional roller coaster of building a fanbase, this podcast is your portal to go from freelancer or DIY musician to full fledged music-preneur.

The next episode of this podcast will go live on Wednesday, January 3 and focus on The Art of Becoming a Music-Preneur, complete with tips in better managing your time as a multi passionate creative and getting over your fears to finish the projects you start.

And, just as in every other episode, there will be a free download to help you implement the tips we discuss.

If you missed any of my other stories from the Lessons Learned Series I invite you to check them out now at www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast or on your favorite podcast platform.

In the meantime, if there is any way that I can help you stay motivated during difficult times, create systems for sustainability, 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.