



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EP16: When Loved Ones Don't Get It



You're listening to Episode 16 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hey there! You're listening to Episode 16 - When Loved Ones Don't Get It. How many of you listening right now are rolling your eyes and saying, "YEP! Tell me about it!"

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach to help freelancers and DIY musicians become full-fledged music-preneurs by building sustainable careers in music.

I not only hear about this and get asked about this on an almost-daily basis - how to deal with the lack of support from loved ones - but it's something I've dealt with myself and have never discussed in public before.

Originally, Episode 16 was going to be about how to make sure your team/band members are carrying their weight.

I'm still going to do that episode in the future, fear not, but it was important to me that I discussed this topic and I felt this week was best to address it.

I realized a few days ago that Episode 16 was going to air on March 14, one day before the 5-year anniversary of my father's passing.

I rarely discuss my relationship with my dad, if ever, but this week very little else was on my mind, so I thought it was best that I share thoughts that have been on my mind that I KNOW others struggle with often.

Bare with me because as much as it was on my mind, this was not an easy episode to put together.

I want to dedicate this episode to both my parents - a father I didn't quite understand until years after we parted and a mother who has always pushed me to pursue my dream and who has helped me find that peace with my dad.

I want to first share a bit about my dad and our relationship when it came to my love for music and then I'll get onto ways that you can apply what I've since learned to your own situations.

I've left out the "Key Highlights" in the episode show notes, as this episode is intended to be listened to from beginning to end, so enjoy!

My dad was the definition of a workaholic. He worked tirelessly to provide for our family. While my mom was someone who was always a champion of finding a job you love, my dad was all about what brought home the biggest paycheck.

To be honest, I believe his outlook made my mother's outlook possible and I also believe that on some level he *did* love his job, sometimes even a bit too much.

My dad was someone who loved to serve others. Before cell phones, his team always had a number where they could reach him, day or night.

We would be away on family vacation and the hotel phone would go off at 2 a.m. or even 4 a.m. and my dad would take the call.

Take-Your-Daughter-to-Work days would involve me babysitting the other children in the copier room while the adults stayed in their offices, glued to the phones.

I've always been torn about how I felt about that.

As much as I wished my dad would work less, I always admired his work ethic and always understood the sacrifices he made for our family.

I definitely get my drive from him, but I wondered often if it was for better or for worse. I teach working smarter not harder after *years* of undoing many unhealthy habits I picked up from watching him.

I'm proud to see my brother, who went into a similar industry as him, manage his work life and family life in a much healthier way and still succeed at what he does.

My brother summed my dad up beautifully at his funeral. He said,

"I can't think of a situation where "No, you won't be able to do that" was said, and Sue and I had some good ones. He simply believed in us.

Changing colleges on a whim, starting a business, horse back riding, solo trip to Greece, wanting to play ice hockey at 5am on Sundays. If we wanted to do it, he was behind us.”

And that was very true. However, as we entered adulthood, my father and I came head to head almost on the daily.

While my brother decided to pursue the financial field, my dad tried everything under the sun to entice me to join down that same path. I simply had no interest in it.

I’m pretty good with my money, but I’m someone who begged and pleaded with my Economics professor for a C - the only one I ever received. I wasn’t built for the fast-paced, high-stakes environment.

I remember my first internship at Atlantic Records and our boss said, “Hey, relax, this is music, we’re not curing cancer. Our mistakes won’t kill anyone.”

I LOVED THAT!

I didn’t want to be in an environment where a mistake could bankrupt a client or crash a trading system - believe me if it could be done I’d probably have done it.

Upon graduation my dad said to me, “Ok, so now that you’ve played around for a few years, what are you seriously going to do?”

I was dumbfounded. Drexel was not cheap. I had a partial scholarship, but I couldn't believe my dad didn't think I was serious about the music business and yet agreed to pay my tuition.

I said, "What are you talking about? I have a job lined up. Wasn't that the goal?"

He told me that wasn't a real job, after all, I wasn't even making \$30k a year. I was told it was time to start looking at "more serious" options.

True, that was the same job I quit 5x, as I explained in [Episode 2](#), but I never shared that with my dad. I would never give him the satisfaction that I might have chosen the wrong path.

When I did come clean that I had left that job, he was thrilled. He handed me a list of openings at his company down in the Financial District. I saw salary postings starting in the \$80s.

He sat me down saying, "What about this one? I know the person hiring for it, I can send an email telling them to look out for your application."

I politely declined and explained that I was going to try to start a business with my college roommate and that I'd be getting a job at a law firm - which I thought he'd see value in.

He was a bit confused and still thought I needed to get a few things, "out of my system," as he called it.

My brother was right, he never told us we “couldn’t” do something. He even loaned my business partner & I money when we needed it for our business - which we eventually paid back.

But nothing was done without a fight. It was always, “but why are you doing this...when are you going to stop playing around?”

Believe me, I now see, looking back, why my dad had his reservations.

My business partner and I had no honest clue about what we were doing, though we tried, and he didn’t see the practicality in it as we weren’t turning a profit very quickly.

But, in the moment, it was crushing to constantly hear him try to dissuade me. My mom often played referee when tempers flared on either side.

His monetary investments were appreciated, but they always came with a heaping side of stress and anxiety for me. Every time I purchased something with that loan I’d think, “Does he think this is smart? Would he approve of this investment?”

Years went by, including years of therapy, and I learned how to keep my dad out of my professional life.

However, once he got sick, things changed.

I'd spend days with him at Sloan Kettering as he would get his treatments and many times he preferred silence so he could rest, so I would bring work with me to do.

At the time, I was still doing freelance consulting - writing bios and creating marketing plans for people.

One day, I was working on a marketing plan that someone had paid me \$500 for - the MOST I had ever charged for something!

My dad was brilliant when it came to business and I soooooo wanted to ask him for his opinions and get his insight on things. He saw me working and asked what I was doing.

I proudly said I was creating a marketing plan. He sat up and said, "Wow! Crate & Barrel commissioned you to create a marketing plan for them? That's amazing!"

When I explained to him that this wasn't for Crate & Barrel {where I was working part time} but for a client of my own, he quipped, "Oh, that phony bologna business? I thought it was real work," and went back to watching his shows.

I told him the money was real, but that didn't matter. It wasn't official in his mind.

I'm so fortunate that during a very painful time, he and I did manage to share many precious moments together, however that moment often stings.

For years I let it haunt me.

Every failure I experienced I took as letting him down. Every success I experienced I sat wondering if this would have "counted" in his eyes.

What my brother said was true - he loved us unconditionally. But he and I could never get on the same page as to what my future should be.

He never worried about my brother, he always worried about me.

It's not easy to go against someone who you hold in such high regard. My dad was successful at what he did, and very respected at work. I hated the idea that he didn't think I made smart decisions.

For years, as The Rock/Star Advocate grew and made progress, I celebrated publicly and often teared myself apart behind close doors.

A few months back, after celebrating a big milestone with my mom, I turned with tears in my eyes and asked, "Do you think he's proud yet?"

I started weeping uncontrollably. My mom was shocked I was letting his words affect me so many years later. She knew the truth and she knew I wasn't seeing how complex his feelings were.

She explained to me that it had nothing to do with his faith in me, but his ability to see the music industry as stable. He was right on that, it's not very predictable.

But, plenty of people out there make a comfortable living inside of it. Someone not familiar with the industry wouldn't always assume that and he certainly knew very little about my world.

She also explained that he was a numbers person. If the numbers didn't add up in his mind he couldn't process it.

Life as an entrepreneur doesn't always add up. Sometimes your decisions need to be based on faith alone. That's something as foreign to someone like him as speaking Japanese would be.

Finally, she said to me, "You can't live your life for someone else. At the end of the day you can't be doing it for anyone else but yourself."

That was a very powerful thing to hear and I hope anyone listening who needed to hear that is hearing it.

Live your life for YOU.

As basic of a statement that can be, it can be very difficult to implement.

My dad was not a bad father. He wasn't unsupportive, he just didn't know how to support someone he didn't understand.

Over the years I have learned more about my father's life that has helped me understand some of his life choices.

I've been blessed with a very supportive inner circle. But, I have heard plenty of people question my decisions over the years, some well-meaning, others just plain mean.

And while I may not have been able to get through to my dad while he was here, I have learned over the years how to handle the "but what do you *really* do for a living" remarks from others.

Over the holidays I created a document entitled *7 Ways to Politely Tell Loved Ones to STFU*. I knew others struggled with this very issue and didn't know how to respond when they were in certain situations.

I often hear musicians struggling with unsupportive spouses or parents, and if you're one of those people - I feel you.

It's not easy, but it doesn't mean they don't believe in you. More often than not, it comes from a place of worry about the industry not about your abilities.

I often think about one of my friends who came out to their parents in his early 20s. His mother was crying not because she didn't accept her son, but because she immediately thought about the hardships her son would most likely face and couldn't bear the thought of seeing him suffer.

I don't mean to compare living as a homosexual in this world to living as a creative, but I wanted to show how in both instances it wasn't about not accepting the person they loved, but rather being anxious for the obstacles that person may face.

Often times the people that love us most want to protect us and they don't always communicate their concerns in the best way.

Other times, when they don't feel connected to what we're going through, rather than ask questions, they get frustrated and shut down on us.

Let's be honest, how many times has a friend told you about a story from work and you kind of tuned out?

I know it feels different to you because your work is often your life, often a part of you, but to them they may not see the difference.

Sometimes simply explaining to them what your life is really like and how you could best use their support is enough to shift the way they communicate with you.

Other times, it's simply a lost cause and you have to draw certain boundaries around what you discuss with them.

Sometimes it's ignorance and other times it's a simple fact of having a different set of values, but not agreeing with your decisions doesn't define how they value *you* as a person.

Not EVERYONE has to be your biggest supporter. I always feel that people are in our life for a certain purpose and that purpose can't always be to cheer us along at every turn. Sometimes they're there to challenge us.

But, at the end of the day, you can't be motivated solely by someone or solely in spite of someone. You have to be motivated by something deeper inside of you.

I cherish the time I had with my dad and appreciate the many lessons he's taught me and continues to teach me. I also, as always, thank my mom for always being that dependable cheerleader, encouraging me to take risks and trust my gut.

I thank you for allowing me to share a bit of my story that I've never shared before.

If you related to it in the least and are looking for ways to improve a relationship in your life, I encourage you to download the guide I created - [7 Ways to Politely Tell Loved Ones to STFU](#).

You can access this guide for FREE by going to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep16 and downloading it.

Thanks so much for listening. I hope you've found this information helpful and empowering.

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.

As always, 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.