



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EP26: Taking Out the Competition



You're listening to Episode 26 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hey there! You're listening to Episode 26 - Taking Out the Competition.

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach to help music-preneurs build sustainable careers in music by setting clear goals and creating time management systems that enable them to work smarter, not harder.

One of the ways we often work harder than we need to is when we get consumed by our "competition."

I understand in marketing classes they teach the importance of being first to market and having the leading brand and so on, but with music, I don't believe the same rules apply. You don't need to be "first to market" when you have an album that no one else is ever going to have.

It's not like producing the first electric car where future cars are going to have limiting discernible features. Most people will buy one type of car from one manufacturer and stick with it.

But I'm hard-pressed to find anyone who will only buy or stream one R&B singer or one heavy metal band. I didn't buy only Brandy's albums growing up. I also bought Monica's, Tamia's, Aalyiah's, and Janet's albums as well. I loved each of them for different reasons.

And unlike in sports, there's no scorecard in music. No one can definitively say that another artist has "beaten you" at something. Even when it comes to industry awards, not everyone will agree that the person who won was, in fact, "the best."

A little bit of healthy competition is always good. Watching others succeed or do something we'd like to do can be just the motivation we need to do it ourselves. Much like in sports, the desire to "win" can help push you to be your best self.

However, there does come a time when competition can be harmful to your productivity and overall growth.

You know, those times you spend mulling over the band who plays in your area and has 5k more fans than you or the consultant who charges more for their services than you or the seemingly over-night sensation who's living off of their Spotify streams and YouTube monetization?

Yea... that crap.

I get it. It happens. Especially more these days with the ENDLESS amounts of channels for people to show off their lives through their best filter - literally.

All too often we mistake social media for a glimpse out into the world and we forget just how heavily filtered/edited/photoshopped that window is. Social media is NOT reality - it's a showcase of pieces of reality.

And many of us sit there connecting our own dots and telling ourselves the stories we believe to be true from our poor detective work. That's because we don't draw conclusions based on rational thought, we draw conclusions based off of our deepest fears and insecurities.

Plus, to make matters worse, we do all of this in an increasingly-isolated world rather than when we're surrounded by friends who can quickly snap us out of our misconceptions and false pretenses.

For example, who here listening has ever sat up in bed on their phone, burning the midnight oil as they fall into a Instagram binge-a-thon, scrolling thru perfectly-curated

photos of someone they wish they could be more like, telling themselves all sorts of stories of how so-and-so must have it so together and how nice their life must be etc.?

All of a sudden 45 minutes goes by and you're not sure what's happened but you do know you not only wish you were more like them, but you now hate yourself for never getting those 45 minutes back.

Hey, I get it. I've done it and more times than I care to admit, even though I never considered myself a competitive or envious person.

Any sports I played growing up were usually not team sports - gymnastics and horse back riding were pretty single-player-focused. Whenever I did play a team sport I was usually mentally checked out and rarely trying to be at my best out in the field. Most times I couldn't even tell you if my team won.

In high school the kids in my class were very competitive when it came to grades and I had friends who would be overly protective of their test when they got it back, making sure no one saw their grade in order to avoid the comparisons. Of course those same kids wanted to know what everyone else got.

I always left my test out on the desk. I didn't care if people knew what I got, or if someone did better than me. I never felt threatened by someone else's success or failure. But in hindsight, I realize that's because I always knew I was going to end up in the music industry and majority of people I grew up with would not follow that path, so I never felt the need to compete.

Once I found what I was passionate about, I definitely noticed a bit more energy was being given to what others around me were doing. The stakes seemed higher and I had something I wanted to protect and see flourish.

I have no concern about who's having babies before me, or who's gotten married, but when it comes to building a business, I definitely have had my eyes on others and what they've been able to build.

What we usually forget is that our flower can bloom right next to someone else's. It's not our success we're trying to protect, but actually our ego and insecurities. If we got rid of those we wouldn't feel so guarded about what we were doing next to someone else.

It's been a hard truth to come to terms with for someone who never considered themselves competitive. I truly believe, especially in music and in entrepreneurship, there is enough out there for all of us to build our own path, but I still find myself falling down that competitive rabbit hole every now and again.

I even know a few people who have said things to me that tell me they've gathered up an image of me and what my life is like strictly from connecting the dots of my social media posts in their own way.

If you at any point saw my posts and thought my life was super together and organized, I invite you to listen to [Episode 4: WTF Did My Pants Go?!](#) That's where I share how I moved to Nashville and forgot to pack ANY pants. So, yea... a different reality.

The funny thing is, and I notice this with a lot of people, when it's healthy competition we take action and when it's toxic competition we become paralyzed. For the most part that seems to be the basic litmus test.

For example, when I had a business partner there was definitely friendly competition between the both of us. For the full story you can check out [Episode 3](#). But when I saw her making headway on a project, if I was slacking I definitely felt inspired to up my game.

After all, we were working towards the same goal and I wanted to hold my own. If I started to slack, sure I would be envious of the awesome work she was doing, but I was also inspired and therefore motivated to work harder.

Unhealthy competition is often connected to that fraud talk we discussed in [Episode 11](#). This week is the perfect example.

I am currently recording this episode on a Friday, two days after it's intended publication date.

While I map out the content and free downloads of this podcast ahead of time, publishing all of the content usually gets done on my content day - Tuesdays {Time Blocking for the win!}.

The one thing I haven't yet mastered, however, is batching the content I outline, so when plans go awry this podcast may not go out in time. People I'm telling you - batching is your best friend and this weekend I plan to make it mine!

However, in my current reality a not-so-funny comedy of errors happened Tuesday morning and I ended up spending the day with my mom in urgent care as she had fallen and fractured her foot.

Family ALWAYS comes first in my book, so I didn't think twice about canceling certain plans and pushing back projects {like recording this podcast episode}.

After a few days of running errands and making certain arrangements, I came back to my email only to find that a good friend of mind and fellow coach, Bree Noble, had released an article: [5 Ways to Avoid Playing the Comparison Game](#).

My topic for this week? Taking Out the Competition.

::Face plant!::

For a moment I was crestfallen, not only bummed that my podcast episode was late, but worried that people would think I didn't have any original content and simply ripped off a great article someone else had written.

HELLO, FRAUD TALK! It's been a hot moment, how are you, old friend?

As someone who has had their content stolen by others I'm always super weary of putting out content that doesn't seem original and authentically me.

I'm also someone who tries very hard to stick to plans and often struggles to come to terms with changes in those plans. Funnily enough the things I get the most complimented on by others is my laid-back approach to life and my go-with-the-flow attitude.

I think I do exhibit those traits but sometimes it's a journey to get there!

Eventually I had to laugh and, as always, find a lesson in it all. It took me another day of beating myself up until I realized this situation was a perfect example to illustrate how there's enough room for everyone to share their gifts.

I read Bree's article and her tips are GREAT, and I link to them in [my show notes](#). They're also different from mine, which isn't surprising as we are two individuals who have our own voices and thoughts to share with you.

Neither one of us invented the idea of competition and the struggle it brings. Simply Googling "unhealthy competition" will bring up endless amounts of resources, studies, and tools to help you understand and overcome this comparison paralysis.

Just like none of you listening invented music and I'm sure by now every possible chord progression and combination has been attempted. It doesn't mean you shouldn't make your music. It also doesn't mean there's nothing left to be unearthed in the world of music.

You will do something in this world unlike anyone else, because you're the only you in this universe. But the only way what you do will make a difference is if you actually DO IT.

So when you find yourself green with envy or so certain you've determined someone else has it all figured out, leaving you in the dust to suffer and struggle, remember these three things:

- (1) You will never see the full picture of anyone's life. There's no app that will give you a 360 degree view of what their journey's been like and where they're headed.
- (2) Trying to live someone else's life or wishing you had what they had will not move the needle on your record faster. We succeed by doing, failing, and doing better the next time. So get busy doing and failing so you can reach your goals faster.
- (3) The simple fact that you envy someone is proof enough that there's someone out there envying you right at this moment. Rather than wishing you had what you think you may not have, realize what you DO have and work at continuing to inspire those who are watching you, even when you don't know they're watching.

Being a music-preneur means understanding the business you are in - the music industry is not like other businesses in the sense that the products you create as a musician can never be fairly compared to someone else's.

Use that to your advantage. Find the beauty in the fact that everything you create is subjective in its value to others. You'll have your critics and you'll have your fans.

Also realize that while it's important to do market research on your fans, unlike in other industries it doesn't behoove you to focus on your "direct and indirect competition."

I used to write marketing plans for artists and, because of the template I was taught to use in my marketing class at Drexel, I included a list of indirect competitors - artists who did not live in their region or who were maybe a bit more well-known but worth learning from - and direct competitors - artists in their region who were maybe going after playing the same venues and selling to the same audience.

I soon started to change that template to showcase a few artists my client could look towards as motivation - whether they had the same audience or simply built a career

similar to the one my client was after - and a few “potential collaborators” rather than direct competitors.

I realized it didn't serve them to spend time sizing up other artists when they could find greater success reaching out to those artists and collaborate on tours, new music, and even marketing efforts towards the same target audience.

That is the definition of working smarter, not harder.

When you are motivated to be a better version of yourself based on what someone else has said or accomplished is one thing.

When you have fallen into comparison paralysis due to the fear that you'll never be as good or when you have started to obsess on every move someone else makes rather than your own next steps it's time to re-evaluate your priorities.

If you're finding yourself paralyzed by the success of others around you, realize that has nothing to do with them and everything to do with your own belief in yourself.

You have everything you need right now to take action.

Tune out the fraud talk and start making progress, no matter how small. When you start filling your plate with tasks that move you towards your goals you'll have less time to worry about anyone else's progress or perceived successes.

Shut the social media down and go on a cleanse. Take some time to schedule a few weeks of posts for your music pages and then try something like [FaceBudda's Mindfulness Challenge](#). I've linked to it in the show notes.

In addition, realize there are things you can do to quiet the white noise and misguided feelings of needing to compete with others in your line of work.

I've created a cheat sheet to remind you of mental exercises and physical action you can take to rid yourself of unhealthy competition & focus on your own path to success. You can find it in the show notes and reference it whenever you need to.

Simply go to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep26 and download it today.

Always remember, this journey is difficult enough. Don't be your own road block or get off course by looking 5 lanes over. Stay the course. You'll get to your goals on your own time and you'll write your own story.

Don't be an onlooker when you can be a doer. In order to take action you've got to keep your eyes on the road ahead - YOUR road ahead.

If you enjoyed what you learned today, you can access all current episodes using your preferred podcast app, including iTunes & Spotify, or by visiting www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast.

If you're looking to get clarity on your next steps, find time to balance everything on your plate, or if you're finding it difficult to focus on your own path, let's talk!

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.