



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EP27: Mentors, Coaches & Peers, Oh My!



You're listening to Episode 27 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hey there! You're listening to Episode 27 - Mentors, Coaches & Peers, Oh My!.

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.

Part of building a sustainable career involves having a dependable team around you. Building a team is a popular topic that is discussed at almost every music conference and in every industry book. Everyone wants to know who they should bring on first and when they're ready to add them.

We dissect when an artist is ready for a manager, when a booking agent is required, how soon you should contact a lawyer, and when it's necessary to hire a publicist.

However, there are 3 important team members we never discuss, let alone highlight their importance in an artist's career.

I'm sure you can guess those 3 roles by the title of this episode. That's right: Mentors, Coaches, and Peers. Oh my!

These 3 slots on your roster are often overlooked when discussing resources at your disposal. We automatically discuss the role a manager has in shaping your career, but very often these 3 roles are filled long before a manager comes into the picture.

There's also no specific time in one's career when any of these team members need to be brought on - they're always available depending on your needs and it's never too early to rely on any of them.

It's important to discuss their roles and the different purposes they cover in your journey as it's very common to feel alone as an independent musician who many not be ready to bring on additional team members.

Understanding that these people may very well already exist in your space and are at your disposal will not only allow you to tap into resources you may not have realized were there but also shift your mindset when it comes to building a team.

Rather than feel as if building a team is so far out of reach in relation to where you're currently at, realizing your team has already started to form can empower you to take action and get to the next milestone more quickly.

So let's dig in. We'll first start with mentors.

Mentors are people who have come before you and who can shape your future by guiding you, cheering you on, and helping you open doors so you can walk through them more easily.

It may seem like a one-way street at face value, but for the mentor the value is in being able to pay forward the support someone else showed them and to spread their influence onto someone they believe in.

Mentorships can happen organically or you may reach out to someone you admire and ask them if they'd be willing to mentor you. Either way, you want to make sure your mentor is someone you can trust and someone who can give un-biased advice that will move you forward.

As I've grown in the business I definitely got the whole "mentorship" concept wrong in the beginning. I sort of desperately felt the need to make every experienced professional I worked with a mentor of sorts. I can tell you right now, that's a bad plan.

I thought if I worked hard and built close relationships with each one then I'd be receiving the best guidance in every new area I was learning. But that's not what mentoring is about.

First off, you can't be everything to everyone. You're not going to form a close bond with every professional you meet, and you shouldn't want to; as they say too many cooks spoil the broth.

Everyone is going to have different advice and intentions for you and you'll want to choose one guiding light to rely on when the waters get murky.

In addition, not everyone is built to be a mentor. As I said before, a mentor will hopefully give you un-biased advice, guiding you with the best of intentions - that will certainly not be everyone you meet in this business.

Be careful not to jump into a mentor/mentee relationship blindly. Make sure the person you allow to "take you under their wing" is someone you trust and be sure not to place the reigns of your career in their hands.

Mentors may be there to guide you, but you're still steering the ship.

After a few short years in this business I learned a very painful lesson that mentors are not always easy to come by and some like to throw that word around a bit too easily.

For example, be weary when someone begins to throw that word around and crown themselves your mentor, mentioning to everyone around you that they're to thank for your success.

It's one thing to guide someone, it's another to take full credit for their wins.

That whole “I taught them everything they know” approach can often be pushed on you by someone who’s stopped moving forward in their career and sees an opportunity in you to rise on the back your hard work.

A mentor should be someone who is cheering you on whether they have had a hand in the success or not, wanting your success to shine on its own.

I’ve been blessed with a few key mentors throughout my career, and thankfully 2 of them have been women which is a shining light of hope in an industry that often pits females against one another.

Marcy Rauer Wagman, Esq. was my very first mentor in this business and continues to be a source of guidance and support. As the dean of my program at Drexel she has always given it to me straight and has cheered me on every step of the way.

She’s been blunt with me when she’s felt I may have taken a misstep {but has encouraged me to try and take it anyway if I felt it was right} and has never tried to take credit for anything that was my win, even if I felt she should at times!

Years later, when I worked as a paralegal {yes, another lawyer!}, I was blessed to have a boss - Alan Bennett - who understood nothing about the music industry but who encouraged me to continue to build my business and never hesitated to sit and explain certain legalities and break down contracts for me.

He also never sugar-coated the ups and downs of running your own business and I’ve continued to learn so much from my time working for him. I also have to thank him because as hard as I worked there were definitely days I should have been fired. So thanks, Alan! You’re a good man :D

I’ve also recently been fortunate enough to find both a colleague and mentor in publicity and social media badass extraordinaire, Ms. Ariel Hyatt, founder of Cyber PR. There

are people you will collaborate with and then there are those who will go out of their way to create opportunities for you that they could have kept strictly for themselves.

It's pretty cool when you admire someone from a far and then are able to learn directly from them and turn to them for guidance when you get stuck.

These three individuals have played a crucial role in helping me shape my journey and I'm forever grateful to them and for the crucial role mentors play in general.

If you don't currently have a mentor, list the qualities you'd like that person to have and the type of guidance you are looking for currently.

You can then visit industry networking events, discuss recommendations or build connections in Facebook groups, or join an industry association {i.e. Women In Music, Society of Composers} to widen your network & increase your chance of connecting with your future mentor.

Coaches, as opposed to mentors, are experts you hire to train you in specific areas of your life/career. While they also guide and support you, this is their job and their time with you may be temporary depending on your needs.

It is a clear two-way street wherein they help you learn new skills and you pay them for their expertise.

You will most likely have many coaches throughout your career; some you may bond closely with and others will be more transactional in nature. Unlike mentors, you don't necessarily need to form a deeper connection.

For example, plenty of musicians hire me as a mindset coach to help them with getting clear on their goals or managing their time. While most of what I do involves guiding them on the choices they make in their career, I don't necessarily mentor every music professional I work with - I'm not always that steadfast, recurring foundation of support in their journey.

A good coach specializes in a particular topic or area you wish to improve. These days you can hire someone to help you with your image, your email marketing, your social media, your stage performance, you name it.

Be weary of anyone who will try and coach you in every aspect of your career.

While mentors can oversee your overall journey and advise you on best practices, a coach who is claiming to be able to teach you the ins & outs of every piece of pie is either fooling you or fooling themselves, or both.

I've had many coaches throughout my career. The most influential ones were Jordana and Gena Jaffe who I hired as my business coaches to help me formulate and shape what is now The Rock/Star Advocate.

I hired them for their expertise in helping people find their purpose and create services around that purpose, as well as Gena's additional expertise as a business lawyer - I can't seem to escape those!

But since then I've also hired a financial coach, a launch coach, and SEO expert, and have invested in multiple online courses that cover everything from list building to creating multiple income streams.

Links to all the amazing people I've mentioned and any courses I recommend can be found in the [show notes](#).

Whether you pay for direct 1-on-1 coaching or invest in video courses, podcasts, eBooks, etc., it's important to realize you can easily suffer from information overwhelm.

For example, do not sign up for more than one video course at a time.

Whenever I am promoting a course I always encourage prospective students *not* to join if they're already in the middle of another course or learning this particular topic from another industry professional.

Trust who you trust.

If you've come to trust a certain source when it comes to "best practices," don't wear thin your time & energy by searching out 2nd & 3rd opinions at every turn. Most times there are multiple ways to find success, it's simply a matter of whose approach speaks more to you.

For example, there are a lot of eBooks and courses out there on list building, but because I already trust & align with Amy Porterfield's approach I follow her advice when it comes to building my list, and most other areas of my career.

It doesn't mean Amy is the expert in each of these areas - outside of list building she focuses on building profitable online courses and hosting effective webinars - that's it, those three things. However, when I need help in other areas I turn to her first to see who she recommends.

I know that if I align with her methods I'll most likely align with the people she stands by, which saves me a lot of time debating which methods are best.

You could probably find success with many coaches and many different approaches to a particular area in your career. Sometimes the hardest part is deciding who to listen to when they're all teaching the same thing in different ways.

It's VERY easy to get so consumed with comparing the "best" practices that you spend more time learning {if you can call it that} and less time doing the work necessary to succeed.

Finding your key Board of Influencers, as I call them, will enable you to pull from their recommendations and take the guesswork away and get you taking action faster.

Resonating with what Jordana & Gena taught me, I joined their online community and was then turned onto people like Amy Porterfield and Marie Forleo.

After falling down the rabbit hole, signing up for any eBook that came across my news-feed, afraid that I'd be missing out on some secret someone else had figured out, I learned to trust that my Board of Influencers have made it pretty far in the game and have already weeded out what's worked for them and what hasn't.

I've since decided if it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me.

I don't need to get on board with Gary Vee just because he's successful at what he does. I respect his game, but I resonate more with someone like Amy. When it comes to books or courses or 1-on-1 coaching that I choose to invest in, I stick to what resonates with me and tune the rest out so I can start taking action sooner.

That Fear of Missing Out, that FOMO-bologna kids talk about these days can be detrimental to one's success.

Just as I limit who's on my Board of Influencers, I also have become more selective in the peers I surround myself with - keeping in mind Jim Rohn's average of 5 theory. That's the one that states you're the average of the 5 people most present in your life.

Peers are your colleagues, your partners-in-crime, your fellow soldiers in the trenches. Forming bonds and connections with others in/around your level allow you to feel understood in your present struggles as well as lift each other up with successful collaborations.

You can never have too many peers to collaborate with, however you'll want to ensure they share certain values as collaborating with people who are "off brand" could alienate your fanbase. Again, average of 5 theory.

As we discussed in [Episode 26](#), competition doesn't exist when you stay in your lane. So rather than seeing your peers as hurdles to surpass, find ways to combine forces and amplify each others' messages.

Think about the people in your network who you respect & admire. While they can offer a certain amount of advice and guidance, these relationships are more equal in their flow of support.

You may be struggling with similar issues at similar times and may be able to help create new opportunities by joining forces and helping each other get to the next plateau.

You may also have similar followings/target markets and be able to offer your fans greater value by collaborating together.

Even when I don't directly collaborate with a peer, nothing is better to me than creating work dates, brainstorming sessions, and accountability check-ins.

I'm lucky enough to be able to count on way more than 5 peers, so I won't start listing in fear of leaving someone out, but understand who you choose to align with and make sure they share similar values, especially when it comes to team work.

Each of these relationships - mentor/mentee, coach/student and peer-to-peer - are important pieces to your team & overall success. They require nurturing, attention & the ability to tell whether or not it's a good fit.

I've created a worksheet to help you map out these relationships if your unclear where you stand currently in your journey. Simply go to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep27 and download it.

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 struggling to find the people you align with most, 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.