



# *The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast*

## Ep105: Mental Health in Music: Chris Keats

You're listening to Episode 105 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 105: Mental Health in Music: Chris Keats](#).

I'm your host, Suz, a mindset + productivity coach helping music professionals get clear on their goals, priorities, and next steps all while decreasing overwhelm and avoiding burnout.

Today's episode is the third installment of our four-part series to highlight mental health in the music industry. Each week I speak with a special guest to shine a light on various aspects of mental health and how we can all make a greater effort to protect not only our own mental health, but also do our part to enact change within the industry.

There are no sponsors for these episodes, nor are there downloadable extras. These episodes stand alone so we can focus on listening and reflecting as each week's call to action. The show notes of each episode have links to additional resources to get help and/or learn better ways to manage your mental health.

For today's episode, you can find all 'rocksources,' including links to learn more about our special guest by going to <http://therockstaradvocate.com/ep105>. Today we are speaking with folk singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Chris Keats.

Chris describes music making as "better than" therapy. Inspired by his harmonica-playing grandfather, this Brighton born, 21st century folk raconteur and world traveller writes songs to heal both his audience and himself. Following his mother's suicide, he promised himself he would work every single day to be a better guitarist, singer, songwriter and human being and has never looked back.

Citing Damien Rice, Ben Howard and Neil Young as his major influences, he describes his songwriting as a "natural process" turning his "stream of consciousness into melodies." His

music has been described as having a “deep beauty to it, a simplicity that is poignant and has a reflective feel, far from urban life.”

I reached out to Chris to be a part of this series as he has organized a number of charity concerts to spread awareness on important issues, including one for the Campaign Against Living Miserably (a suicide prevention charity) and RISE UK (a domestic abuse charity). He released a cover of “Live Forever” by Oasis for National Suicide Prevention Month in September of last year and “Love Is So Simple” this past November for RISE UK.

His latest single, “The Real You,” drops next Friday, May 28, and this song of personal growth has a great story behind it that I’ll let Chris tell you himself, so let’s get started...

**Suz:** Chris, thank you so much for being here with us today.

**Chris:** You're very welcome. It's a pleasure.

**Suz:** I'm so glad we got a chance to make this happen. You know, we followed each other for a bit of time on Instagram, and I love, not only the music you put out, but the messaging that you put out with your music, and we're certainly going to dive into that today.

So when I decided to do this Mental Health Awareness Month series I was just so happy that you were willing participate and say yes to it. I know there's a lot we can dig into here that our audience can learn from, so thank you for all that you do with your advocacy.

**Chris:** You're very welcome as are the people who are listening. We've got a lot to talk about, I think.

**Suz:** Yeah. So I've told the people the usual, right? The bio, the usual nice and neat little packaging information about you, but what's something that you can tell our audience that maybe we won't find in your bio? What's something that our audience should know about you?

**Chris:** Oh, that's a good question. I spent a long time writing that bio! I'll tell you what my bio doesn't say is that my mental health, as we're on the subject of mental health, is the best it's been in my adult life. That isn't in my bio, and it's not really all my socials either.

'Cause I like to be honest about where I've been and the journey I've gone through, but that is something that I think it's important for people to know because I've got so many more strategies than I had up until very recently, and I want to pass those on, you know? So yeah, that I'm happy!

**Suz:** That is fantastic! I am so happy to hear that. And thank you for sharing that with our audience because as I'm sure as we get into some of today's topics, it's good to know that there is a place that you can get to where you can say that with confidence and that's wonderful.

**Chris:** For people that are still in that place, I didn't know this place existed. I didn't know it was possible to go through some traumatic events and then deal with it and heal from it and then feel like the person I was supposed to be before it all happened. But, yeah. We'll get into that.

**Suz:** Right. Yeah. I think it's really hard, especially if it's prolonged trauma or one thing after another, it's hard to even imagine that happiness doesn't have to be this one fleeting thing or it's not this idea that people talk about like, "Oh, I can actually experience it and feel it." And I think that that's really important, because it's hard to trust that when you're not in it that that place exists.

**Chris:** A hundred percent. Like I used to look at people when they tell me that they were happy and I'd be like, "How? What are you doing that I'm not doing? Because I seem to be doing all the things people tell me that are the right thing to do, and I still don't see the light at the end of the tunnel," you know?

**Suz:** Right. Yeah I totally resonate with that, for sure, and I'm sure a lot of our listeners do, too. I'm glad we have you here as a beacon of light and as somebody that can help illustrate for people you can trust it, it's there and to keep the faith there, because you know, one of the things that your bio *did* say was that music, for you, is better than therapy. So.

**Chris:** Don't tell my therapists! They might be listening. Yeah. But it is though, it is.

**Suz:** Right. Well, because that's the thing, like I'm in therapy. I've been open about my journey through therapy and I think it's great for people to have therapists, but I also know that for creatives, when there's a different way to express it and a different way to tap into your emotions and process them, that's a really great tool to have and to utilize. So can you dig a little deeper there for us and kind of talk about what music has meant to you and how it's helped you?

**Chris:** So a good friend of mine died a few weeks ago, and I hadn't been writing really. I've been so busy with the business. I was doing social media, trying to pick dates and playing live streams and doing that kind of stuff. I'm in a releasing phase, so I put that to one side and then when he died, I just *needed* it.

I don't know how to explain it to you. I went and bought a new journal and I was like, I just need to write, and I just wrote song after song, after song, after song, after song. It just like

reconnected me with the part of this business that I absolutely love and that I would do, whether people heard it or not.

And I think just to like, see how I felt on a piece of paper. I'm not having therapy at the moment, but I have friends who I can speak to if I need to. But it's just such a beautiful, cathartic thing to sit on my sofa and write a song about my friend who's died, and this time around, I was focusing on the positive aspects of our relationship rather than the pain and the grief, which is different.

**Suz:** I think a lot of people feel like, "I need the pain or I need the bad parts in order to create," and I think it's really great that you can find the happiness in it to create.

**Chris:** Because that's what I used to think, and I think so many people think, like I've heard Taylor Swift say that and she's like, "People are like, what's going to happen if you're happy?"

And it's like, "Well, you just write different songs."

And I didn't know that if I was happy or if I was in the best place how I would be writing. But yeah, you don't have to write from the pain if you don't want to.

**Suz:** Yeah. And do you write with the hope that it helps others do the same or do you just write for the sake of writing, like how do you approach creating songs? Because I've heard from other musicians the kind of struggle, you know, the pressure that people put on themselves, especially when they've decided they want to make music their career that, "Oh, the thing that comes out has to be amazing! Or it has to do this or that." I mean, do you feel that pressure sometimes? How do you grapple with that? What's your approach to creating?

**Chris:** That's a good question, because I've gone on a bit of a journey since making music a business in the last year or so since COVID. And so I found that I was writing songs, thinking about the audience and thinking about how it was gonna sound recorded and what people would think of it, and how I'd market it, and that doesn't work. It doesn't work for me anyway. I'm sure it works for other different types of artists.

And then when my friend died, I was just writing from the heart. And I just had that little moment of being like, this is why I write. I write to heal myself, and then, hopefully, when the songs are released, they can then be marketed to people who've been through something similar. We've all been through death and loss and grief to some extent, and when it's released, that's about helping other people.

Or, some of my songs have been written for other people that couldn't talk about how they felt, so it was kind of helping them by proxy, but I wasn't writing it to record it to release it to help other people, if that makes sense.

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**Suz:** Definitely. Yeah. First I have to say, my condolences. I know what that's like, and I'm so sorry that you've had to go through that. And I'm glad that you've been able to find the joy and the happiness in the moments that you reflect on with your friend because I think that's really important.

I think, as you said, we get sidetracked with all the grief that we only see the negatives or the sadness, but that, you know, focusing on the good points is just as important in the healing as the sadness.

You mentioned with COVID and kind of focusing on the business aspect of your music - losing people is hard enough, and that definitely is a grief, obviously in and of itself, but I think another grief that a lot of people have been experiencing is through this lockdown and through this pandemic, and loss of their "normal routine" or lifestyle.

You said you used this past year to really focus on the business and stuff, what has this last year been like for you in your career? What have you learned about your career as a musician in this past year?

**Chris:** There's another very good question. What have I learned? I mean, so many things. Before last April, I didn't really have a definition for what a strategy was. It was always about making the music and then releasing it. In hindsight, a slightly naive way, not thinking about my target audience, not thinking about who would listen to it, not thinking about marketing or promoting and having that mindset, hopefully people that listen to this don't have, but like "I've made it so people will listen to it and I believe it was good, so people will listen to it." That's how I used to think. You know, I was just naive really.

Turning my passion into a business, you know, before the pandemic, I was able to work as a physio and make regular, good money that I could then put into the music business and then not being able to do that as regularly or in the same way made, you know, the necessity.

It's like, this has to work. And certainly I've learned a lot about how business works in general, not just the music, business or industry. But it certainly took the shine off the joy of just creating music, you know?

**Suz:** Yeah. I think that's something that musicians grapple with a lot. You know you need to know the business, you go learn it, but then as you said, taking that shine off now there's more weight on this. And that's why I asked you about in terms of creating.

I think if we let the overwhelm sink in to that and make it feel like, now that I have a strategy behind this, these songs have to do A, B or C for me. I think that can kind of stunt people's

writing and creativity. And it sounds to me like now you might be able to spot where you've been able to just create for the sake of creating, and you know strategies that you can pull from when you've got something you want to release and it doesn't have to be a type of tug-of-war.

**Chris:** No, no, it doesn't. And it doesn't have to be so pressurized as well, you know? Just generally, we're very numbers-focused. It's like, well if it doesn't make, I don't know, 5,000 plays on Spotify week one, then it's not a success. **And it's like, well, actually the success is in writing the song and recording it, making the best you possibly can, and then putting it out there. And that's success to me.**

But I'm also part of the human race as it is now with social media numbers and Spotify numbers and Spotify playlists and how many did we sell? And what did we make? Which I think is also really important, and that's part of it.

It's so funny in hindsight, it's like, well, I've given myself this year to learn the business and then I go back to creating, and I've done both, you know?

I've created and I've written, like a song idea has come and I'd be like, no, no, no. I've got all these other things to do that are on the to do list that are part of the business, part of the release plan. So I've kind of like stunted the creativity because I decided to choose to focus more on business.

**Suz:** Yeah. It's a precarious balance. Yeah.

**Chris:** It's certainly not as satisfying to me to try to do both as it was just to write songs and record. That's where the overwhelm comes in, you know, cause it's like, well, how much work can I do? How many hours can I work?

**Suz:** Right, and I commend you for using this year in that way to learn the business. What I hope our listeners remind themselves of too, because I see so many go through this is there's so much to learn and while a year is a great incubator to really get a lot of the foundational pieces set and to really open your eyes to the strategy and to everything that's out there, you're not going to be a master at business after one year of learning things, you know?

So now you're at the place where you've learned, like I get the business and they get the strategy, but I see that throwing myself all in there has now stunted my creativity. All right, let me bring the creativity back. And now it's just going to be this experience of weaving them together and saying like, "Maybe I reach 5,000 streams, maybe I don't. What was the lesson there? And what can I learn? And I'm so proud of the song."

And those songs are still going to live on past the initial launch. You know, a year from now, somebody else is going to find that song and say, "Oh my gosh, this changed my life. This came to me at the right time. Thank you so much for this."

So I love that you're sharing your process with us, and I'm curious when COVID hit and you said around April you decided to really dig in to learn more about the business, what was that like for you? Because when something like that happens and we lose out on work or our normal day-to-day is no longer what it once looked like, do you find you're just somebody that makes the most of a situation or was it more of a struggle to get to that point when you were like, "I'm going to learn the business?"

**Chris:** I always make the most of the time I have, so I was quite happy in lockdown because I was doing what I love, apart from not playing live. I think I'm quite good at pivoting, in hindsight. I was like, "Well, if I can't play live, I'm just going to get really good at livestreams."

I used to do like three or four livestreams a week. You know, I was anxious before doing them because I wasn't used to doing it. I just make decisions like right this year, I'm going to learn the business 'cause I wanted to put my music out there in a way that as many people as possible could listen to it and enjoy it and for it to help other people, really.

When I make decisions, I just don't look back if I'm really 150% in, you know? I was like, "I'm going to learn the business." Boom. Done. That's the plan. So I just took some courses and learned about social media marketing and release strategies and just dove in really.

**Suz:** Yeah. And I think you've mentioned a few characteristics here that you have that I think others might miss at times is number one, you mentioned pivoting. I've always said, and I doubled down on it this past year, telling people pivoting is one of the best skillsets, and I do believe it is a skillset, that you can have in any form of entrepreneurship, which this all is.

Because whether it's a pandemic or it's something else that's happening in your personal life that you didn't plan for, or it's just doing something that you thought was a sure thing, and you realized it wasn't - life is always going to throw hurdles in our path.

And I love that you took control of now I've been given time maybe touring or performing live was taken away, but time was given. So what can I do with it?

And I love that you mentioned pivoting and also just going all in and not looking at the past or what decisions were made. It's like, "Here's where I am and I'm just going to go all in with it and show up," really what you did is you showed up and I think that's fantastic.

So why get behind these important causes? Why not just focus on your merch and your live shows and your lyric videos and all of that?

**Chris:** Yeah, I guess if I spent less time doing the charity stuff I could focus more on those things, but these are the things we don't talk about as a society in a way that is open and promotes healing between individuals and between societies and between countries, and I feel like the world would be a better place if we could acknowledge our trauma. And if we heal that then the world would naturally be better or people would be more conscious, and if the world is more conscious than the world is going to be a far more pleasant place to live in.

After my mum died by suicide, I just didn't talk about it. She died in 2005 and I can honestly say between 2005 and 2007, I only thought about it consciously a handful of times. I just immediately pushed it back into myself, just didn't think about it. I didn't talk about it. Everyone knew how she died, it was just like the denial part of grief, and so I just didn't talk about how I felt for a long time.

And I can't remember what happened, but I just realized that I needed to talk about this because there are artists that talk about suicide and domestic abuse and sexual abuse and these other things that are horrible to go through for one.

And I was like, I want to be someone that stands up for what they believe in and talks about how they feel, and it's in the music anyway, so why not talk about it and make it a platform to gain attention for the charities that are doing amazing work that no one really knows about it?

It's just about me having felt so alone for so long, and then me being like, right, my mom died by suicide. That was an awful, traumatic experience, but it has brought me here and it has taught me a lot, and I want people to know that they're not alone because I felt alone, but I wasn't alone, and I didn't know that.

And you know, with experiencing depression and anxiety, it's like no one's alone and it can feel like you're really alone, so if someone is alone and they've put on one of my songs that's about domestic abuse or suicide and they feel better and they're like, "Oh, this guy has been through something that I'm going through and he seems, although he struggled, it's been very challenging, he has got to the point now where he's at a place where he didn't realize he could be before."

And I think that's why it's worth talking about. It's not particularly comfortable, but it is important that we talk about it.

**Suz:** Thank you for sharing all of that and being so open about it because I think a lot of people do feel alone and what you were able to do is turn it into, "Well, if I'm feeling alone, I'm sure other people are feeling alone, but let's just talk about this and not feel so alone."

But I think some people get so far into feeling alone that they feel, "Well, who cares?" or, "Who wants to hear me talk about this?" or, "I don't want to turn people off," or, "I don't want to lose audience members that might feel uncomfortable."

Or I've also heard people say, "Well, I'll do that once I have a platform." You do have a platform!

I think when people hear platform, they feel like it has to be a certain size or it has to be a certain reach, and if you already have people following you, you have a platform. You have people that are listening and watching what you're doing, and going back to what you said before in terms of using the time you're given, not waiting for, "Well, I'll do it when I reach this plateau or that plateau." You know, talking about it now because somebody's always listening, and that person could need what you're saying right now.

**Chris:** Yeah, exactly. It's really important, you know, someone might listen to this podcast in six months time, and be like, "Oh, right. Chris Keats used to lie on the sofa and think he was the only person on the planet." I really did this, not that long ago, I don't know, maybe three years ago, I was like so alone and didn't know how to talk about how I felt. I thought I was the only person that felt as I felt. I try not to use the word depression too much these days, but like low mood or anxious or like my life isn't going where I want it to go or I don't know what the solution is, and I wasn't solution focused, so there's a lot of mindset shifting.

But I just want people to know that even though they think they can't do it, in fact, they can do it if they meet the right people and have the right people in their lives and have coaches and get super involved in personal development and growth, which I did in the last year. Yeah, I wouldn't want anyone on the planet to have to lie on the sofa like I used to think that they were the only person who was experiencing that.

**Suz:** Thank you for sharing that. I resonate with that a lot. I mean after losing my dad about eight years ago and just most recently on the same date, I lost a very close family member to suicide.

And I remember when my dad passed really walking around with a large chip on my shoulder, like I was the only person in the world that ever lost a parent and that nobody could possibly get what I'm going through. And then, pushing myself to show up at work, and then it was almost like everybody, I knew lost a parent. Then all of a sudden I started talking about it and another coworker would say, "I just went through that last year" or another coworker would say, "Yep. I went through the same exact thing."

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And it was like, "Oh wow. Other people have experienced this," or they know what I'm going through. And it's amazing as soon as you open yourself, just a little bit, to talking about it how not alone you can feel is really amazing.

**Chris:** Yeah, it is. And, you know, you have to be vulnerable, don't you? It was kind of all sitting in my subconscious for years, but I just got to the point of, I can't not tell people how my mum died.

It's impacted my life more than I could ever explain to you in words or that songs could ever explain. And I'm not the only one that's experienced that, obviously, unfortunately. I was like, "Someone's got to do something. Someone's got to talk about this because no one has talked about it."

You know, I have friends and family members who I've never talked to about my mum since she died. Never! And then she dies twice, you know? I can't remember who said that. It's a rapper. Maybe it was Dr. Dre?

We have to move our consciousness forward, and I think that involves talking about things that are very painful because only through talking about things that are very painful do you get the full extent of life, somehow.

**Suz:** Yeah. And I think when a death is rooted with mental health, whether it's suicide or it's any other sort of death that is connected to mental illness, or any sort of situation, even if the person doesn't die, but they're suffering with it, there's some sort of stigma or inability to talk about it. But we can talk about a murder or somebody dying of cancer, or people dying of all these other just as tragic situations, but people somehow feel there's more of a vocabulary to talk about it and less shame around it.

And I think with suicide, you know, I don't know if you have found this as well, but so many people in the family still not wanting to say the word. Or talk about this is what it was, or even just admit, "I'm angry" or I feel this way about it, or I feel that way and because it's very complicated.

**Chris:** It's complex. Yeah it is.

**Suz:** Yeah, and I think rather than just saying, "Oh, I feel sad" because when somebody dies of a heart attack, you know, it's, "They're gone too soon. I'm sad."

There's so much more complexity that I think people really struggle with it and rather just keep quiet, so I applaud you and I thank you for bringing awareness and being able to talk about your

experience and bringing awareness to organizations that can help prevent people from going down that route, because it is very complicated is the only word that comes to mind.

**Chris:** It's definitely complex. You know, like when my mom died, I was sad, but I was also furious to a point that again, I can't explain the fury that I had inside me, towards her, for leaving me, you know? How would you articulate that with your friends who are 22 sitting around the table at the pub?

**Suz:** Right.

**Chris:** D'you know? We're not trained for that, are we? I had no experiences before that in my life to, although my grandmother died by suicide, but I didn't have any strategies. It's not like we go to school and they're like, "If this happens, you can do these 50 things, but you have to be patient, and it's going to take time and grief is a process," like no one teaches you that.

So my dad, my brother and I, and everyone just got our heads down and just got on with it, and just got on with life. I can't really talk for them, I took the joys and then I just accepted the pain, and I was like, "Well, Mom died by suicide. It's never going to get better, so I'll just get on with it." This is quite a long time ago, but I'm sure there's, loads of people on this planet right now that are probably thinking the same thing.

I didn't deal with anything. I coped with it, and my coping strategy was to work and be obsessive about music and about the guitar. Which, you know, also had joy in it, because I love playing the guitar, but I had a counselor at the time who I still speak to now every week, and she asked me once, she's like, "Oh, you're playing the guitar a lot." She thought I was like processing my pain and going through it.

And I was like, "No, I just want to be better at the guitar."

I remember it, and we talk about it now, it was in 2007, and she was literally like, "Oh,..." I was like "I just want to be better. I just want to be amazing!" It was like being a kid, even though I was 24. I was just a kid 'cause my ability to understand or process my emotions was that like a five year old kid. I was like, "I just want to be better!"

She was like, "We've got some work to do, Chris Keats."

And then at the time, I was like, "No, I'm fine."

You know, it must be hard being a counselor or a therapist. She must have been like, "You're definitely not fine, but how do I tell you you're not fine without you having a breakdown?" which happened anyway later on. Do you know what I mean?

It's a fine balance between coping and then crashing.

**Suz:** And as you said, you know, music is your therapy and whether you told yourself it was there to get better at your craft or whether it was your body's way to process trauma either way you were utilizing it, you know?

**Chris:** Yeah. I only realized recently, I was talking to the girl I'm seeing actually and I was saying to her, like, "I never wanted to be a songwriter. I never wanted to write poems, I didn't care about that. All I wanted to do was play the guitar like Eric Clapton."

**Suz:** That's interesting.

**Chris:** Isn't it, though? Before my mom died, I was obsessed with music anyway because of my parents and my brother. Our house was always full of music, so I was always obsessed with the guitar.

But yeah, once she died, I remember writing a song called "Keep on Keeping on" in 2006, it's the first song I ever wrote, and I can't really remember how it goes. I think it was just lyrics at the time, but I started writing songs because I *had* to, not because I necessarily wanted to. I didn't want to be a songwriter. I didn't want to be a singer. I just wanted to play the guitar as fast as possible.

**Suz:** That's amazing.

**Chris:** It's just so interesting, isn't it? If I only could go back and speak to that 23 year old boy/man.

**Suz:** Like there are so many strategies out there!

**Chris:** Well, yeah, exactly. You know, it's different. You've got, you use social media in a way that's useful for you, but there's lots of information on Instagram and Facebook, particularly Instagram, that comes up about self care, about loving yourself, about doing what makes you happy, about avoiding people that bring your energy levels down.

**Suz:** Yeah.

**Chris:** It's a tool, isn't it? Social media, and if it's used in the right way, like any tool, then it can be very, very beneficial.

**Suz:** Well, and I think what I've learned from this conversation too, is that, you know, there are tools for coping, there are tools for strategies, there are tools for marketing, and when you have

more tools in your toolbox, you know, life is always going to be hard, but it doesn't have to feel impossible.

And tools help open our eyes, and I know that's what you're doing with your platform, and what you're doing with your songs is opening people's eyes to these other tools and this bigger world that they probably have blinders on from.

And that's why I think it's so important, and I'm so happy that we could sit here and have this conversation. And one of the things that I do want people to know, because they should be following you and should be getting in your community to experience all this because at the end of the day, you know, I think the biggest takeaway here is that no one's alone. I think are important conversations to have, and I thank you for being a part of that conversation and taking that conversation further.

I would like to take the conversation to your upcoming new song that comes out on the 28th, which is next week for everybody.

**Chris:** It is. Yeah.

**Suz:** Let's celebrate that! What can you tell us about your latest song, and what are you most excited about it?

**Chris:** I thought you might ask this. It's a song I wrote in 2015, sitting at a table at a friend's house, I was house-sitting for her. As I write songs and as I released them, I realize that there are multiple layers to the song, so the song is about the end of the relationship, it's about me sitting there with a piece of paper and my guitar being like, "Did I ever really know you?"

And then I was like, about the girl that I was with, "Did I ever really know you?" And then I was like, "Do we ever know ourselves?" Like I didn't really know who I was then, and I don't know exactly who I am now or what I can become, but I know more than I did six years ago.

But then the chorus is talking about not being able to feel being loved by another person other than in fleeting moments, which is what happened, you know, during my childhood with my parents. And it happened in that relationship, and I was just looking back and I was like, I don't really know what the feeling of being loved is. Like physically, like I know that my parents love me and that my brother loves me, and that my friends love me, but I couldn't like make that bridge to like, "Oh, they love me. Oh well, now I feel loved by them."

**And that was just a case of having to cut off my emotions, you know, I cut off my emotions about my mom's death and other traumatic events. And I didn't even know at the time, but**

**I know now, is that when you cut off one thing, you cut off everything, so you don't cut off the bad, you cut off the good and the indifferent and the in-between.**

And it was about me trying to work out, I guess, what was going on for me really? You know, I didn't know who you were. I don't know who I am. Where does that leave me? I've never really felt consistent love from people around me who I know love me. It's a pretty confusing place to be in.

**Suz:** Yeah. And what made you decide now was the time to release it?

**Chris:** That's another good question. Just because now's my time. I was like, you know what? I was a different person when I recorded those songs and when I wrote them, I was a different person and I've come a very long way, and I wasn't going to release them. I was gonna have that as a project that happened in the past, and I was going to record new songs in a different way with different producers. And I was like, "No, no, no. People need to hear this because it was a period of my life."

It was a period in my life where I was confused, where I was in relationships with the wrong people. I didn't know who I was. I didn't know what I wanted, or I did know, but I was basically too afraid to say, I want to do this because I was worried about other people's judgment.

And I was like, well, I'm not in that place as much now, although I still am concerned about certain people's judgments, of course. But I was like, people need to hear this and I need to put this out for me.

**Suz:** Yeah.

**Chris:** Basically, cause I wanted to, and I felt like it would help. If it helped one person, then it was worth all the work, all the hours, you know, the 12 hour days or 17 hour days, it was worth it for one person.

**Suz:** I love that. Yes! Well, I'm so thrilled to speak with an artist who has worked on processing, not only their trauma, but their art as well. And who looks at something where, okay, you created this in 2015 and you know, six years later, you're not that person, but that doesn't mean what you have to say and what you said back then, isn't worth sharing.

And you've taken that and decided to share that with the world, the fact that even your linktree on your Instagram supporting R U OK day, that is later this year on September 10th, the fact that you talk about suicide prevention and support all these other great, amazing charities - everything about you and your message is about not only improving your life and working on

yourself, but helping others do the same, and I think that that is such an important thing for other artists to see.

And I thank you for coming on and sharing your experiences and your intention and your why behind why you do speak up. And so I hope, and I have no doubts that this has inspired other listeners to say, "Okay, why wait? I've got something to say. I've got a light to shine. Let's do it." Yeah.

**Chris:** I hope so. Because I just want people to know that Chris Keats, it's funny is talking about myself in the third person, like I'm just a normal man, you know?

**Suz:** Yeah.

**Chris:** I'm just a man. I'm just a normal man, a normal human being. I'm not special. I'm not different. I'm just driven, I'm just hungry, and I want to change me and the world as much as I can before that someday I'm not here anymore. Do you know what I mean?

You know, people are like, "Oh, you're so talented!" I'm like, I'm not talented. I wasn't talented when I first started playing the guitar. I wasn't talented, for like the 20,000, 30,000 hours I had practicing the guitar and practicing my singing, like, "Oh, you're such a good singer." I don't know if I'm a good singer, but if people like it, it's because I've worked on my craft behind closed doors, painfully for years, you know? I never really call people talented because I think it's a bit disrespectful. No I'm not. I'm just obsessive and driven, and I just won't take no for an answer. That's not talent.

**Suz:** Well, that's a talent in and of itself!

**Chris:** Yeah. Maybe! Maybe the obsession and the drive is the talent. I don't know. I'm not here to judge that really, but I just want people to know that I'm normal and that people can do what I've done. That's important, you know?

**Suz:** Well, I have a feeling that they're all resonating with this in an unbelievable way. So how can they continue to connect with you and be a part of this amazing community that you've started?

**Chris:** Another very good question. You're full of very good questions. So you can follow me on Instagram, which is [instagram.com/keatsofficial](https://www.instagram.com/keatsofficial), which is K E A T S, like the English poet, official. My website is [keatsofficial.com](https://www.keatsofficial.com), and then my Spotify is, KEATS. with a full stop.

**Suz:** Great

**Chris:** Send me a message.

**Suz:** I love that. All of those things would be available in our show notes. And for all of you listening, like I said, on the 28th, that's next Friday, his brand new single comes out, please go pre-save it. Be a part of this important movement, and all the links to do that are in the show notes.

Chris, thank you so much once again, for taking the time to talk to us, I really appreciate it.

**Chris:** It's an absolute pleasure. Thank you for having me on. It's a privilege.

It really is a privilege to talk openly about mental health and healing when so many feel silenced and ignored. I want to thank Chris again for being so open to continuing to spotlight this conversation and for using his platform and his music to help inspire healing and change.

If you take one thing from this episode, let it be the reminder that you are not alone. I've left links to various hotlines and organizations who are ready and willing to listen in the show notes page, [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep105](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep105) as well as all of the links and information for connecting with Chris and joining his music community. And be sure to support his latest single, "The Real You," when it drops next Friday, May 28.

Thank you so much for listening and I hope you'll join me next week as we wrap up our series of interviews for Mental Health Awareness Month. Be sure to subscribe on your platform of choice so you don't miss it!

Until next time, Rock/Star. Keep planning, keep learning, and I hope to see you back here next week so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.