



# *The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast*

## Ep113: MusicPreneur Spotlight: Elisa Di Napoli

You're listening to Episode 113 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 113: MusicPreneur Spotlight: Elisa Di Napoli](#).

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.

This is our final interview of The MusicPreneur Mindset. We have one more episode for Season 4 and then we'll be back this fall with Season 5 under a new name, the Redefine the Hustle Podcast. It will still be available right here in the same place you are listening now, there'll be nothing new to subscribe to, we'll just be under a different name and a bit of a new look.

If you want to stay up to date with the latest info on this rebrand and get informed as soon as the new season drops, be sure you're subscribed to my newsletter. You can do so by visiting the show notes page, [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep113](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep113) and entering your name and email into the sign up form in the middle of the page. You'll even receive access to my FREE time blocking video training when you sign up!

In the meantime, we have a GREAT episode for you today, I'm so fortunate we're closing out our series of MusicPreneur Spotlights with a really impactful one with my good friend and colleague, Elisa Di Napoli.

Elisa is an Author, a Holistic Clinical Hypnotherapist, NLP Practitioner and Transformational Coach since 2001, and is the best-selling author of the book, online course, and podcast Dare to Be Seen, which helps artists command the stage, magnify their presence, and defeat stage nerves so they can share their gifts with their audience and shine their light on the world.

Her work places a great deal of importance on positive mental health, Neurolinguistic Psychology, and Holistic Coaching. She studied hypnotherapy at the prestigious Hypnotherapy

Training Institute of Northern California, training with world-renowned teachers Randal Churchill and Ormond McGill, and now helps artists who need to find a way forward, get their project going, or figure out how to turn their creative, artistic, or performance skills into a new venture.

She is also a multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriter, under the moniker Elyssa Vulpes, and has produced 12 albums, with a focus on inner transformation through sometimes dark and sometimes comedic storytelling. We discuss everything from her obsessive love of cats to her FREE transformative workshops for artists, to her new life chapter beginning in New Zealand this coming month.

Let's dig in, I bring you Elisa Di Napoli...

**Suz:** Thank you so much for being here with us today. I've just told our audience a bit about you and all the amazing things that you've accomplished. You've got many plates in the air, and I want to get to all of them. But first what's something that you'd like our audience to know about you that maybe they wouldn't know?

**Elisa:** Well, I'm absolutely mad about cats. I would have tons and tons of cats if I had a garden, but unfortunately I only have one cat because I don't have a garden yet, but maybe one day.

**Suz:** If that is what you desire, I have every confidence that you will indeed get there. Obviously you're a hypnotherapist. You're also a best-selling author, you're a coach, you're a musician... do you find it difficult to integrate all those together or does it feel like it integrates all naturally for you? Do you have to pick and choose what you focus on? Walk us through that because I know a lot of our listeners are very multi-passionate and multi-talented, so what is it like for you?

**Elisa:** Yeah, that's a good question and very relevant. I'm a bit of a jack of all trades, master of none, and I used to think this was a problem. I'm beginning to think this is not a problem. It's just who I am, but it does have its problems because I can kind of obsess over one thing and then forget about the rest and then have to pick up the pieces.

So recently, in the past year I have really focused on this and realize that actually it's not healthy to do that. In my daily routine, I have to have music, every day if I can, at least five days a week. And so I've started to really observe myself and what do I do well when? When do I have energy

for what? I've kind of experimented with a lot of different routines, and I'm sure this will change, but at the moment I find that what works for me is to dedicate my morning to music as much as possible. Sometimes it's not possible, if I'm doing a launch of something, but usually it is, and then dedicate the afternoon to business or seeing clients, that kind of thing, and my weekend as much as possible to things that have got nothing to do with work in any way, shape or form, so that I can feed my soul, if you like.

Like I said, it's not always possible.

I came to this because in the last few years I put a lot of focus on business, and then I started feeling really unhappy, you know, and thinking, "Oh my God, I'm an artist, what am I doing?" I was in pain. I really was not feeling like myself, and so that forced me to actually put myself first and to put pleasure first, because I'm one of those strange people that have been conditioned to put *duty* first, you know? First duty then pleasure, but then pleasure never comes.

So I really need to remind myself, pleasure is not a luxury. Pleasure needs to be prioritized. And what I mean by pleasure is doing the things that make me feel good. And music is definitely number one on that list and writing and the arts.

**Suz:** I love that. Thank you for being so open about that. It sounds like you've really gone through your journey of finding what your boundaries are and just making sure that you honor them. I think that's beautiful because I know a lot of multi-passionate people struggle with that and that's what it really comes down to. I love how you said, "I was kind of conditioned to put duty before pleasure," and I think so many of us were, I certainly have been, and it's a process to undo that and to put pleasure first. It is a process for sure, and so thank you for sharing that journey with us.

You help so many artists when it comes to stage fright - you've got a fantastic book about it, you focus on it in your coaching, you integrate your hypnotherapy with it - can you share any secrets with us about stage fright and how to feel confident when performing? Can you give us a little bit of your secret sauce?

**Elisa:** I think first of all, it's important to figure out where performance anxiety comes from. A lot of us think that maybe we're weird because we have this excessive anxiety, but the thing is that it's normal to feel anxious before going on stage. A little bit of anxiety actually can be good, but

it's when it's excessive that it starts to stop us from performing, then we need to do something about it.

And so whereas it makes evolutionary sense to be anxious because basically we are social animals and if we got rejected in the past we might've died. But you know, our brain doesn't know that that's not any more possibility. I mean, we still do depend on society somewhat to survive. So fear of rejection is at the root of performance anxiety. Fear of rejection is pretty normal. We all have it, and it comes in the form of often fear of judgment, fear of criticism, fear of not being good enough, or not belonging - that sort of thing.

What I found is that the two causes of this excessive fear, both related to negative conditioning, and negative conditioning could be a result of some kind of trauma, and by trauma, I don't necessarily mean something dramatic - it could be being laughed at at school when we were a kid because we said something silly in a class - being humiliated, that sort of thing.

And then there's a negative conditioning that happens without other people. So we actually can condition ourselves negatively by mentally rehearsing a catastrophic scenario in our head. So for example, thinking, "Oh my God, I am sure it's going to be awful. People are gonna think I am a fraud or people are going to laugh at me. I'm going to make mistakes," this sort of thing and we visualize these inner words in our minds and our brain doesn't see the difference between what we imagined and what we actually experience, so therefore we get the bodily reaction that we would get as if that was *actually* happening. And if we repeat this again, and again, and again, every day under the guise, for example, of worrying well, that's negative conditioning, and so then it's much more likely to happen when we are on stage.

So the main things that we need to do to reverse the process is we need to identify any traumas that have happened. Reframe them positively because you know, they have happened in the past and they are not happening now, but our brain doesn't know that. So we need to condition our mind and with the use of hypnosis because hypnosis gets to the subconscious, so it gets to the root of the problem, so that's one thing we need to do.

If there is any trauma we need to identify and reframe and recondition, and then on the other hand, if we worry a lot, well, then we need to use positive mental rehearsal, which is the opposite of worrying and problem solving, if there are actual problems to be solved in order to be in control and in order to feel calm when we go on stage.

So this is done with hypnosis because yes, there are other ways, for example, mindfulness training is good. Mindfulness training does involve a state of consciousness similar to analysis, but it's different in the sense of what we do with that state. So during mindfulness, you know, basically we become aware that we have certain thoughts, certain feelings, and we kind of detach from them and see them for what they are, which is, you know, thinking, feeling is not who we are, but hypnosis really helps with identifying where this has actually come from because if we don't treat the trauma, then these thoughts are gonna keep on coming.

So yes, the monkey mind is always there, but if we have negative conditioning going on and we feed it, then you know, it's like, we're feeding a fire with fuel, and then we try to put water on the fire to extinguish it. And it's like, if we actually stopped feeding the fire, it's going to be easier to then extinguish it.

**Suz:** Right. It makes total sense. I feel like this is why we always connected because I find what you do fascinating, and it's such a great tool and important way to not only help performers overcome their anxieties, but to help them heal. And I know that's a big part of what you do. It's not just helping them be aware of it, but it's how to heal from it, which I think is so, so important.

I know you've got some tips for example, when people are used to that negative conditioning and *do* do that a lot. Sometimes it can result in things like panic attacks, and sometimes it can hit us really hard, it might come out of nowhere, and I know some of my friends who suffer from panic attacks, their biggest struggle is how to get out of it. How can I stop this? So do you have any tips for our listeners who have likely been there? If you haven't done the work to stop this negative conditioning, and now you're in this spot of pure panic, what can you do about it?

**Elisa:** Right. Well, I go in real detail about this in my masterclass, a free masterclass, but to kind of give you the sum up of it, it's actually not that difficult to get out of a panic attack if you know what to do. The problem is if you're having a panic attack and you don't know what's going on, you might not even know you're having a panic attack. And if you don't even know, then you'll take it seriously, and you might be convinced that you're going to die. I mean really, the fear can feel like you're dying, so the first step is to actually know this is a panic attack. Now, how do you know you have a panic attack rather than an actual heart attack? Well, there's actually one way that's really easy.

It's kind of controversial of course, because, you know, if you really were having a heart attack, you wouldn't want to do this, right? And it's that if you go up and down the stairs 10 times or, you know, you get your heart pumping, basically your heart to go fast. If you were having an actual heart attack, you wouldn't be able to do that. You might expire in the process. We don't want that, right? Of course not. I'm just joking there. But if you are having a panic attack, that's actually going to help you.

So one of the easiest, fastest ways of getting off of a panic attack, if you can, of course, you won't be able to do this during a gig - you can't start doing jumping jacks in the middle of a gig, but if you could do this, you know, maybe before, it really helps to send a signal to the alarm center of the brain, which is amygdala that the threat is now passed - it's over. So you basically need to engage in aerobic exercise, and the aerobic exercise can be the jumping jacks. It can be a running up and down the stairs. It could be dancing. It doesn't matter what it is. So that's one trick.

If you can't do that, for whatever reason, then the other way is to use diaphragmatic breathing, which is basically the kind of breathing that you do when you close your mouth, you breathe through your nose only, and you take a deep breath, a belly breath. So you fill up your lungs and your belly, imagining perhaps that your belly is like a balloon that you're inflating, and you hold your breath for just a couple of seconds. And then you breathe out really, really slow through the nose, making sure that the out-breath is longer than the in-breath.

And you need to do this, this is the key, you need to do this for at least five minutes. A lot of people only do it for like 30 seconds and then go, "This doesn't work." You've got to do it for five minutes. It's guaranteed, if you do that, you will stop having a panic attack. And then once you start calming down, only when you start calming down, what you can do is start talking to yourself in a positive manner, such as you know for example, you could just repeat the word "calm."

But that's not gonna work if you are in the middle of a panic attack because your prefrontal cortex signals are inhibited there. The prefrontal cortex has got to do with rational thinking, and you're not going to be able to really think rationally while you're having a panic attack, and so that's why it's so important to to calm yourself down first.

**Suz:** That's really such valuable information, and thank you for sharing that. For all of our listeners, I highly recommend digging more into this with Elisa and doing this free masterclass. I mean, it's free - this is a no brainer guys. The link is in the show notes, so definitely go register for that.

What I think is so important that you touched upon that I think a lot of people miss, as you said, is number one, the duration - it's not just the exercise itself but how long to do it. But also to explain in terms of repeating that word, "calm," or repeating positive mantras to yourself, I love that you made it clear that that's *after* you've been able to bring your nervousness and that panic down after you've done something like the breathing or the running up and down the stairs.

Because people would hear tips like that and just do it when they're in the midst of it, and so they don't understand that, as you said, the prefrontal cortex, when those neurons are inhibited, it's not going to do anything. And so, yeah, as you said, people give up, they say, "Oh, there's no fix for this." But you know, there are nuances that people miss, so thank you for touching upon those nuances. It's important.

**Elisa:** Yeah. And that actually it's something else as well. I know that you do EFT. Now, EFT can also be used during one of these episodes. In fact, I used it on myself at the beginning of the pandemic. You know, at the very beginning I was freaking out. You know, I was like, "Oh my God, the world is going to end, and everybody's going to die," and whatnot. And I started jumping up and down and doing jumping jacks in the bedroom.

And then I started doing EFT just after doing the jumping jacks and I used it to kind of say to myself, "Okay, it's going to be okay. I can deal with this. It's going to be okay," and I just repeated and repeated and repeated until I was calm. So that's another thing you can also do, and it goes really well with the affirmations, but again, *after* the exercise.

**Suz:** Yeah absolutely. I was wondering if you could dig into more of the mind hacks around being a successful performer, because we talk a lot on this podcast about sustainability, and what I love about the work you do is that it's always based in sustainability. It's not a one-time fix. It's not a band-aid. It's to really get you to a place where you can *consistently* perform at the level that you need to be performing at to build a career. So could you give us some background on these mind hacks that you recommend for performing success?

**Elisa:** Yeah. So there's six. I'll go through them as quickly as possible.

The first one is that your mind does what it thinks that you want it to do. So, what I mean by that is that your subconscious has got one job since you were born and the job is to keep you alive. And it does that by taking you away from pain and moving you towards pleasure, or moving you towards a place where you can survive.

So now it's obviously easy for the mind to know what gives you physical pain, but how about psychological pain? So, you know, an event might be pleasurable for someone and painful for others. You might love to jump off a plane and somebody else would think you're insane for doing such a thing. So in order for the mind to know what is psychologically painful or pleasurable, your subconscious gathers information from you by listening to whatever you say to yourself and noticing the positive or negative tags, if you like - the meaning you assign to events.

So once your mind knows what's good or bad for you, for example, if you say to yourself, "Oh my God. This gig is going to be a nightmare. I'm terrified." Then your mind is terrified, "Oh God, this isn't good." You know? So then on the other hand, if it thinks that something is fun, it could be playing with snakes. It doesn't matter. But if you're like, "Oh, snakes are so much fun!" Then your mind knows, "Okay, that's something that we do. It's not dangerous."

Right? So your mind will basically facilitate whatever course of action is getting you towards something pleasurable or positive, but not in itself, something that you think psychologically is pleasurable, right? This is important because you need to monitor what you say to yourself.

If you constantly say to yourself, "Oh my God, this show it's going to suck." Well, you're going to have your mind listening and it's going, "Oh, God. Oh, shows are bad. Okay. We better get out of it in some way or another," you know? Maybe we'll get you to lose your voice, which actually has happened to me a couple of times.

So number two is your mind responds to two things: the words you say to yourself, just like I said before inside your head and out loud to other people, and the pictures that you create in your mind, and these pictures are created automatically responding to the words you use.



And it's important to know this because sometimes we say, "I don't want to be nervous. I don't want to make mistakes." Well, what are you thinking? You're thinking about being nervous and you're thinking about making mistakes because the word "not" is not an object word.

So your mind is picturing these words and is making them into a psychological reality and it will respond to these automatically. You don't have to try. It just happens, right? I mean, I could go on a lot more detail on this, but if you really want to know in detail then there's a whole chapter of my book about this.

The third hack, if you like, is that emotion will always, always trump logic. Emotion will always win. And so this is easily exemplified by the example of, "I'm overweight. I want to lose weight, but I love cakes. I just love cakes." You know it's like, well, if you're talking like that and you really feel like that about cakes, you can be as logical as you like, but if you love them, I'm sorry, you're going to go and eat them.

**Suz:** I feel that 100%.

**Elisa:** So then number four is that repetition is the key to changing your beliefs. If you think about it, we're all conditioned from birth to behave in certain ways, and this is through repetition. You know, if you repeat something to yourself long enough, your mind will believe it whether it's good, bad, true, false - it doesn't matter. Your mind will accept whatever you say, whatever you repeat to it again and again and again because whatever you focus on will expand.

So whatever you focus on, you get more of, it's like the plant that grows is the plants that you water, you know? So better be careful what you're feeding in the positive and in the negative. That's a nice part of it is that, you know, we always often feed the negative, but what if we fed the positive?

**Suz:** Exactly!

**Elisa:** What if we did that? What would happen then? You know, I don't want to be like saying here, "Just think positively, just ignore all the bad things." That's not what I'm saying. You know, your mind will do the job of focusing on the negative. Don't you worry about that because we are evolutionarily just designed to scan the environment for threats, so we're gonna constantly

be looking for the negative. So what we need to do is actually rebalance by focusing more on what feels good basically.

And the last two, number five is that what you expect tends to be realized. I always say I should make a t-shirt that says, "Expect the best, accept the rest," because it's just so true. Just expect the best, and then, you know, it's not always going to be like that. It's not always going to be good, but if it's not good just go, "Oh, well."

**Suz:** Right. Nobody go and steal that! We've got it implanted on this podcast episode. Elisa announced that is her design, I love that. That needs to happen.

**Elisa:** And then the last one is that the mind loves what is familiar and it rejects what is unfamiliar. So that's why, if you've said to yourself all your life, "I'm not good enough. I'm not going to be enough. I don't belong. I'm going to screw up whatever it is," yeah? Then your mind thinks, "Okay, that's familiar," right?

And if suddenly you start saying, "No, I am enough. I am enough," it's going to feel weird, and your mind's not going to believe it at first cause it just feels unfamiliar. So the job of hypnotherapy is to make the familiar unfamiliar and the unfamiliar familiar. So the toxic self-talk needs to become strange, and the only way to do that is to repeat again, and again, and again, that the positive self talk.

But not just repeat it because this is the thing. A lot of people go, "Okay, affirmations. I get it, but they don't feel real. I don't believe them. They feel strange to me." You have to *embody* them. And what I mean by that, is like for example, if your affirmation is "Every time I get on stage, I'm getting more and more confident," this is a progressive relaxation, meaning it gets better and better over time. So it's a good one to choose if you're having trouble accepting affirmations such as "I'm confident on stage," right? Because you may think, "Well, I'm not, so this is not reality."

So the progressive relaxation can be really good cause it's like, "Well, okay maybe I'm not just yet, but I'm getting better and better every time I do it." Well, not enough to just say it. You have to think about it and embody it. So you stand up, in a posture that a person who actually believes that would stand up in. You use the kind of voice that a person who believe that would use. You imagine what kind of emotion you would have if you really believed it.

In other words, you bringing all of that into the present moment, and all you're doing is opening the door for a possibility. You're saying to your subconscious, "Okay, I get it. In the past, I didn't feel like this, but it's possible, and this is what I want." And then you treat your self, like a child that you love very much, and that you're trying to coach to be more confident, even if they're not just yet.

**Suz:** There's so many things I love about all of that. And thank you for going through the six of those for us, because first I want to point out I love number six, about the familiarity. We talk about that a lot on this podcast, but we always talk about it from the fan perspective of if you want them to hit play on your music, if you want them to engage with your content, they have to be familiar with it.

And I love how you've framed it in a way for yourself when you're introspective and you think about what you believe and how you engage with your own content and your own performances and your own abilities when you create this stuff, if it's unfamiliar to you to say, "I've got this. I'm capable. This is going to be great," if those are not things you're used to doing, you're going to reject those as well.

So I love that you've shown us a way to look at the unfamiliar mindset of that in a different way and how we see ourselves and how we get too used to saying the negative stuff and we live in the Debbie Downersville too often.

So I think that that's such a great frame and lens to look through. And the other thing I kept thinking, because I know our listeners are sitting there, probably writing all this stuff down, going, "Wow, this was so much goodness," and shifting that just happened for them as you went through those six points. I kept thinking to myself, that's just one piece of your book. All of this amazing information guys, that's just one piece of her book *Dare to Be Seen: Going From Stage Fright to Stage Presence*.

And I love the book. I have a copy. I've read it cover to cover. I'm not even a performer, and I got so much out of it because I do do a lot of speaking events. I do put myself in front of the cameras sometimes and I hate it. So I've gotten so much from your book. I highly recommend people go check it out. The link is in the show notes.

Go get the book, but also you have an audiobook version of it, and I personally, I find your voice so calming, so if you guys prefer to hear her read the book to you, there's also an audiobook version available.

But on top of that, you've got your Dare to Be Seen Podcast. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about what they can expect from the Dare to Be Seen Podcast and some of the guests you've had on and some of the things that you talk about on that podcast?

**Elisa:** Yeah, that's been a changing, shifting project, as you will know. You know, having a podcast is one of those things that you find your feet and it takes quite a long time to figure out what do I want to say? What is my voice? So I'm not sure that I found my voice, but at first, I've really focused on female singer-songwriters. Then, I kind of expanded it on to female musicians. I do like to address women specifically. I'd like to offer a space for women that is, you know, safe and where they're encouraged to express themselves.

And the podcast is talking about things that are a bit more intimate, but I also now started interviewing people such as yourself, that work with musicians because I want to offer even more value, you know? So it's shifting, but so far it's been kind of like a mixture of interviews with female musicians.

And when I say interviews with them, it's not your typical interview where you just talk about their songs and what's next in the pipeline, but it kind of goes a little bit more into detail about the inner life, if you'd like, of a musician, what is it like? What makes you want to do this? What are the challenges that crop up and how do you deal with these challenges? I'm always really interested in sort of going a little bit deeper, so that's kind of what it's been about.

**Suz:** I love your podcast for that very simple fact that you do go under the hood. You do dig deeper into what makes a person tick and what really motivates them and shapes them into the person and musician they are, and I find that fascinating. I think a lot of our listeners will too. Be sure guys to check out that podcast because yeah, I think it's great to have a conversation where you can go deeper and you've got the credentials to be able to go deeper with somebody. You've got the knowledge to be able to know how to facilitate a conversation like that.

You know, I think too many people too often just kind of dig deep and there's no training behind understanding the deepness of a conversation like that. And so I just really appreciate your background and your expertise and how you share that with people, so I find that really helpful.

My listeners know too, as well as you know, I know I've told you, this podcast is going under some tinkering and some rebranding so, yeah, I, 100% empathize with you about the work it takes to put a podcast on, but I'm just thankful that you share your episodes with us because they're really great, and I look forward to more.

**Elisa:** Yeah, we're just finishing next episode is actually going to be an interview featuring you, and then we're going to close our second season.

**Suz:** And I thank you for having me on, and I'm glad we were able to do this kind of podcasts swap and come into each other's worlds a bit, because I think our worlds are very similar but also very distinct at the same time and I had a lot of fun being on your podcast. I look forward to sharing that.

So we've got links in the show notes. We talked about the book and the podcast and all of that, but what is the best way for people to get in touch with you, to join your community, to work with you? How can people connect with you?

**Elisa:** Right now, because I'm launching my free masterclass, I think that would be probably the most value your listeners would get because there's a lot of value there. If they're interested, specifically, in overcoming stage fright.

If on the other hand, they're interested in having some coaching then probably better to go onto my website. If they want to get in touch specifically with me, they can always send me an email. That's no problem, and I also offer a free discovery call for anybody who wants to have some coaching.

I am moving to New Zealand in three months, so that's going to be a bit of a strange period, but I will still be online. It's just the change of timezones.

**Suz:** I think that's great though that you know, you've got this free masterclass because yeah, that's going to be a huge shift and focus for you. So at least while you're busy doing that, we can all learn from the masterclass. So great planning and great timing on that!

While she's rebuilding a life in New Zealand, which I can't wait to hear about once you're all settled, guys, really go check out this free masterclass. The link is in the show notes. The website is [hypnotichealing.co.uk](http://hypnotichealing.co.uk) and her email will be in the show notes as well.

So thank you so much for spending time to talk with us today and give us a bunch of insight into your world and how people can really start to heal from their traumas and from their anxiety and their panic attacks. I greatly appreciate it.

**Elisa:** Thank you very much for having me. It's been a real pleasure.

**Suz:** Take care.

I love talking with Elisa because she's someone who understands this is a journey. You may know the tools that can help you overcome hurdles, but without practice and patience you can absolutely fall back into toxic habits and mindsets.

I hope you take her tips and apply them to your daily life, and focus on *maintaining* the practice of these tips. I can't recommend her book, masterclass and podcast more and you'll find links to all of them as well as additional 'rock'sources in our show notes page.

Head on over to [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep113](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep113) for links to everything discussed here today and be sure to scroll to the bottom and leave a comment about what you thought of our conversation. What resonated with you? What additional questions do you have for Elisa? What would you like to see in Season 5? I wanna know it all, so share your thoughts with us!

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 during our final episode of Season 4! Take care.