



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EP35: Ending Toxic Collaborations



You're listening to Episode 35 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hey there! You're listening to Episode 35 - Ending Toxic Collaborations. Today's episode is sponsored by The Music-Preneur Mindset Summit, which I know a lot of you know about already and I've got some news to share on it at the end of this episode, so stay tuned!

If we haven't yet met, I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach to help music-preneurs build sustainable careers in music.

And what does sustainable mean, really? To me, it means you can maintain your energy, focus, and passion in order to remain motivated to grow a career in doing what you love for the rest of your days.

While sometimes that means building a time management system that works within your day-to-day obligations, other times it means finding ways to take better care of yourself so you continue to make sure you don't get so discouraged and burnt out that you begin to resent what you once loved doing.

I've seen instances where people don't get burnt out from working too many hours necessarily, but rather from working with toxic people who chip away at their passion and confidence. I've even experienced it first hand myself at times.

Collaborating with the wrong people can drain your energy and keep you from staying focused, on course, and motivated to keep going.

Now obviously we have people in our lives that can be toxic and have nothing to do with our career - maybe we have family members or exes or even long-time friends who have grown to be unhealthy influences in our lives.

This can range from dealing with drama kings and queens to downright abusive and dangerous individuals. If you're dealing with someone who is harming you mentally, emotionally, or physically, I urge you to get help immediately.

If you're in the U.S. you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or visit <https://www.thehotline.org/>. They have ways to properly clear their data from your search engine if your browser history is being monitored.

No matter what, if someone is causing you harm - tell someone you trust and get help!

Sorry to get so serious so early in the episode, but this is important to address as it happens a lot more often and to a lot more people than you may think. And if you need that information again, it's listed in the [show notes](#).

But, switching gears now to the non-threatening but downright pain in the ass toxicity that others can bring your way, I want to address how you can identify when someone in your life is toxic and what you can do to cleanse yourself of their bullshit and keep moving forward.

The thing that is often tricky with toxic relationships is that they don't always start out that way. Most people don't see a mean or manipulative person and think, "Wow! Can't wait to work with them!"

The toxicity may not be due to a person being an awful human being, but just someone whose energy doesn't work well with yours. When you first meet they seem great, and they, in fact, may be wonderful, but as you begin to work together you realize the collaboration is not a healthy one for you to be in.

Maybe they party too hard and you're trying to stay sober. Maybe they are of the belief that you have to work hard and play hard and you're trying to find more of a calming balance.

As we often say on this podcast, you are who you surround yourself with. If you have friends who are innately negative Nancys or dramatic Dans, take some time apart from those people. Keep busy with those in your life who lift you up.

If you are surrounded by lazy people who sit around and complain all day, find people who are go-getters and inspire you to do better. You don't have to end friendships over it, but taking a break can be extremely beneficial.

Hang out with those people in controlled environments when you know you can have a good time with them and then bounce when you need to. Stay in touch with them but in a way that doesn't suck you down into their doldrums.

Maybe they're going through something very traumatic in their life right now and you're unable to be the support they need due to triggers of your own.

Just because someone needs help doesn't mean you have to be the person who helps them. If there is a situation that is harmful to your own health and well-being you aren't doing either party a service by trying to help.

Removing yourself from those types of situations can be the most difficult because it's easy to feel like the villain. No one enjoys turning their back on someone who needs help.

So don't turn your back, simply step out of the way. Support them from the sidelines by finding people and resources that can provide the help they need. Understand that that Oxygen Mask principle is not just something you hear on airplanes.

You can't help someone else until you make sure you're safe and taken care of or else you'll put yourself in danger and the person you're trying to help will be worse off.

In [Episode 18](#) we spoke about boundaries. Boundaries are important not just for managing our time but for protecting our energy and focus.

If you've started to work with someone in the studio or if you're co-writing or recently formed a band and another person is really in a bad spot, hit pause. Don't keep pushing through and hope they get it together. Don't keep going hoping it'll work itself out or that you can help carry the weight and get to the finish line.

Things can sneak up on us when you already think you've done a good job at surrounding yourself with good people. Unfortunately bad things can still happen to good people and if not dealt with properly things can spiral out of control and derail everyone in its path.

Stop and address what's going on and regroup. Does the work take a backseat for the moment? Does someone else sub in? Is help brought on board to handle what needs handling?

Talk it out and come up with a solution that works for all parties. Understand your own boundaries and what you realistically can and can't offer as support. Talking it out openly and honestly will allow all parties to see what next steps each can take to move forward.

Talking it out works when you trust the people you are dealing with are good, honest people who just happen to be wrapped up in a bad situation.

There are other times, however, when talking it out won't be a solution. When manipulative people find their way into your life all the talking in the world isn't going to change your situation.

In fact, being that they were able to manipulate you enough to come into your life you may not even see them for who they really are and therefore can't be the one to take the steps to rectify a bad situation.

Maybe you've noticed that they're disruptive in your life or haven't always had your best intentions at heart, but they somehow convince you things can be different or that you've been misinterpreting the situation.

This usually happens when things are going extremely well and people see an opportunity to ride coattails, or when things seem at their worst and people see an opportunity to play savior and then wield control over you through guilt and manipulation.

It's so sad when bright stars like Demi Lovato are unable to get the help and support they need when others are allowed into their circle who can enable them or put them in dangerous situations. Of course, we are all responsible for our own choices, but when you're in a vulnerable situation, others around you enticing you to make poor decisions is the last thing you need.

Michael Jackson was surrounded by "yes" people his entire life and it stopped those who cared about him from being able to get through to him and help him get the treatment he needed to overcome his addictions.

Justin Timberlake credits his ability to avoid the dangers of success and fame to his mother and a few childhood friends who stayed close and put him in check when he needed it.

Building a career on your art can leave you feeling extremely vulnerable at times. It's a tough industry with a lot of temptation out there to help take the edge off.

It's important you allow yourself to stay open to healthy criticism and boundaries. Those willing to tell you yes and stay agreeable at every turn should be raising red flags.

Success is built on smart decisions, not permission to do whatever it is you want, when you want, the way you want. Sometimes hearing "no" is the best thing for you.

Building a career requires seeing the bigger picture and if you can't see it, if you're too deep in whatever is in front of you, you need trusted individuals around you who aren't afraid to question your judgment for the purpose of your overall success and well-being.

In [Episode 16](#) we discussed what to do when family and loved ones just don't understand. We talked about how to try and get through to them, or at the very least be around them without feeling bad about your decision to pursue your dreams.

However, it's important you find at least one person in your life who you can trust to always keep it real with you. Even if they don't agree with your decision to do music, if they can support you regardless and keep an eye out for people with the wrong intentions, they are more valuable to you than the people who may fully support your dream but not always support what's best for you.

For example, while my father wasn't always thrilled with my decision to pursue my own business in the music industry, he never got in my way and even did what he could to help, despite his feelings about my choices.

I know that if something didn't seem in my best interest, both my parents would speak up about their concerns, and I would do my best to hear them out. Even though they both came from different perspectives - my mom is my biggest cheerleader while my father was my biggest critic - I know no matter what they'd support good people in my life and warn me of anyone they didn't think I should trust.

Don't be so quick to annex those who don't agree with you from your life. Disagreeing with you doesn't mean they're toxic. It's when they go out of their way to sabotage your progress that you'll want to keep your distance.

When someone you care about raises concerns, hear them out. Rather than talking to the party who is stirring the pot, speak to the one who is raising concerns about them.

If you know in your gut that the person raising concerns ultimately wants what is best for you, maybe they aren't wrong about the new person in your life. Maybe they are and are just over-reacting, but talk it out and hear what it is they have to say.

Every successful person who's been able to sustain their success has always stayed open to a trusted insider who isn't afraid to question their judgment at one time or another.

Once you've both laid out on the table how it is you see things about another party in question, work together to find a solution.

What about those times when you're not the one calling the shots? What about when you work for someone who doesn't even waste their time being manipulative but is downright malicious?

What if you find yourself in a situation where the stakes are high and the only way to stay with a job you love is to deal with a boss or supervisor or bandmate who disrespects and dismisses you any chance they get?

What do you do when other people's success depends on it? How can you disrupt the flow like that by complaining? If you quit or walk away, what will it mean for the future of your career?

In an industry like this one - and in entertainment in general - there is an assumption that everyone is dying to be a part of it, so those already in it can act however they'd like and if someone doesn't like it, they'll find someone else more desperate and willing to deal.

I'm not talking necessarily about sexual harassment, but rather mental and emotional abuse in general. I'm talking about the disrespectful way many are treated by people in power.

Many times this happens when you're new to the industry and you feel as though this will be your one and only chance to get your foot in the door, and they know that, they feed on that. Other times it happens to people that work for people in power and are quiet and submissive in a way that almost puts a target on their back.

To be clear, I'm not saying they ask for it. I'm simply saying certain people are easier targets than others and when someone is miserable enough to be nasty and disrespectful to others they go for the easy prey.

I've learned through my time in this industry that there are three main ways you can handle a situation like this, and many times these solutions are easier said than done and depend greatly on you being able to read a situation and those involved.

If the person who is being nasty and disrespectful to you is also underhanded and sneaky with how they do business, be careful not to speak to them alone. There's a difference between being rude and being an immoral, vindictive person.

If you feel you can trust they won't be retaliatory - maybe you feel they don't realize how they are coming off - speak to them privately about it. Stay calm, practice what you want to say beforehand and then make a time to speak to them one on one.

When you own your convictions and confidently tell someone else how you deserve to be treated, more often than not they hear you. When they see you are not someone to be pushed around they will very often change how they interact with you.

As my mom always told me, no one likes a push over. Sometimes people are just waiting for you to push back. They want to know where you draw the line (even if you think it should be very clear to them they've crossed it).

Having the confidence to speak up and showing them the respect of handling it privately can do wonders for the dynamic.

However, if they are someone who you don't think you could trust to be adult about the situation, find a way to speak up to them, respectfully and calmly, in a public setting or at the very least with a trusted witness.

Maybe in a team meeting they shut you down and try to embarrass you. Staying calm and pointing out that they could have gotten their point across more respectfully can do the trick.

Having people bear witness to the disrespect and holding your own to say something about it can help you feel less alone and can put them on notice in a way that won't allow them to change the facts of the situation if it's brought up again.

Lastly, if you feel the person is not only not trustworthy but also has everyone else wrapped around their finger, sometimes the best thing to do is create an exit strategy for yourself.

Network with others, find ways to create new opportunities for yourself and then make your move to get out of that situation. As I said before, do what is going to be healthiest for you.

Never believe this is the only opportunity available. You have the ability to create your own opportunities and you will meet other people who will add to your life, rather than detract from it.

Be strong, be honest with yourself, and remember to put yourself first because no one else will. Demand respect from others and you will get it. Those who fall short can keep walking.

Reach out for help when you need it and tell someone. You don't have to be in this alone, but you alone need to make the decision to change the way things are going.

No amount of fame, money, success is going to feel worth it to you if you allow yourself to feel drained and depleted by others who bring you down.

The incomparable Lisa Nichols, a celebrated motivational speaker and founder of Motivating the Masses, has a story about the day her father took her out for her first date at 12 years old, to show her how she should be treated on a date.

She explained that the lesson he taught her at the end of the evening was that, "You are the first example of what loving you looks like and the way you love you is the way the world's gonna love you."

Love yourself enough to no longer take bullshit from others who don't have your best interest at heart. There's more talent out in the world. You'll find someone else to make magic with and be successful doing so.

I know this because magical things happen when like-minded people get together in one place to support one another and encourage each other to go after what they want.

The Music-Preneur Mindset Summit is a collection of musicians who want to pursue their career in a healthier, more effective way - without the toxicity and burnout!

From September 27-29th we'll be in beautiful Long Beach, NY for a 2.5 day event at one of Long Beach's newest hot spots - Junction - with more than 20 respected industry professionals all focused on one goal - providing you with digestible information you can learn to apply that very weekend to your own career in a way that works for you.

I can now confirm a few more amazing guests - WPLJ Radio Host Roxie Digital, Wendy Parr, founder of The Artists' Circle, and Pledge Music & dotBlockchain Media co-founder Benji Rogers, will be joining our wonderful group of speakers, including ReverbNation co-founder Lou Plaia, Cyber PR's Ariel Hyatt, and Randy Nichols - manager to Underoath, The Starting Line, and tech consultant to Bandsintown and many more!

So head on over to the [show notes page](#) to find more details and purchase tickets. You can also join us via live stream, catching all of the classes, panels, and workshops inside a private FB group!

Thanks again for turning in! We have just a few more episodes left for Season 1, how did we get here already?!?

I will be taking September and October off from the podcast to focus on the Summit, my next book, and recording episodes for Season 2 which will be out in November :D So stay tuned for more on that!

You can access all Season 1 episodes of this podcast using your app of choice, including iTunes & Spotify, or by visiting www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast.

If you're looking to figure out your next steps, find time to balance everything on your plate, or learn how get the toxic out of your life, let's talk!

That email again is suz@therockstaradvocate.com.

Until next time, Rockstar! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next week so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.