



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

Ep52: Shutting Down Without Shutting Off

You're listening to Episode 52 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 52: Shutting Down Without Shutting Off](#).

I'm your host, Suz – a mindset coach helping music professionals get clear on their goals and find the time to get it all done while maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

Last week I spoke about finding that work/life balance when trying to grow your community while you network at industry events. This week I want to talk about a different kind of balance – the times when it's important to unplug altogether and go live and enjoy your life.

Whether that's a vacation to a far off land or a staycation that involves a social media detox and midday naps for no reason at all, it can be difficult to unplug and trust that the progress you've made in your career will still be right where you left it when you're ready to return.

Cause let's face it, anyone with a 9–5 knows that as long as they make their bed, put the dishes away and take out the trash before they leave for a getaway, life as they know it will be waiting for them with open arms when it's time to come back.

But for musicpreneurs that's not the case, is it?

When growing a fanbase feels like it needs constant attention and shows don't book themselves and newsletters need to stay consistent and the writing and recording deadlines are looming... you're lucky if you can turn away for a few *hours* without feeling like you're falling behind, let alone worry about the dishes being clean and put away before you take off for a few days.

When you've reached a certain level of automation and growth in your business, social media

The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast (c) 2019 The Rock/Star Advocate, LLC All Rights Reserved.

www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast

and newsletters become less of a stress and it can even be possible to make *progress* in your business while you're checked out.

But even if you're not there yet, it's still possible to hit pause and ensure those in your network who depend on you are attended to while you attend to *you*.

This past week I took a much needed time out and went with my family to Disney World. I'm lucky enough to be able to go away with them once a year at this time while my nieces are off from school.

This is the 7th year we've gone away together and each year I've gotten better at preparing for and managing the stress of unplugging from my business while we are away.

7 years ago I was still working a full-time job and had just finished my Masters, but I still had my former business that I was trying to grow for the first time without my business partner and the trip was booked as a last hurrah of sorts as it would be my dad's last trip with us before he became too sick to travel.

So trust when I tell you I understand the urge to want to be present while simultaneously stressing that being so present will come at the expense of everything falling apart career wise.

That first trip I remember making the obvious decision to be present with my family but I would work and check emails every chance I had back at the hotel while everyone was sleeping. So I was present each day and completely exhausted.

I remember one late night in the hotel lobby trying to put out a fire related to launching a new blog or something of that nature, I was so tired I've blocked most of it out.

On subsequent trips, I wouldn't make arrangements to unplug, I only made arrangements for when I would do work around the things we had planned on the vacation. It was always a "workcation" because I was the most important piece of my business and my business needed

me to function.

What I've learned in the years since is that a vacation is more than practicing being present; you should always practice being present whether you're working or out living life. A *vacation* is about completely breaking from your normal day to day and tuning out your normal responsibilities so your mind, body and soul can recharge and gain perspective. If you never completely step back from your work you'll be too attached to it to know when it needs fixing.

Over the last year or so my travel has increased and I've had some practice at refining my system of unplugging. One of my services that I offer clients is building systems for them and this is a perfect example of what I mean by a system.

Think of it like a company's operational manual. Crate and Barrel, for instance, had systems or protocols in place for when customers signed up for a store credit card, for when a customer wanted to return merchandise, for when employees needed to turnover promotional displays in the store (a system I helped improve, thank you very much), and of course a system for when an employee requested time off.

I needed to create a system of protocols that enabled me to take time off while still allowing my business to run. Because the truth is, I am ***not*** the most important part of my business, **the content I create is.**

As much as I am my brand, I'm the face of my company, the career I'm building isn't about *me*, it's about serving music professionals who want to get clear on their goals and better manage their time. Serving that community is bigger than just me and should be able to function with or without me.

As an example, a musician is their brand, right? The key to engaging fans is for the musician to share their lives and their interests with people so fans can relate to them on a deeper level. However, the ***music*** they create for their fans is the service they are providing and the music is ideally meant to live beyond the musician.

My point here is that by building a career with the mindset that your business lives and dies by your ability to be present or on call at all times will not only set you up for failure and burnout, but also limit the overall scope of success that your business/career is capable of reaching.

Think about having to perform your song live every time someone wanted to hear it. Sure, if you have literally a handful of fans you may find this approach lucrative, but I'm sure you want to grow your career to reach LOTS of fans and over time that would not be sustainable.

So how do you begin to build a system that works for you?

I always like to start with a checklist – a run down of everything that should be done in preparation for a trip or staycation. Once you have your checklist you'll need to decide how you will execute it and how everything on that list will fit into your current situation.

That second part can take some finagling until you find the right circumstances under which you work best, as everybody is motivated by different factors – some like to tackle the difficult stuff first while others like to knock off a bunch of quick easy tasks to begin – but let's start with the checklist first, and if you'd like additional support in figuring out the rest I'm happy to help!

Now in the spirit of transparency and authenticity – I haven't mastered this process. I've figured out what I've done wrong and I've made notes on how to avoid those mistakes, but it does take time to put some of this into practice if you are a master procrastinator or if travel gives you anxiety or stress; sometimes even the most detailed plans can get sidetracked when emotions run high.

This past week for instance, I had a plan before I went away with my family. And due to outside stressors I allowed my plan to get derailed and I did not get everything done in the time frame I wanted it to get done. However, as my plan was unraveling I was sure to make note of what was happening and why so that you could hopefully learn from my mistakes.

I also succeeded in one particular area – I kept *myself* from completely unraveling with my plan

because I stayed flexible and was always able to quickly identify my priorities in the moment.

Time management isn't about always sticking to a plan. It's about knowing what deserves your focus at any given time so you can take action on what matters and not waste time on what doesn't serve your goals.

Keep this in mind as you create your own plans and systems – it's not about following the plan for better or worse – it's about staying flexible and assessing what needs to take center stage.

Being an entrepreneur is messy. I like to think of it like triage at a hospital with the benefit of not actually being a matter of life or death. Last minute things will pop up, things will take longer than they should, other things will get cancelled or rescheduled, and other factors that are beyond your control will mess with your plan.

Don't let it throw you and don't let it discourage you from having a plan. A plan is something you can lean on when you need guidance and a reminder of why you're doing what you're doing. It's there to point you in the right direction even if you don't follow it to a "T."

Over time I've gone from being agitated and stressed out on vacations, always looking for the next fire to put out while letting the amazing trip I was on pass me right by to being able to be present and enjoy how fortunate I am to travel and spend time with family and when something pops up, even though I may get anxious for a quick minute, I am able to assess if it needs my attention or not, who else can take care of it for me, and (if it does need my attention) remind myself that it rarely (if ever) needs my attention this very moment.

For this last trip I just took, I realized not everything got done before take off, so I made a deal with myself to work an hour or two in the morning while the rest of the family was getting ready for the day and an hour at night after everyone turned in.

That was it. The truly time-sensitive matters were handled and all others were alerted to when I would be able to check back in. I didn't panic and I calmly managed expectations, my own included.

Over time I've added things to my checklist to account for changes in the plan, as you'll see when I go through it, so always keep that in mind – breathe deep and remind yourself to embrace the mess and keep it moving, striving to honor the *intention* of the plan you created from the start.

Now that I've gotten that confession and explanation out of the way, let's dive into how to best prepare to unplug from your business.

Feel free to take notes, but just know that this checklist can also be downloaded from the show notes. Simply go to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep52 and download it today! I've also included some bonuses like my Packing Checklist for you to download as supplemental material to the freebie.

It's now time to dig in and go through what you will need to do to unplug and focus on enjoying your idea of time off.

The first thing I like to do is about two weeks before I hit pause is check the calendar for all upcoming deadlines in the next two weeks. Which are hard deadlines and which are self-inflicted? Which ones, if any need to be rescheduled or delegated?

The other week I had planned to make time to dive into my Google Analytics and learn more about SEO rankings. The trip was fast approaching and other projects were beginning to pile up. Familiarizing myself with Google Analytics is not something that really expires, and it's also not something I'm really crazy about doing – so I delegated it :)

I wrote a list of things I wanted to track and have set up in Google Analytics and I asked my assistant to handle it while I was out of town. Great. Off the list!

I continued to go through my list and make note of what absolutely had to get done before V-Day. I also made note of bills that were due, subscriptions that I might want to pause, and content I may want to batch and schedule ahead of time.

Oftentimes weekly content like a newsletter or podcast episode {ahem} don't have due dates on our calendar but you don't want to forget that this regularly-scheduled content needs to be considered.

Side note: I started to batch this episode with others, but then as my plan unraveled I figured I might as well see just how far off course I go and report back with full lessons learned at the end of my trip.

Anyways, after that, I took the top priority/time-sensitive projects and broke them down into microtasks – my favorite! Once I was able to see that a bunch of graphics were needed for multiple projects or multiple people needed follow ups via email or numerous spreadsheets needed to be updated I had a clearer picture of how much time it would take me.

Next, after breaking things down I was also able to schedule in blocks of time into my last week before I went away to batch and tackle many of these tasks. Emails were a block of time, I knocked out the graphics in one sitting, newsletter content was it's own block, etc.

Another thing that is on my Journey to Unplugsville checklist is reaching out to high priority contacts a week before I leave to let them know my plans. This was something I started to implement recently as I've found it allows for a much smoother transition, it manages people's expectations and it helps avoid unforeseen pop-up projects.

Who do I mean by "high priority contacts"? These would be any client (or possibly in your case, super fan), active collaborator, and work for hire contacts. You owe it to them to share when you're unavailable so that *they* can create their own plan accordingly.

For example, I run a monthly subscription service for group consulting. Music professionals pay a monthly fee to have weekly access to me and I provide weekly accountability. It would not be fair to me to steal a 1/4 of their month from them, so I could either make the time to stay in touch while I was away or ask them if they'd like to pause their account.

I decided I would carve out time in the mornings to be available for a quick check in so I alerted them of the trip but made myself available as needed during that time frame. I did not schedule additional calls or take on new clients, but I honored my relationship with the clients I was currently serving.

I'll admit this past trip I kinda fell behind on reaching out to everyone I should have reached out to and I did end up having to attend to a few things that popped up, as I felt it necessary to make an exception to two people who were not given notice of my leave ahead of time.

So, as I said, I carved out a limited block of time to attend to those more time-sensitive matters and maintain the trust built in these important relationships.

If you run a Patreon account and plan to go on an extended Internet detox or trip that would prevent you from upholding your end of the deal with your super fans who pay monthly to get regular content from you, make sure you plan in advance to schedule messages to them or reach out to them and let them know additional content will be delivered the following month.

When people are investing their time and/or money in you it's important you take the proper care necessary to manage their expectations and let them know if anything in your current relationship is changing.

This goes along with the first few items on the checklist, but I thought it was best to make it it's own line item – social media.

It's important to take some time and schedule a few posts to go out while you're away. If you're someone who like to document your travels and you don't feel the need for a social media detox, by all means do it in real time. However, when I've managed to take the time to do this it's been a HUGE relief to know that content is getting out there on a consistent basis and I don't have to think about what's going on in cyberland.

I've taken pics this week – and I can recap about my trip when I sign back on or save them for throwback pics.

Again, this was something I wish I did more of this go-round, as it felt so good when I did it in the past. However it wasn't a huge inconvenience as being on your phone is unfortunately pretty standard for most people when there's time to kill so while we were on the bus headed somewhere or waiting for our meal I took a few moments to check in and share some thoughts.

I also include on this checklist a few things NOT to do so I don't fall into the trap of bad habits.

One of those major don'ts is Don't Schedule a Launch While You're Away. If the trip or detox was a last minute decision, MOVE YOUR DATES. Do NOT ever ever ever schedule the launch of a release or website or product or service while you're away. You will NEVER feel at peace.

Go away AFTER the launch or a bit beforehand, like a babymoon, but never during. Take it from someone who thought launching a new blog wouldn't be a big deal while going on a very special trip with her family.

I had other people involved and I was too stubborn to ask that the date be moved {mind you there was barely a following for my content at the time} and I stressed about it most waking hours while I was away.

Never again.

Another don't – Don't assume you'll get it all done to and from your destination. I was surprisingly productive during my plane rides this trip – but I've banked on that time in the past and it backfired horribly.

On a normal day being on a train or bus can be a great time to knock out a few small yet important tasks. However, traveling for a trip is much different. Emotions run higher, stress levels increase, and you're focused on so many different variables, your energy will be drained much more quickly than if it were just another day traveling to work.

Don't schedule work to be done during this time. If you choose to work, fine, but if you NEED to work and you end up falling asleep – you'll wake up more stressed than you were when you began your travels.

Even sitting can be exhausting when you're vacation-bound, so don't overdo it.

A final don't – don't schedule anything for work the day before you leave for a vacation. If you're only doing a digital detox and you have no where to travel to, that's one thing. But if you're preparing to go on a plane, train or automobile somewhere for an extended stay do NOT schedule any work for the day before because it will inevitably get eaten up with last minute personal errands.

When you make a list of everything that has to be done the final two weeks before you leave, and you break down those tasks, do not count that day before your trip as time you can assign those tasks. Be more conservative with how much time you have left and maybe reschedule and delegate some of those other projects you were planning on finishing if they're not super urgent.

Things will almost always take you longer than expected so don't overbook yourself. I've done that plenty of times and that's still something I'm trying to get better at. Don't believe me? Take a listen to [Episode 4: WTF Are My Pants?!?](#) And you'll hear all about how I tend to overextend myself.

Lastly on my list when preparing for a trip {besides, obviously packing and running personal errands} is to create a value-packed auto-reply message for emails and make sure you add an extra day to your trip.

I often fall into the trap of wanting to wow people with my commitment to getting them what they need and I don't take time to ask myself what I need.

Last year I decided to create an auto-reply email to alert people that I received their email but would not be getting back to them until [enter date here] and I made that date the day AFTER

I'm already back home.

This is a great way to keep your business going while you hit pause. In the email I direct them to check out a recent piece of content and/or to schedule a call with me for when I'm back.

Many people contact me with similar concerns, so by including a link to something that might be able to answer their question while I'm gone is valuable and allows me to feel that my community is being served even when I'm not checking email 3x/day.

I forget exactly whose model I learned this from, so thank you whoever you are! To pay it forward I've included an example of the email I used while I was away this week so you can use it to structure your own email with your own content when you need to head out of town.

You can find the example included in the freebie download I've provided in the show notes.

If you'd like the full checklist I just went through, a copy of my ever-popular Packing Checklist {which you can usually only access by purchasing the 2019 Rock/Star Life Planner} AND a copy of my recent auto-reply email head on over to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep52 and download it!

You'll also find on that page an announcement that February = FREE SHIPPING on The 2019 Rock/Star Life Planner. It's not too late to get yours and start your journey to ROCK your 2019!

As always, I thank you for listening and I'm here if you have any questions. If you're looking to figure out your next steps, find time to balance everything on your plate, or prepare for your next self-care getaway, let's talk!

Email me at anytime: 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.