



# The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

## Ep59: The Power of Decision Fatigue

You're listening to Episode 59 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 59: The Power of Decision Fatigue](#).

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.

There are times when we *have* the time to get it all done but we sit doing nothing, exhausted for a reason completely unknown to us. We don't have to have run a marathon or been out on the road doing shows 3 weeks straight to explain our exhaustion, although that sometimes is the case.

Being an entrepreneur of any kind takes a lot of mental energy and some days are more depleting than others.

Unlike your friends who may have a "normal" 9-5 job where they show up and are told what to do, how to do it, and when to have it done by, you're growing your own business, creating your own product {your music}, and are responsible for all the decisions that go with it.

That includes deciding the lyrics and arrangements of the songs, deciding who engineers, mixes and masters the songs {and, if that person is you, what levels each track will be and what plugins will be used}, when the songs will be released, on what platforms, how the cover photos should look, what fonts and colors are used, who to reach out to for PR, what to write in the email when you reach out them.... I haven't even begun to scratch the surface.

You not only have to do the work, you have to invent what work there is to be done before

you even carry out the tasks involved. And then you have to decide when and how to begin again. It's never-ending.

Take me for example.

This month, May, is Mental Health Awareness Month. My first instinct was to hit the ground running and be all over social media with self-care tips, mental health resources, I had a bunch of podcast episodes lined up to cover various topics... and then came the decisions.

On top of deciding what episodes to record and produce and in what order, deciding what gets written on social media, what the newsletter will say, what call to action the subject lines of those newsletters will have, the time of day to release the episodes and posts and what the images should be on each platform...

I'm currently having a Tiny House built for me to move into come September, finishing up the 2020 Rock/Star Life Planner for a fall release, and preparing for the 2019 Music-Preneur Mindset Summit in Long Beach, NY this September.

Every single one of those things requires me to make every. single. decision in their execution. The buck stops with me on all of those projects. Not to mention my clients who I work with to help make decisions in their careers.

I haven't bought groceries in over a month. The thought of going to a super market and even with a list, choosing between twelve options of pasta sauce or how much meat to purchase and then deciding how much to freeze ahead of time... No. Just no.

I've been making the same sandwiches and having the same bowls of cereal on repeat each day because I can't make another decision about anything.

I've managed to see friends to catch up with them and God bless whoever has the courage to ask me where we should meet up. I DON'T KNOW! JUST TELL ME WHERE TO BE! Tell me what time... hell tell me what to wear and what mode of transportation to use because I am done.

Not to sound ungrateful, I am soooo blessed to be able to have this life that I've built for myself. I LOVE being an entrepreneur in the music industry. But, sometimes the amount of decisions needing to be made are too many and my brain just stops working.

So in the spirit of Mental Health Awareness Month, I took a few weeks off to reflect and start automating and delegating some of the decision making that was going on in the different areas of my life.

Was it easy? NO! I still constantly worried that hitting pause on any of my projects or prior commitments was going to cause me to lose momentum, lose followers, lose the attention of people who maybe wanted to work with me - but I could only do so much.

Again, it wasn't the amount of work or the time it took to do it all, but rather the mental energy certain projects took that completely left me braindead once they were done.

I look forward to sharing more about my Tiny House in the coming months, but for now all I'll say is that I'm so relieved the decisions are all done being made - the colors, fabrics, and materials have been chosen and now it's up to a bunch of other talented people to turn it into a reality.

I'm so thrilled for this new chapter and it felt great to control every aspect of what I want my new dream digs to look like, but as the name of this episode suggests - the power of decision fatigue is REAL and it is a bitch.

So many times I sat down to prep a podcast episode or a blog post or even an Insta-story and the thoughts of "When should I post? What should I say? Who should I tag? Whose posts should I leave comments on and engage with today?" were all too much and I'd sit and just stare at my phone.

I had already planned a while ago to touch upon decision fatigue and how it affects all of us, but I realized during these last few weeks I didn't truly understand how to combat and/or manage it.

I knew there was more to it than just being tired from making choices. Because sometimes I

noticed I'd be fine firing off choices about certain things and I'd actually feel invigorated and empowered. I knew my tendency to want to control the situation was fed by that, so it's not like I hated making decisions - what was the tipping point?

I've been working on a book for a while now, dragging my feet because... decisions, but the book itself is about why musicians drag their feet when it comes to calling their own shots in their careers.

My entire adult life in this industry all I ever hear from artists when they discuss their biggest hangups is, "Ugh can't you just do it for me? Can't a manager just do it? If I just had a label to do it for me all my problems would be solved."

And I couldn't understand how they could so easily give up control of their career like that when this is their dream they're going after. So I was writing a book to help empower them to make more decisions on their own.

And I'm still going to, but now I have a better understanding of why we sometimes get to that point. I have a new understanding of why, even when it's something we reeeallly care about, we're willing to let someone else take the reins for a bit.

I recently read a New York Times article that was from back in 2011. It's called, ["Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?"](#)

In it the author, John Tierney explains, "No matter how rational and high-minded you try to be, you can't make decision after decision without paying a biological price... The more choices you make throughout the day, the harder each one becomes for your brain, and eventually [the brain] looks for shortcuts."

He goes onto describe the two main ways we take that shortcut - through reckless abandon #poorchoices and/or inactivity #donothing. He also noted that once we hit our level of decision fatigue we are quicker to look for whatever someone else recommends.

Much like me going to a restaurant with my friends and just asking the waiter/tress to suggest what I should order, musicians reach a point where they just want someone who



may know more than them to tell them what to do. Rather than sit and weigh the options about what's best for their specific situation, they're resigned to leave it to someone else to call the shots.

He ends the article by saying, "...people with the best self-control are the ones who structure their lives so as to conserve willpower. They don't schedule endless back-to-back meetings. They avoid temptations like all-you-can-eat buffets, and they establish habits that eliminate the mental effort of making choices."

The article also breaks down the different ways we become fatigued mentally. As I said it's not just the amount of decisions we make, but rather the types of decisions we're making {i.e. how complex they are}, our body's level of glucose and the time of day it is that affect our brain's depletion of energy.

I've spoken many times on and off this podcast about our Productivity Rhythm. Rather than assume we're all prime candidates for the 5 a.m. Club, many creatives tend to have better focus at other times of the day or night that are not part of the early morning, no matter how hard they try.

I, too, am one of those people. If you are a morning person, don't leave tasks that require focused decision making for later in the day. For me, nothing good has come from decisions I've made before 9 a.m.

That's because, for me, I'm not focused, I'm not warmed up, and I'm not 100% aware of what's going on - trust me it's not contingent on when I go to bed, I've tested it. My productivity rhythm is just not that of a morning person.

For many that 2 p.m. slump comes where they need to take a break from work and get a snack or get up and stretch. That's a prime example of when you would NOT want to be trying to focus signing a contract or negotiating important factors on a project.

I know I'm best at making tough or complex decisions when it's later at night, the world around me is resting and I'm relaxed and warmed up from the day. Not too late into the early morning, but late evening when there's less going on around me I feel very focused.

I'm able to quiet my mind and my body has energy stored up to use as I usually eat a late dinner before going back into my work.

It's taken me some time, but after a few bad decisions here and there I've come to realize my own productivity rhythm. We all have it, so be sure to start taking note of yours if you haven't already.

I've included a worksheet for tracking your focus in this week's free download, so be sure to visit the show notes to download it.

The other part of conserving your energy when it comes to making decisions is limiting your options and/or taking away a lot of the guesswork.

Options are great until they're debilitating.

When I first started working on designing the Tiny House I was filled with anxiety when it came to choosing a color scheme for the paint. There are so many options out there. The designer helped me by limiting the options I had to look at.

She explained to me, "We're going to only choose from these color families, since that's what you seem to be drawn to and we're going to keep it in these shades or lighter, as anything darker will make an already tiny space feel smaller."

That narrowed it down a bunch and we then decided to first choose the color of the countertops, since those were a large focal point, and then everything else would be colors that were complimentary to that choice.

The point of this story is start small and start with the easy decisions first. Limit your options as much as possible and decide what pieces of a more complex decision can be delegated to someone else or broken down into easier decisions.

In addition to making sure you're making important decisions on a full stomach and during a time of day where you're more focused, you need to get used to breaking things down into digestible scenarios and moving things off your plate by delegating to others.

This is different, mind you, from throwing up your hands and begging someone to manage your career so you don't have to make any decisions.

This is about taking inventory and understanding when it's best to step back from certain decisions and use your deciding power to choose the person who will do the research and reflection involved in the complexity of choices, coming back to you with a well-thought-out set of options to choose from without much mental anguish.

For example, while planning the Summit for this September there are a lot of new ideas I've had and rather than painstakingly anguish over which ideas to move forward on, I've delegated tasks to my assistant so she can research further into all of the pros and cons and then based on her best educated guesses and decisions come to me with a whittled down list of best options and scenarios.

Tierney also quotes social psychologist Roy F. Baumeister in his article saying, "The best decision makers are the ones who know when *not* to trust themselves."

Another great way to take better stock of the decisions on your plate is to create a structure to better automate certain choices. Again, limit your options.

Recently I've been overwhelmed with how to rollout certain ideas and topics online through social media. I was getting too bogged down with decisions to make on each and every platform and through each and every medium - graphics, blog posts, videos, podcasting, etc.

So, I decided which ONE piece of content would determine the direction of the other content, in essence automating the decisions for the other platforms.

I would first decide what podcast episodes I wanted to make and then I'd let those episodes dictate the topics I wrote about for blogs, the images I created for social media, and the way I integrated my promotions into that content.

Done.

Now instead of deciding on 10 different content-centered pieces of my business I make a decision about 1 of them and it then dictates how the other pieces are decided.

If you're still stuck on how to get certain decisions off your plate without being 100% reckless or inactive, this week's free download ALSO includes a decision map I made last year.

It's helped me and other clients cut to the chase and cut through the white noise of decision overwhelm and fatigue.

Give it a shot! Head on over to [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep59](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep59) and download your Productivity Rhythm Tracker and Decision Map today and start conserving that mental energy!

And, as I briefly mentioned this earlier, the Music-Preneur Mindset Summit, the event that launched this very podcast, has been booked for this year!

It will be hosted in Long Beach, NY from Thursday, Sept 26 - Saturday, Sept 28. If attending {whether in person or virtually through our private Facebook Group} is an easy decision for you, then as a reward I'm offering pre-sale tickets for \$25 NOW until Sunday, May 19, at Midnight EST.

More details will be released next week and in the coming weeks after that, but if attending this event is a hard YES for you, take advantage of this super low cost today, as it will go up to \$47 on Monday and up from there as we get closer to the event.

Simply go to the show notes to find the link and purchase your pre-sale ticket today! That's [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep59](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep59).

As always, I thank you for listening and I'm here if you have any questions. Email me at anytime: [suz@therockstaradvocate.com](mailto: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.

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