



5 Extremely Common Mistakes Slowing Musicians' Growth to a Grinding Halt

**...and how to fix them before they cost you many years of wasted
energy, embarrassment and heartbreak.**

**THE
MUSIC
MENTOR**



Introduction

Most musicians don't fail because of a lack of talent.

They fail because of hidden traps rooted in comfort, insecurity, ego and/or impatience.

This guide will break down the 5 biggest mistakes that silently kill careers, explain the psychology behind them and show you how to fix them so you can grow faster, smarter and with more confidence.

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Mistake 1:

Treating Music Like a Hobby

(Root Cause: Comfort)
The hard truth?

Labels, managers, fans - nobody will take your music more seriously than you do.

If it looks like a hobby from the outside, that's all it will ever be.

Why This Holds You Back.

- **Comfort feels safe, but it keeps you small.**
- **Without consistency, there's no momentum.**
- **Hobby thinking = hobby results.**

■ **I've known far more people work like this than take it seriously!**

They WANT it seriously!

But they don't TREAT it seriously!

You don't have to have a straight face all day (if you've seen me @thescouseness you know I like a joke).

But notice... I turn up every day.

And I spent the rest of the day as a professional songwriter AND helping other artists AND going to the gym AND caring for my terminally ill Auntie.

Yeah it's hard sometimes.

I still do it.

The Fix

Start treating your music like a business - even if it's a small one.

- **Show up on time.**
- **Track progress (followers, streams, gigs).**
- **Think long-term (how today's actions compound tomorrow).**
- **Be disciplined even when you're not motivated.**

Quick Exercise

Write down 3 actions this week that would make you feel like a professional, not a hobbyist.

1.

2.

3.

Mistake 2:

Hiding Behind Perfectionism

(Root Cause: Insecurity)

Endless tweaking, rewriting, or re-recording feels like you're aiming high but it's usually fear of judgment in disguise.

"It's not ready yet" is often code for "I'm scared of what people will think."

Why This Holds You Back

- **Perfectionism delays progress — the song never gets finished.**
- **Without a finished version, you can't get meaningful feedback.**
- **It feels like progress, but it's really procrastination.**

■ There's a difference between sitting on tracks while you grow an audience and sitting on tracks dreaming about A&R; from Polydor suddenly knocking on your door.

Don't WAIT for it to happen...

It never will.

MAKE IT HAPPEN!

The Fix

Focus on finishing, not perfecting.

Growth comes from completed projects you can learn from, not endless tweaking.

- **Give yourself deadlines.**
- **Finish the work to the best of your current ability.**
- **Share it with trusted peers, mentors, or even a small audience online to get real feedback.**

It doesn't mean release everything officially!

In fact releasing before you have all your ducks in a row is one of the worst things you can do.

But you can share with hundreds and thousands using social media and create demand with just a 30 second clip.

Quick Exercise

Pick one unfinished project and commit to finishing it within the next 30 days.

Once it's done, get feedback from 3 trusted people instead of tweaking forever.

Mistake 3:

Releasing the Wrong Way

(Root Cause: Misinformation, Ego and/or Impatience)

A lot of artists get this backwards.

- **Some hide behind perfectionism and never release.**
- **Others rush into “official” releases too soon — before the music is ready, before there’s an audience and before anyone’s asking for it.**

Both approaches kill momentum.

Why This Holds You Back

- **Releasing too late = nobody ever hears your music.**
 - **Releasing too soon = your songs get buried because there’s no demand.**
 - **Either way, you miss the chance to build real anticipation and connection.**
- **So many artists released music on Spotify to 0 listeners (over 50% of all releases!) that Spotify actually stopped paying anyone until they had over 1000 listens.**

It just wasn’t worth anyone’s time or money to pay an ego project the 34p it earned by releasing into the ether to no one.

The Fix

Not every release has to be “official.”

Social media is your testing ground — post snippets, demos, or live versions to gauge response.

The songs that connect there are the ones worth polishing and putting out properly.

- **Test ideas in public.**
- **Double down on what connects.**
- **Save your “official release” for when there’s real demand.**

Quick Exercise

Pick one unreleased track you’ve been sitting on.

Post a 30-second snippet this week and watch the response.

Mistake 4:

Avoiding Marketing / Audience Building

(Root Cause: Insecurity)

“I just want the music to speak for itself.” Sounds noble, but usually it’s fear of being seen or rejected.

Marketing isn’t bragging — it’s connection.

Why This Holds You Back

- **Without an audience, your music has no impact.**
- **Hiding feels safe, but it starves your career.**
- **Waiting for “organic discovery” = wasting years.**

■ **In a recent conversation with A&R; at Atlantic Records I was told by them that it doesn’t REALLY matter what they think of the music.**

They have their own personal tastes but why would they invest in something with no audience?

The Fix

Reframe marketing as storytelling, not selling.

- **Share your journey, not just your songs.**
- **Let people connect with you as much as the music.**
- **Consistency beats one-off “viral” moments.**

Quick Exercise

Write down 3 non-musical things about yourself you could share this week to let fans connect with the person behind the music.

1.

2.

3.

Mistake 5: Not Building a Fan Funnel (Root Cause: Lack of knowledge / comfort zone)

Most artists chase playlists or viral moments instead of building a real fan funnel that turns strangers → fans → supporters.

Why This Holds You Back

- **Streams without connection = no loyalty.**
- **You're always starting from zero.**
- **A fan funnel compounds over time but most never build it.**

■ We've all heard about the Island Boys... need I say more?

The Fix

Think of your fan journey like a funnel:

- **Awareness → They see you (socials, gigs, content).**
- **Connection → They engage (DMs, comments, lives).**
- **Support → They buy, share, and show up.**

Quick Exercise

Sketch your own fan funnel.

Where are people first finding you?

How are you moving them deeper into connection and support?

Summary

Growth doesn't have to come from luck.

It comes from avoiding these traps:

- **Don't treat music like a hobby.**
- **Don't hide behind perfectionism.**
- **Don't release the wrong way.**
- **Don't avoid marketing.**
- **Build a fan funnel.**

Don't just show up and do the bare minimum you think you can "get away with."

Do all you can do every day so you make it impossible to fail.

You don't have to figure this out alone.

A mentor gives you clarity, accountability and shortcuts so you don't waste years guessing.

■ **If you're serious about growing your audience and turning your music career into something real, apply now at**

themusicmentor.co.uk

