



Dealing With Frustration & Anxiety.

Control the controllable. Tips to ensure you are in the best frame of mind to create.

Working in the creative realm can often come with its fair share of challenges. Generally when you're starting out, working in a creative field is often a side hustle with the dream of eventually creating financial stability.

Sustainability in art is unpredictable, you can be on top of the world one day, and uncertain and unsure the next. There is no one size fits all measurement to grow in music, hence the heavily emotive behaviours creatives have to work through. What starts off as a passion project, full of inspiration and ambition, can quite often turn into feelings of fear, anxiety and frustration due to a variety of factors including but not limited to; lack of resources, time management, comparisons to others, confusion around industry best practices, a feeling of entitlement because what you do deserves recognition etc.

Firstly, it's important to acknowledge that as a creative there is no escaping these feelings. You will at some point feel anxious or frustrated & those feelings only compound as you develop due to the demands and standards you have for your project. Following that, it is important to understand that it is OK to feel that way, what is not productive, is letting these emotions dictate your actions regarding your project.

"Anxiety is a psychological, physiological, and behavioral state induced in humans by a threat to well-being or survival, either actual or potential. It is characterized by increased arousal, expectancy, autonomic and neuroendocrine activation, and specific behavior patterns. The function of these changes is to facilitate coping with an adverse or unexpected situation."

- Thierry Steimer (Clinical Psychopharmacology Unit, Geneva University Hospital, Chêne-Bourg, Switzerland)

Learning to deal with negative thoughts, opinions and feelings will forever be about education and accountability. There is no magic pill or mantra that will allow you to just always be positive and feel like you're constantly developing, there will be rough days and you will at times feel stuck. With that being said we do believe that it is vital for artists and creatives to learn ways to cope with these feelings.

Below we have listed 3 ways that have worked for us (both in developing sustainable artist projects and Cartel as a business). We must stress that this is simply what has helped with us and has no basis in the

medical field. (We are not doctors)

1. **Consistency / Adapt.**

In every article we put out we reference consistency at least once. Creating a back catalogue of music that you 'intend to release' is paramount for not only yourself but the industry and fanbase you wish to connect with. Working 3-4 (sometimes even more) songs ahead allows you to remain consistent at the forefront of your brand; i.e. releasing a lot of quality over a short period of time will keep social media profiles active and relevant, while in the backend you have time to create the next wave of music to follow.

In terms of how to navigate this with your emotions, having a clear understanding of what your long term vision looks like allows you to measurably see the growth of your project, no matter how big or small that may be. Linking a tangible action and building processes around those actions allows you to unconsciously feel as though you are moving forward with your project. The most unproductive feeling as a creative is sitting in front of your computer, not knowing what to do next, which can lead to negative feelings or comparison.

2. **Don't compare yourself to others.**

Most artists and creatives (ourselves included) have been guilty of comparing the merits of an individual project to another. Sometimes, it is a positive reinforcement and actually pushes you to a positive action to develop but more often than not and for the context of our article, comparing your project to others can very often lead to igniting ego & expectation in yourself.

"How on earth did X artist get that?"

"Why does X artist get to be the support act on that tour?, it should have been me"

"Why is Spotify backing this band?, they suck compared to us and still get play-listed"

Social comparison in a negative sense can be debilitating for an independent artist without the right support network. It is important to understand that an egotistical emotion / behaviour and an inability of action due to that behaviour is ultimately crippling for your project. Again, comparing yourself to others will happen, and it isn't as though we can just say stop and everything will be fine. Instead, understanding that you are in fact comparing to others and understanding what positive action can come from that.

Often artists put down the achievements of other artists as luck and in our experience that is absolutely not true. More often than not, that "lucky" artist has had backing by a certain industry, has developed into that point over a period of time, or has ticked the certain box that pertains to that specific achievement. When you do compare, look to break down your comparisons and instead of allowing your ego to run wild, adapt to the situation and understand the viable actions around that comparison. This allows you to not only educate yourself around the industry but also push you to actually develop into areas you need to grow in.

Original Thought: "How on earth did X artist get that?"

Positive Action: "X artist got this, I'm going to research the actions that led them to achieve this"

Original: "Why does X artist get to be the support act on that tour?, it should have been me"

Positive Action: "Who books this tour, I will endeavour to grow my relationship with the booking agent / management team of the headliner"

Original: "Why is Spotify backing this band?, they suck compared to us and still get play-listed"

Positive Action: "I cannot control editorial playlisting, but I can control how many independent curators I can hit up. This will put me in a better position to gain more consistent editorial playlisting down the track" (More information in our [Getting Playlists](#) Article)

"Social comparison not only plays a role in the judgments that people make about themselves but also in the way that people behave. As you compare yourself to others, consider how both upward and downward social comparison might influence your self-belief, confidence, motivation, and attitude, and watch out for negative feelings that might emerge as a result of this process." - Kendra Perry ([Social Comparison Theory in Psychology](#))

3. Plan your time (value education and recovery).

Ultimately, your passion project is as successful as the time that you put into it. If you are putting minimal time in and your expectation is to grow rapidly, then you are creating a situation where only frustration and anxiety can fester. In one of our previous articles: [You are wasting hours in the day. \(Time is your best asset\)](#) we have broken down a stock standard 24 hour day. Within a day prioritising sleep and actual time for your project while still living a life and operating as a member of society.

With planning your time for studio & admin etc, a small portion should be focussed on educating yourself. For us, it is educating ourselves on parts of the industry we do not understand. This allows planning for growth, within the best practice of the industry but also gives you an understanding of how the industry actually operates professionally, allowing you to seek opportunities that fit as well as create actions to viably grow, which takes your ego out of the equation. There is always more to learn and always more than one way of doing a task.

One major theme behind this article is to actually acknowledge when fear, anxiety and frustration is there. With that, having an ecosystem of support around you to lean on when you are feeling this way is so important. You are not alone, it is ok to feel these emotions and there is always someone willing to help. If you are feeling these things and are struggling to find your way to a more positive position feel free to get in contact with us. info@cartelmanagementaus.com or with someone who makes you feel comfortable and understands what you are feeling.