

Ep #1: How to Develop a Creative Mindset



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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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There was a time when selling a painting, one of my own paintings, for \$25,000 was what seemed like an impossible dream for me. It seemed like maybe something my future self, 25 years out could accomplish, but at the time I did this, \$25,000 was a full \$21,500 more than I'd ever sold an original piece of work for before. And it was just three years after I'd started selling paintings at all.

My first painting had sold three years earlier for \$1,200, which, at that time, had seemed like an impossible dream. So \$25K, I just decided that, if I really believe in the power of belief, that I was going to go for it.

You are listening to *The Art School Podcast*, a show for artists and creatives who want to become the next greatest version of themselves. Learn how to cultivate an extraordinary way of being and take the mystery out of making money, and the struggle out of making art. Here is your host, master certified life coach, artist, and former lawyer, Leah Badertscher.

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the very first episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I'm really excited to be here. I have been thinking about creating this podcast for a long time. And now that I'm doing it, I'm even more stoked to think about you out there listening in, so thank you so much for that.

And I know we've just met and it is probably standard podcast protocol to give you an introduction to me and my coaching work and what *The Art School* is and what this podcast is all about. And I will do that, and I also want to cut to the chase and dive in, right in, to the topic today, because I'm guessing you're here because you want to learn something and I want to make sure that you leave with something really useful.

So, I think the best way to do that will be for me to sprinkle in a little bit about myself as we go in today's episode and in future podcast episodes, and about my coaching work because, I think, diving into the topic too is

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going to be what gives you as good a sense as anything about what my coaching work is all about and about who I am.

I also would love it if you would write in and tell me about you and your challenges and your dreams and visions and anything that you'd love to hear from me, any coaching you'd love to hear, and I'll use that as topics for future *Art School Podcast* episodes.

So before we do get any further today, I think it would be really helpful for you to know that I got into coaching, then became certified as a life coach, then master life coach, and started *The Art School* because I am just in love with creativity, with coaching and with this work of changing the paradigm of what is possible for so many more artists, creatives, and really, for anyone with a big beautiful impossible-seeming dream; for anyone that's really willing to open themselves up to their creativity and to the creative process in order to make that dream a reality.

I really love to work with these kinds of people and help them not only create that vision, but also to help them create extraordinary lives along the way. Because there can be the art that we work on and the greater impact and more money for yourselves and for your families and your contribution and the career things, but if we don't look at that within the context of our whole lives and ourselves as full robust whole human beings, then I think we miss the point.

So where I think the most powerful work is really is working with my clients to cultivate extraordinary lives along the way to creating exactly what they want to create. This is what I do in my private practice, and this is what I do with my students in *The Art School*.

And while I've been inspired by so many teachers and mentors, coaches, and also creatives, artists of past and present, there is one quote in particular from the American painter, Robert Henri. And what he said was

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this, “The object isn’t to make art, the object is to be in that state of being which makes art inevitable.”

And I just love that because I think you can extrapolate from that and apply that to all of life and not just art. And that’s what I think is the fundamental power of the creative process; that you can apply it to all of life.

And this is what I talk a lot about to my clients, about cultivating an extraordinary way of being that makes extraordinary results inevitable. And so this is what I wanted to make available to you as well through this podcast.

Then, there is another reason I am so passionate about this work, and that’s because I believe a really powerful implication of empowering artists and creatives and visionaries and leaders is that when these people are empowered, they create really powerful healing and positive change. These creatives, when empowered, are potent medicine and are change agents in their families, in their work environments, through their art, in their communities. And eventually, those ripples lead out to the whole world.

No one says this better, I think, than one of my favorite poets, Mary Oliver. In her book of essays, *Upstream*, she writes, “In creative work, creative work of all kinds, those who are the world’s working artists are not trying to help the world go around, but forward.”

I really believe this is true, and I believe you can take it even further by adding that those who are artists include those who are working on making possible what currently seems like an impossible dream. It’s these kinds of people, visionaries – the ordinary among us are visionaries, I believe, who are then rolling up their sleeves, being courageous, daring, risking, and going for it.

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And when they do this, they make their own lives and the entire world move forward. But how do they do it? That's what my clients ask as soon as we have gotten past the point where they were discounting their dreams or apologizing for them.

So once we get them to the point where they're no longer dismissing or discounting their dreams and they're now honoring them and taking them seriously, and we can still have fun and be serious, they want to know how. So the answer to this is the best kind, everybody's favorite kind of former lawyer turned life coach blend; it depends.

Which is true though, there are as many paths as there are people. And I don't think we get to know the way. I think we get to live into the way. And it's also true that there really is no end; fortunately for us coaches. But it's the beauty of the process and the mystery of the process in life, that there really is no end to the coaching that creating impossible dreams brings up for people, myself included.

However, that being said, there are also universal tools, practices, wisdom, information, things we know from people who have gone before us that can help us, I know, change anyone's life and help them to be empowered to be able to create exactly what they want.

So, what I want to do today is focus on four of those things; four things that have been some of the most powerful and effective in my own life and my own creative journey, and in the lives of my clients. I want to preface these points by saying that they all do fall beneath the same umbrella of adopting and cultivating a creative mindset.

And when I'm talking about a creative mindset, I'm talking about a way of thinking that is intentional, on purpose, powerful, and is premised on accepting full responsibility for your experience in life. And I think the creative mindset can sometimes be even better understood and seen more

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clearly when we contrast it to the opposite. Which tends to be an unfortunate default for the human brain and can continue that way if we're not taught otherwise and not taught how to use this powerful tool that is our mind, and that is a reactive mindset.

So same letters, creative and reactive, different order, and produces a very different order in our reality. The reactive mindset is a way of thinking that tends to be very undisciplined, it's unintentional. I think it's helpful to even think of it as being lazy and indulgent even, just to help us get a handle on the attention and focus and effort that's required to shift that to a creative mindset. And the reactive mindset is largely premised on the belief that your life is determined largely by external circumstances, by things that are beyond your control.

So, three keys to developing a creative mindset, and the three main points in today's impossible dreams, how to do it manual are, number one, that you really understand that the true meaning of decision, as it applies to the creative mindset and impossible dreams, is defined as a commitment and not a wish.

So think of committing to your creative dreams like getting married. Getting married is not going to the altar and, like, "Well we wish that we stick it out through thick and thin, good times and bad, no matter what."

A commitment is rooted in the Latin root of the meaning of decision, which is to cut off from; to cut off from all other possibilities. It's the burning of the boats. It's making yourself unavailable for any other destiny, except the one where you are living your dream. That's what decision means when you're talking about deciding on your creative dream. And it's a point that I'll return to in upcoming episodes and we'll talk more then about how developing decision and commitment as a skill and as a muscle will make you unstoppable.

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The second idea I want to offer you today is that if you want to create your impossible dream, if you're really wanting to become a creative force of nature and someone who does exactly what she says she's going to do and creates exactly what he wants, then you're going to need to assume full responsibility for your life. And this will require that you develop the skills of, one, managing your thinking, and two, managing and processing your emotions, and that, three, you own that these things, your thinking and your emotions, are creating so much of your experience of life.

So committing to an impossible dream will ask that you grow and evolve. And in order to evolve, you're going to have to learn how to develop more mastery of your thinking and emotions, rather than being at their mercy, rather than proceeding on a default.

So I don't know if you've ever heard this saying, "The mind is a terrible master, but a wonderful servant." In order to achieve an impossible dream in a way that is good for all of your life and all of the other people who are around you in your life, you're going to have to learn to be that wonderful servant master. You're both.

Otherwise, not doing that is not making full use of the impossible dream, of the invitation. It's not making full use of the astounding miraculous gift of your brain, of your emotions, and it's not making full use of your life.

So this is a lot of the work that we do in coaching, because a creative mind is a really beautiful thing, but an untrained mind, any kind of mind – even one with creative tendencies – cannot even come close to touching what a creative mind can create when you have that creative mind and you've cultivated a way of thinking that is intentional and is so powerfully absolutely, or more than not, aligned with your highest intentions and with that vision, with that impossible dream.

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So set another way you want your creative mind to work for you and your dream, not against you. I have a lot of clients who come to me and they are so brilliant. But to them, their brilliance and their gifts can feel like a double-edged sword. So getting to the place where you are the master of your mind and it is a wonderful servant and the relationship is loving and friendly and boundaries are in place and it's creative and productive in the best possible ways – getting that to happen is where coaching is truly life-changing and can even feel like a miracle. It can feel like being set free and given wings.

And then the third point I want to share with you today is that once you can commit to the impossible dream and then you commit and get started working on developing that mastery of your thinking and emotions, then what I want you to know is, I believe there is no downside to believing in your impossible dreams. And people will really argue with me about this and talk about, what about the risk? And what about losing money? What about losing face? What about losing time? What about losing years?

But I want to argue that all of those things go back to number two. Those circumstances, it's all within your creative power to own what they mean and to define, for yourself, what that means. Because, the way I want to offer you to think about it, I think, is so much more powerful and gives such greater meaning to our lives. And also, it gives us more fuel for the journey.

And that is, think of it as the hero's journey. And think of it this way; whether you go for the impossible dream or not, it's still impossible. The thing is, you don't go for it, and you don't embark on the hero's journey. You don't answer the call. You don't take that invitation to evolve and you don't take up that opportunity to learn to master your mind and to learn to master your emotions.

You don't get to find out what you're made of and you don't get to explore the outer limits of what's possible for you and what you could create. If you

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don't pursue it, it's still going to be impossible for you, but you're in the same place. If you do pursue it, you could give yourself a chance, plus you open yourself up to what could happen and who you can make of yourself along the way. And you open yourself up to a whole host of other adventures and magic, as you'll see when I end my story of listing that \$25K painting at the end of this episode.

So I want to offer you all these ideas, knowing that if it's the first time you've encountered some of these, that it might be pretty difficult to wrap your mind around them in the beginning. But just trust me that, if you commit to working on this and you keep coming back to it and applying these principles to your life, your mind will be blown and your life will open up to you like it never has before.

Now, this brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to really lean in here and work with me, coach with me. So here's how it's going to work; I'm going to give you one specific suggestion for something to do. Your spirit doesn't just want to learn or to consume information passively, it wants to create something real in the world, to express, to live. So let's get you out of your head and doing something differently.

Are you ready to get coached? Okay, so I want you to look at the date today. Note the month, day, and year. Say it out loud. Notice where you are. Notice your surroundings. Take note of what you're doing.

So in addition to listening to this podcast, obviously, maybe you're also driving, maybe you're washing the dishes, maybe you're walking to pick up the kids or working in your studio or out for a run. So you know those moments in your life when everything changed, when life was never the same, that's what we're setting you up for here, in a really loving kind positive way.

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As of today, and for evermore, you are going to decide that today is the day everything changed for you. Say the date, write it down when it's safe to do so if you're driving, journal about it, talk to a trusted friend or mentor about it, or write to me and tell me about it, if you want to. I'd love to witness this moment for you as well.

But promise me, you will not go to sleep tonight until you have burned this date into your mind and spirit as the day everything changed for you. It's a Monday here as I'm recording this, no holiday, but you can make it one of the most important days of your life by doing this.

Will you have to work for this dream, even after you make this commitment? Oh yes, you will. But there is a world of difference between working for something you are still wishing for, even half-wishing for, or sitting on the fence about, or you'd kind of like it to happen, but you're still not sure it's going to happen, as opposed to going all in and really committing to something; as opposed to deciding that it's as good as done for you, that it's a done deal and now you are just walking yourself home, you're making your way on your hero's quest.

So when you make yourself unavailable for anything other than that dream coming true, part of the difference that happens in your life comes from the fact that you have so much more energy freed up from not losing it to indecision and doubt and u-turns and micro-quits.

But some of the difference also can come because when you are in a space of all in true commitment, where you know you are going to help yourself and have your own back, even if no other help comes, come hell or high water, ironically, that's when the help shows up. Help from other people, help that you couldn't anticipate, synchronicities, coincidences, connections you couldn't have made on your own.

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I've seen this over and over again in my own life and I see it in my client's lives, but you can't skip over your part of making the commitment. And once you've made the commitment, work and energy will flow from that. So if you take one thing away from this episode, I really want you to take this – and I guarantee that if you do, and own it and embrace it, it will change your life.

Know that your decision to commit to your impossible dream, like really making it a sacred commitment, getting married to it, is a fundamental and profoundly life-altering decision. It will change your life because it will change you.

Remember my story at the beginning of the episode about deciding that one of my impossible dreams wasn't actually selling a \$25,000 painting in 25 years, it was selling that \$25,000 painting now? So here's what ended up happening with that story.

I posted the painting for sale, and then immediately, it brought up a lot of things for me. Answering that hero's cause brought up all sorts of thoughts and emotions that I could work through; shame and fear and all that. But I was still committed to it.

I was still embracing, you know, this is what creativity is for me; defining what is possible for myself and not waiting for permission from others and not looking to what other people are doing for what's possible, but me checking in with me and listening and going with my gut. And my gut said, "List that painting for \$25,000. It's not available for anything less than that."

Well, not a full two weeks after that, two clients contacted me. They had bought a painting from me before and now they were wanting two commissions to go along with it. They had a larger second home they'd purchased in the country and they wanted two commissions to go with this original piece.

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So I got off the phone with them and as I was doing the calculations on my iPhone calculator, I hadn't even pushed the equals button yet, but it was slowly dawning on me what had happened. And you could have knocked me over with a feather.

When I did hit that equals button, it came out to not \$25,000 exactly, but \$24,500. And granted, it also was not the painting I had listed for sale, but still, that was pretty amazing.

And then there was another twist where I did the first painting for them, which ended up being almost \$15,000, and then my family and I were actually moving out of the country to London for a while, and in that time, they had moved out of that second home and back into the city, so they had less space and no space for the second commission.

And still, I think that whole invitation of my impossible dream and my declaring it made that possible. It led to a huge leap in my art career. I was going to take 25 years to do a thing, and instead, I decided no waiting, I'm going to go for it now.

So I want to share that with you because I want you to know that whatever you can dream, decide that it's yours and commit to it today. Never look back. Taking your power back as a creative begins with this step. You decide who you are and what you are capable of creating.

Thank you again for joining me for *The Art School Podcast*. If you enjoyed today's show, it would be awesome if you would take a moment to write a quick review on iTunes. You can do this by heading over to www.leahcb.com/itunes.

While you're there, you can also register to win a free Creative Life Audit Session with me. If you're an artist, musician, writer, or other creative

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leader and visionary, and you feel blocked in your creative work or in your career, with relationships, health, financially, really in any area of your life, a Creative Audit Session can help.

We'll identify the root cause of your most frustrating block, and together, we'll come up with a customized strategy to get you back on track and back into your prime creative and abundant flow. One winner will be chosen every week. Thanks again for joining me, and I'll see you next week.