

## Ep #5: Taking Responsibility for How You Feel



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

[The Art School Podcast](#) with Leah Badertscher

## Ep #5: Taking Responsibility for How You Feel

Have you ever heard someone and maybe even yourself say, "This job is stressing me out," or, "It's so depressing how few artists actually make a living with their art," or, "My spouse, my partner just makes me so angry?"

We hear statements like this all the time, maybe we even say them ourselves, and we take them at face value. What's more, we often take them as part of a larger gospel truth that so many of us subscribe to without even questioning, and that is that something outside of us is determining the emotions that we feel.

This then leaves us feeling disempowered and victimized by life and even our own emotions, like we have no control over how we experience our lives in this world. The great news is that none of that is true, and in today's episode, we're going to talk about just why that is and what the truth really is, and why this is so important if you want to take back creative control over how you experience any event in life, how to be a more powerful creator when it comes to determining the quality of life you experience, and how this principle can help you create exactly what you want.

You are listening to episode four of *The Art School Podcast*. Welcome 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. How are you? I'm doing awesome. I have to say, my heart is full. Last week was the 12th week of my 12-week program, The Art School, the one that ran this fall of 2018 and I'm just so grateful for that experience and for the women that were in that program. It was really an honor and I just had so many incredible, creative insights of my own, and the coaching was fabulous.

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I mean, the experience of coaching. I hope they would also say the coaching was fabulous, but I can't believe that I didn't know some of these women before 12 weeks ago, but I'm really excited to continue rooting for them and watching their journeys now.

And it's not goodbye either because I didn't want to say goodbye, I wanted to keep the party going. So I started a Facebook group. It's a closed group but it's open to anyone who would love to be a part of The Art School community so it's alum and anybody that's considering the next round, which begins in February of 2019, anyone interested in learning more about what my coaching is like, creatives, entrepreneurs, we have corporate executives in the program, so if you are looking for a creative community, find us on Facebook. It's The Art School.

You can also find me, Leah Campbell Badertscher. Just message me and I'll add you to the group or ask to join the group and myself or my assistant will get you in there. We would love to have you there.

So on with today's topic. Last week we talked about the importance of emotional health, and specifically we talked about how emotions play a really important role in creating that extraordinary way of being that creates extraordinary results. We talked about how emotions are physical vibrations or movements in the body and I also talked about the importance of having a practice that helps cultivate emotional mastery, where it has that aim in mind.

And also some practices that you can use that will help you process your own emotions and discover some things about yourself and develop a deeper understanding and stronger relationship with yourself. We also talked about how it happens that when you're willing to experience any emotion, that that's when life really opens up to you and you become unstoppable.

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So this week, I want to build on that discussion about emotions and talk about how emotions are something we choose. So I want to say that again for emphasis, for those listening, to whom that concept might be new. Emotions don't happen to us. They are something that we choose.

Now, we may be doing a lot of that choosing on default or subconsciously, but it's still so important to own that we are creating our emotional experience. That's really a vital step in taking back our creative authority, our ability to author our own experience.

So even though you may not have control over all the external circumstances in life, the things that happen to you, it is still the truth that these things, these events don't determine the emotions that you feel. So like those statements that I mentioned in the intro where the job stresses me out, my husband, wife, children make me angry, it's so depressing what's going on in the world today, all of those things are lies.

And my clients are onto it now because when they - they'll start talking and they'll get a little ways into what they're saying and they'll start with, "That job interview I had was - just stressed me out," and they'll continue for a while and then they'll stop and catch themselves and be like, "Oh wait, it was my thinking about that job interview that stressed me out."

And even situations where we say, "Oh, that is just so hard," now that's not a fact. That's subjective. So what might be true though is that your thinking about the situation is hard. That we could agree is your story. But to just say objectively that something is hard is not a fact. It's a thought. It's a story.

So what does determine the emotions you feel is ultimately your choice. It's your choice about how you can respond rather than react to circumstances. And I want to pause here and spend a moment on that because sometimes things happen and then our emotional response is so fast, it's immediate

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that it feels instantaneous. It feels like there is no way we could have chosen that emotion, when what has happened is that a lot of times, it's been a trigger and so it's something that we've just gotten very efficient at.

Maybe we're very efficient at anger. Maybe we're very efficient at guilt. Maybe we are very efficient at being stressed out. So if there are things that we have - emotions that we have habitually practiced over and over again, our brain has become very efficient. So we almost don't even need to think. We don't need to think when something triggers it. It just happens. But we have to take back our power to choose to respond differently.

So ultimately, your choice about how you're going to think on purpose about external events and owning that you can choose deliberately what you're going to think and believe is going to give you back that ability to start to have more control over your emotions again, rather than being the victim of your emotions.

And one thing that is so important to know as we go about creating our lives is that the reason we all want the things we want is because it is going to make us feel a certain way. That's another thing worth repeating because we aren't taught to think this way. We're taught to think over and over again that once I get a think outside of me or achieve a thing, that's what's going to make me feel a certain way.

But it's actually what we think that that thing or that achievement is going to allow us to think or make it easier for us to think and then that thought will then produce a feeling. It's that feeling that we're after. So again, the reason we all want the things we want is because it is going to make us feel a certain way.

But if you're really understanding that what's creating your feelings are your thoughts, then you'll know that it's not actually that thing outside of you. It's not landing the gig, it's not winning the award, it's not the promotion, it's not

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getting the girl or getting the guy, or getting your art into that gallery, or making a certain amount of money.

All those things are awesome but they don't have the power to create an emotion in you. What it does is then makes you think a thought that creates an emotion that you desire. It's what you think having those things or having achieved those things will then make it easier for you to think and believe, and therefore feel a certain way.

So for instance, I have clients who are very talented creatives and very successful in their corporate careers, and so some of the things they want and I want as well for them, and I want them to totally go for it, are things like a Grammy, a Tony, a finished book, a book deal, a best seller, a body of work in a major exhibit, a certain amount of money in the bank from their creative work. All of these things are awesome and the most powerful way to create them is to ask yourself why do I want those things.

What do I think I'll be able to think and believe about myself and my work and the world and the having of those things? Because it's those thoughts that are going to create a feeling and it's that feeling that you're ultimately after. So you want to ask yourself if you're a singer/songwriter, what would I be feeling if I'd won the Grammy? What would I be feeling on my way to knowing that I was writing material that's Grammy worthy?

So whether that is clarity, whether that is an absence of self-doubt and just an ability to trust and focus on the work, those are the feelings that you want to focus on generating now because that ultimately is what you're after. That feeling of trust, of satisfaction, of belief in your own work, and it's also those feelings that are going to most likely produce the actions and continue to sustainably produce actions that are going to be more likely to lead to the result that you desire.

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What I find so fascinating and this is across the board in all my clients, whether they are artists, whether they are executives, whether the coaching we're doing is around their creative work or is in relationships, is that that thing that we're wanting, that external thing, that achievement, that money, the relationship, whatever that brass ring is, so often it's the reason that we want it, the reason that my clients say they want it, the reason I've seen I've wanted it is because it's going to make us think something that gives us permission to believe something we deeply want to believe about ourselves.

So if somebody wants a relationship, a romantic relationship, ultimately what they're wanting is to feel loveable and to feel loved. And that that relationship will be proof that they are loveable and loved, and that therefore, they will have permission to love themselves. And then that's always where then the work is, where we have to begin is loving ourselves, is being loving, and from that place, we are more likely to create a loving relationship.

And also in creativity, let's say going back to the Grammy example, I work with some very talented people and then that's the dream and ultimately, what we uncover is that if they had that marker of success, then they'd be able to believe this deep thing they've had within them all along that they really are capable of that level of achievement, that level of stardom, that they're wanting something outside of them to give them permission to believe in their talent, to believe in their genius, and that with that permission, then they'll suddenly be able to step out into the light.

But then that there too always is where our work is. Can we give ourselves the permission to believe what we want to believe, to believe in our genius? Even though we don't have any external evidence for it yet? But it's that believing in our genius, believing in our worth, believing in our lovability which removes negative feelings and gives us permission to not indulge in negative feelings of self-doubt, confusion, or overwhelm because if we believe in our own authority, well then of course we're clear. Of course, we

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can pursue what we want to pursue and not be bogged down by wondering if we're delusional in thinking that we're good enough.

So it's seeking these things is often that we're going to then be relieved of self-doubt, where that work actually happens, and is potentially more potent and is life changing if you're able to do the work before that external marker arrives. And I think it's very important that we realize this and own our responsibility for thinking and be disciplined about our thoughts and own our responsibility for emotional lives and care for ourselves this way before the success shows up.

Because otherwise, we might land in the success and still have these kind of sloppy and habitual ways of thinking and feeling that won't even let us enjoy that success once we get there. And you hear this over and over again from people that once they got the promotion, got the job, got more money, got the girl, got the guy, had the baby, that they still didn't feel the way they thought they would feel, and that's because it's not what's outside of you, it's got to be an inside game.

And that being said, I also think it's really ironic that something that helps bring this idea that we create our emotions with our thoughts into sharper focus is goal setting. That is choosing to create something on purpose. And I believe this is so helpful because goal setting without also owning your full responsibility for how you experience the whole journey to the goal is incomplete and immature if it doesn't include that, if it doesn't include taking full responsibility for how you're going to think about and feel about the process of creating the goal and instead of just being solely focused on the goal.

In an earlier podcast, I talked to you about what it would mean to you to live your goal now. And I did that because I wanted to invite you to think in a way that would prepare you for this work around emotions and around how when we do take full responsibility for what we think and how that creates



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our emotions, that that is when we can really start to take back our full creative power and authority.

So when I did this exercise myself some years ago and I envisioned my future self, what was so remarkable was not only what I was creating and achieving, but what was absent. And what was remarkably absent was what wasn't there as I envisioned myself being faced with greater creative challenges or taking on more responsibility.

So what was missing from this vision, what I could see that my future self was not indulging in, was overwhelm, confusion, self-doubt, shame, or a constant neurotic self-consciousness. In my vision of my future self, I had lost that sort of imaginary entity that sometimes in the past had seemed to just plague me, sitting on my shoulder with its clipboard going, it's naughty, nice, goo, bad, perfect, flawed checklist.

And so I knew my future self had grown in ability, but also that the challenges would be greater. And it's not that she wasn't working hard and it's not that she didn't have difficulty, it's just that it wasn't rocking her emotional world the way those kind of things would have done for me in the past.

And I knew I wanted to, for instance, complete more paintings, do more amazing paintings, publish novels, grow my coaching business, make a lot more money, become an even stronger artist, writer, coach, entrepreneur, woman, mother, wife in the process. And initially, once I set all those bigger goals, it instantaneously brought up all sorts of emotions that seemed to just naturally go along with a bigger more successful life.

Naturally, I say I that way because then I questioned it and whether that had to be the case. I knew that it didn't have to be the case. I knew that was just a kneejerk emotional response, emotional reaction. I knew it was what I was thinking about more success that was so hard and it was what I

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was thinking about more success that was creating emotions of doubt, overwhelm, and stress; just an anticipation, even, of achieving those goals, which is kind of crazy to think about.

So I decided that if I were going to be more creative and also more financially successful as a creative, I would also claim full responsibility for my emotional experience and my personal evolution, my spiritual evolution, and my wellbeing along the way on that journey. I told myself that I wasn't going to use challenge and difficulty as excuses to doubt myself or as excuses to get stressed out and indulge in self-pity and overwhelm, that I wouldn't use failure or disappointment as excuses or reasons to beat up on myself, that there could never be a good enough reason to beat up on myself, that I was done with that, that it wasn't going to happen ever again.

So that's what I committed to in addition to committing to my goals. And has it been a lot of work? Yes. But has it changed my life and been worth it? Absolutely. Do I get it right all of the time? Absolutely not. You can just ask my husband. But I have grown remarkably in my capacity for what I am willing to take on and I am very proud of that.

And I've seen my clients do the same, that once they commit to what I call a sacred twin intention – you have your dream, but then also who do I want to become in the creating of that dream? And that includes emotional mastery, that once clients do this, their lives open up as well.

So it's very important to me that I do this work myself that I do with my clients. And I do really believe you can radically change the quality of your life by changing the quality of your mind. That's being deliberate about what you think and owning that what you think creates your emotions and pausing in those places where you have habitual emotional reactivity and taking back your ability to respond. Because this so much impacts then your ability to create what you want in life; to create more art, more success, and even more money.

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And your ability to do this just accelerates exponentially when you tell yourself you will be disciplined. You will no longer be sloppy about your thinking, about your thinking about yourself and what you're capable of, and you will no longer be sloppy about thinking about how you are creating your experience with your thoughts and your feelings.

So when you tell yourself you'll no longer abdicate your authority, your authorship when it comes to writing your own script and writing the story of your life, that's when things really start to change and change fast. And you can do this in your day to day life as well. And sometimes, I think that's where some of the most beautiful results flow.

How we live our days is how we live our lives. So I do this with motherhood even, and I work with my clients who are parents as well on this. for example, one story from this summer was my family, my own little nuclear family, as well as my extended family of origin, and sometimes my husband's family joins us, for a week on Lake Michigan. We just love Lake Michigan.

And we stay at a farmhouse or a couple of cottages that are up there together as a family for a week. It's in the woods. There is a beautiful dunes preserved area, natural beach, and there is no TV. It's just like an idyllic throwback in time. And there are a lot of small children currently, the place where my siblings and in-law's children are in life.

And there was one time this summer where there was lots of little people running around about counter-top height and below waist height, and I could feel myself, I could kind of feel the stress rising. And then all of a sudden, I just turned to my mom and I stopped and laughed and I said, "You know, you would think that I had forgotten whose daughter and whose granddaughter I am."

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Because you see, my family, I was the oldest of four. Not too many kids, but my mom always rolled with the punches and was just an amazing mom, always playing with us and hardly ever – I can't remember her being stressed. And then her family, my grandma Catherine, had 11 children. So my grandma Catherine and my Grandpa Bob had 11 children. And so when I was growing up within the throngs of cousins that I was so grateful to have growing up, it was the happiest sort of blissful chaos all the time, except to us kids, we never thought of it as chaos.

And I can't remember a single time of my grandmother being stressed. I mean, talk about somebody who just went with the flow and had a great capacity for joy and a great capacity for noise and mess. But it was just a really joyful family environment. So when I reminded myself, I am the daughter of Deb and the granddaughter of Catherine, I can handle a lot of small children, happiness, chaos, and noise. It's actually quite wonderful.

So in that moment, I realized I shifted how I was thinking about myself, which then allowed me to shift how I was thinking about the situation. And in an instant, I went from being stressed to being very grateful. And so it's taking the work into your day to day moments like this that can really be powerful.

Sometimes too with my artist clients who have struggled for a while to make a living, they can complain sometimes. I love them dearly, but it's hard and it's not as romantic as people think. And I don't let them do that to themselves, because if you're going to be creative, you have to take back your power. And if you're going to take back your power in your creative life, you need to first assume that you have it in all off life.

So if you want life to be hard and stressful and draining as an artist, it will be that. But if you want life as an artist to be romantic and sometimes magical and challenging in the best of ways and to require you to be courageous and require you to go into the depths of creativity that most

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don't have to venture into or don't get to venture into, then that's available to you as well.

Just remind yourself that you have the ability to create your thoughts, which create your emotions, which create your experience. And when people want to challenge me on this principle that we actually have power to create our experience and power over how we experience life with our thoughts and our emotions, I always invite them to read a book called *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Dr. Viktor Frankl. It's a book I reread every year.

You can't read this book and not have a deep understanding for the importance of creating meaning in your life, for the importance of hanging on to your responsibility and owning your responsibility and using it for thinking and feeling. So Dr. Frankl was an Austrian neurologist and a psychiatrist and a Holocaust survivor.

So he was in the camps and he was an observer of human behavior because of his background and training. And what he saw was that even in the depths of human misery, even when among unimaginable tragedy and horror, that there were still those human beings that chose hope and love.

I highly recommend that you read this book. It's life-changing. It will alter your perspective. It's enlightening. And I just want to share a short excerpt of it here. "We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms; to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

So those kind of truths are hard-fought for and the price is high, so let's not forget that we know this, that we have this capability, this capacity as

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humans to choose how we think and then to create our experience in that way. So this brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to really take this work and really make it your own.

So I want you to coach with me. I want you to think of a time, thinking back – if you listened to that podcast about living the goal, if not, right now, just think of one of your greatest goals. Call that to mind. Put yourself in the position of being the person that has achieved that. Walk around in his or her life. And now I want you to walk around in his or her head and tell me, what are the dominant emotions in their experience?

See if you can name the top three dominant emotions that they might experience on any given day. On any given day, imagine that there will be great things and there will also be challenges. And then what are their thoughts that you think might be creating these emotions?

I think want you to think about what's the difference between myself now and that future self? Can I name three differences that I would tie to emotional differences? And then, can I think of three things that are different about how I think now versus what I would think then?

So really give yourself the time to think about and do this exercise. Don't just listen to it and move on. This is a powerful one. So I hope you'll take that and run with that.

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](http://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.