

Ep #9: The Artist's Way: Key Practices & Concepts from Julia Cameron



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Leah Badertscher

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“I am astounded I could let go of the drama of being a suffering artist. Nothing dies harder than a bad idea, and few ideas are worse than the ones we have about art.” Julia Cameron.

I've told you before that I'm fascinated by the power of creativity and that I'm also passionate about changing the paradigm of what's possible and raising the bar for what artists can expect to create in life, creatively, professionally, and financially.

One resource that has helped me to change that paradigm in my own life is a book many of you have probably heard of and read; *The Artist's Way*, by Julia Cameron. I love so much of this book. But today, I'm going to focus in on a few key concepts and practices Julia offers that have helped me to take the mystery out of making money and the struggle out of making art.

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.

Hi, everyone, and welcome back. It's kind of crazy to think that by the time this comes out, it will be 2019 when you're listening to this, the New Year. And I will have gone to Iowa, Hawaii, will be back from both places, and then actually heading to meet up with my mastermind group. So it's a bit of a trip to think about all of that happening between now and then.

But I hope this finds you doing great and I'm really excited to talk to you today because I wanted to offer this as a little golden nugget. I wanted to offer you some of my favorite Julia Cameron-isms, gems, to help you on your own journey in making your art and making more money. And if you're

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not an artist and just harnessing the power of the creative process and using that in your life, because it's something that's available to all of us.

I do believe that we all are creative, that we have this energy running through us. And if you don't harness it, I like to think of it as like breathing with only one lung. It's there, you should use it, it would empower and enliven your life.

So what I have learned from Julia Cameron and *The Artist's Way*, that podcast would take days upon days upon days. And this is by no means an exhaustive summary of that book. What I find is that the real power in books like these is in focusing in on certain areas, sections, again and again, and not just reading the book, but doing the book and soaking it in like osmosis.

So I'm going to keep my commentary today to a minimum because my idea here is that you can use this episode as a mini-meditation in part, as part of your own mental training program to becoming someone who taps their creativity, whose creativity flows like water. I will say that one place I take *The Artist's Way* and infuse it with my own style, my own athletic background and business background, coaching, is that I am a big believer in discipline and repetition and practice.

I like to think of training to become the kind of extraordinary artist and successful entrepreneur I know I can be in the same way I think of training as if I were an athlete preparing for the Olympics. So I'd have things in my ears all the time priming me for that just becoming second nature, part of my muscle memory, or in this case, sort of your neuropathway automatic memory.

And today, we're going to carve some grooves in your neuropathways. And you can do it over and over again with, first, the basic principles, and then just four of my favorite affirmations. Because again, this is an area where

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focusing in is more powerful than being really diffuse and where less is more.

And I'm also going to explain what I think is the most common misunderstanding and mistake people make in doing Julia Cameron's most famous practice, the Morning Pages, and how to avoid that mistake and how, when you do the Morning Pages the way she intends them, it really makes all the difference in the world.

So first, the basic principles. These 10 principles, Julia recommends that you read in the morning and at night. And I also like to write them in my journal and pull out different one now and then and put them up on index cards, places where I'm going to see them if there's one in particular that I want to focus on.

So number one, creativity is the natural order of life. Life is energy; pure creative energy. Two, there is an underlying and dwelling creative force infusing all of life, including ourselves. When we open ourselves to our creativity, we open ourselves to the creator's creativity within us and our lives.

Four, we are ourselves creations, and we in turn, are meant to continue creativity by being creative ourselves. Five, creativity is god's gift to us. Using our creativity is our gift back to god. Six, the refusal to be creative is self-will and is counter to our true nature,

Seven, when we open ourselves to exploring our creativity, we open ourselves to GOD, good orderly direction. Eight, as we open our creative channel to the creator, many gentle but powerful changes are to be expected. Nine, it is safe to open ourselves up to greater and greater creativity. Ten, our creative dreams and yearnings come from a divine source. As we move toward our dreams, we move toward our divinity.

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And now, I want to share some of my favorite, or most often used creative affirmations from the book. There's many different ways to use affirmations. One way she also suggests that I love is when you do the Morning Pages practice, which I'll explain in a little bit, to write the affirmations out longhand five times for each one that you're doing. And I usually have three or four that I'm usually focusing in on.

One, I am a channel for god's creativity and my work comes to good. Two, my dreams come from god and god has the power to accomplish them. Three, as I create and listen, I will be led. Four, through the use of a few simple tools, my creativity will flourish.

And so now, about the Morning Pages – so essentially, Morning Pages are very simple. You wake up and, ideally, one of the first things you do is sit down with your journal and write, stream of consciousness without stopping, three longhand pages. Don't pick up your pen, don't censor, don't edit. Just keep the pen moving across the page for three entire pages.

And I will talk more in future episodes about why I think this simple tool is so powerful, but today, I really just wanted to stick to offering you some of the meat of what she offers, and then also with the Morning Pages, to really highlight something.

It's in one sentence in the book, but when I talk to so many people who don't like the Morning Pages – and I did this at first myself too – I think it's because they really miss just this one sentence where she's talking about how sometimes Morning Pages are the hardest for writers because writers attempt to write Morning Pages instead of doing them.

And that's the key; to do Morning Pages and not to write them, not to try to create something from it, not to try to think. If you think back to our episode last week where we talked about how the fear of wasting and kind of going along with that, the need to always be productive, how that can be a

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creative block, that's really one of the secret powers of Morning Pages is that it helps you bypass that. and you might feel that urge there to not waste and to be productive and to make something of it, but it's really just to get you into the flow and to enter into that space where the creativity comes and out it goes.

And to do that, she talks a lot about just being able to bypass the censor and just have your hand move across the page. And if you get stuck and can't think of anything, just write blah, blah, blah until something comes to you. Or when you get stuck, write down what you had for dinner last night or what you're going to have for breakfast.

And I never write more than three pages of that sort of nonsense before something else starts to come. So I highly recommend Morning Pages. Do them every day if you can and try to stick with it for at least six weeks before you make any judgments.

I also just wanted to mention, since the subtitle for the book – it's The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity, that for some people, that's a hurdle, and that she uses the word god and it's spiritually oriented.

So what I want to suggest you play with there, if that is something that happens to be a hurdle or a block for you, play with what you do believe in. do you believe in the universe? Do you believe in science? Do you believe in math? Do you believe the creative process? Do you believe that there's some mystery that happens there? Do you believe in something you engage in that you can't quite explain? Do you believe in a higher power? Or again, do you believe in the intelligence of humans?

I think even right in the text of the basic principles, she offers a really good solution to this, and I love this when she uses GOD as the acronym for good orderly direction; like that there's some self-organizing force within us, in our creativity, that we can open ourselves up to. That's something I

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definitely feel true in my own experience. So I wanted to just point that out in case thinking of god in the traditional religious context is where you get hung up.

Because, if that is a block for you, then I would just suggest believing in your own creativity and using your own creativity to kind of think through these principles and what might be behind it and to see if there is something useful there for you. This book has been so incredibly powerful for me and over probably two decades now, because my Grandma, Donna, who was my biggest fan and greatest champion of my art way before I was even an artist, she gave me *The Artist's Way* for a gift one time and I know I read it then. And I've read it so many times since. And then I inherited her copy when she passed away.

And as the years have gone by and my experience has deepened, I'm always find more and more and moving into a deeper understanding of what she wrote. So if you have read the book, I hope this has been a useful reminder of some of the key points in the book and a touch stone going forward and if you haven't read the book, I would highly recommend it. And again, I think one of the most important things is that this isn't a book that you just read. This is a book you do.

And she has a lot of exercises in it and I don't just mean exercises. I mean really like, chew on things and think about them and make them your own. So this brings us to the part of the podcast where I want you to not just listen but I want you to take this information and make it your own and really create something different in your life because of it.

So if you don't have a Morning Pages practice, that's your assignment. That's the assignment I'm offering you today, to start one and to commit to one every day for six weeks. I know it might seem in the beginning like that's a lot, and I know for the first few weeks it might seem like nothing's

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happening, and you'll move through terrain where you're like, this is pointless, I'm going to quit.

But when you get to that point, make sure you keep going because I promise you, do this every morning for six weeks and something amazing is in it for you on the other side. So do stick with it. I know that sounds bossy, but I don't want you to miss out on what's on the other side. And for me, it's helped so much in many areas of my life in my art, in my writing, in my business, financially, also in my relationships. So I don't want you to miss out on that.

And finally, just to close, I want to read you the entire quote. I used part in the intro but the whole thing is just so good I don't want you to miss out on that either. She writes, "I'm astounded I could let go of the drama of being a suffering artist. Nothing dies harder than a bad idea. And few ideas are worse than the ones we have about art. We can charge so many things off to our suffering artist identity. Drunkenness, promiscuity, fiscal problems, a certain ruthlessness or self-destructiveness in matters of the heart. We all know how broke, crazy, promiscuous, unreliable artists are and if they don't have to be, then what's my excuse? The idea that I could be sane, sober, and creative terrified me, implying, as it did, the possibility of personal accountability. You mean if I have these gifts, I'm supposed to use them? Yes."

So that ends the quote but I hope it opens a lot of new beginnings for you because you also have these gifts and you are also meant to use them. Thank you again for joining me for *The Art School Podcast*. If you enjoyed today's show, I would love it if you would take a moment and write a quick review on iTunes. You can do this by heading over again to www.leahcb.com/itunes.

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

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creative, and you feel blocked in any area of your life, creatively, financially, in relationships, a Creative Audit Session can help you identify the root cause of that most frustrating block, and together, we'll work to come up with a customized strategy that will get you back into your prime creative and abundant flow. One winner will be chosen every week.

Thanks again everyone so much for joining me. I hope you have an awesome week and I will talk to you soon. Bye-bye.