

Ep #17: Insights from Coaching a Creative Mind



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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Have you ever heard the phrase, “What is most personal is also often most universal?” I find that to be true over and over again as I’m coaching. And, that inspired today’s episode. So you’ll want to listen in as you hear me tell the story of a very specific and personal conversation I had with one of my amazing clients – a talented singer and songwriter – and the things that we discussed, even if you are not a singer-songwriter.

Even if you’re a corporate exec, or whether you’re a painter and entrepreneur, I just know you’re going to find takeaways in this conversation. So I hope you enjoy and find something universal.

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.

Hey, everybody, and welcome back. As I mentioned in the intro, I have a little bit of a different approach to today’s episode. It’s just that, so many times I get off calls with my clients, whether that’s a group class for *The Art School*, a group coaching call, or a private coaching call, and I think, now’s the time to record a podcast episode because everything is so fresh and relevant. And I want these episodes, this podcast, to be very poignant for you, to be very useful.

I love hearing fascinating, curious, delightful things to think about and hear about, and I definitely want to pepper those throughout these episodes. And I also want to just give you so much value and so much substance, and leave you with some really just great takeaways every time. And I feel like that’s what a private coaching session or group coaching sessions are; bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. You cut to the chase. You get to the heart of things. People have an insight, a takeaway. We talk about how to implement it.

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And I want to kind of approximate that as much as I can through these episodes for you. So, what I've done with today's episode is I did record some thoughts I had right after I got off a call with a client. And I'm not disclosing her information and I also, just so you know, I also reached out to her and said, "Hey, this was an amazing conversation. Would you be okay if I shared the big picture aspects of that conversation?" And she was like, "Yeah, I loved that conversation. I would love it if you would do that." Because she has also got a big heart about inspiring and empowering other artists.

So, she knows who she is; thank you very much. You are a rockstar, literally. And I'm just so glad that she was open to sharing that with you because I think it will be a real gift to be able to see someone else's process in conversation from the outside. I think, sometimes, that is a great catalyst for our own learning and our own self-coaching process. So, I hope you enjoy and join me again on the backend for the coach-with-me part.

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Hi, so, I just got off a session with one of my clients, one of my *Art School* Masterclass clients who I adore. She's an incredible singer-songwriter. And I had a thought, because this is what often happens after I get off a session, a private session with a client or a group coaching session, is I think, oh man, I wish I could take that and turn it into an article or a podcast because it's so real and you can tell that the information is working and that it's transformational and it's exactly the exchange that needs to happen.

And that's exactly the kind of high-quality content that I want to make available on this podcast as well, so that it's not just ideas that I'm talking about. Because ideas are awesome, but I want it to be transformative for you too and not just something else you listen to and consume.

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But I want it to really be useful in your life and to land in your life and help you change in meaningful ways; not that there's anything you need to fix, but just so that you feel more and more at home in your life and more and more powerful in your life, and, you know, in general, more like, "Hey, I can do this thing called life, including the hard places. Hey, I am absolutely someone who creates whatever he or she sets their minds to."

There are so many great things in this last session that I wanted to – I'm not going to give away identifying information, of course, but I can keep it at the level where I think it will still be very specific and relevant for those of you out there who could benefit from hearing this too, because this client of mine has some beautiful moonshot goals and dreams, which I actually don't think are moonshots for her, like winning a Grammy for her songs. And she's already been recognized and awarded and decorated for many other reasons.

So, for her, she was talking about how she's in this next phase of her career where she's just feeling overwhelmed and like her calendar is way too full and way too packed. She's also a mother. And she's very active in her hometown community and also in a community of artists.

We talked about this idea of – and maybe you've heard this – of how a master rose gardener goes in and they choose the few blooms, the few blossoms of the rosebush that they're going to focus on. And all the others, they lop off, including some very beautiful ones, where there's nothing wrong with them. But they know that in order to really allow the energy of the rosebush to channel into those few blooms, that they have to prune, and prune very aggressively.

And I think that's something that can be so hard for us to do as creatives for many reasons. One of those reasons is it can be scary to go in on a few blooms. Sometimes, we want to spread the risk around or spread our chances around. So it really takes the next level of commitment to yourself

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to be like, “No, these are the few things that I’m focusing on and I’m going to go all in on these so I’m not diluting my own energy and so that I’m not spread too thin and frazzled and feeling like the Jack of all trades, master of none, but that I’m really giving the best shot possible for these few blooms to be the champions and to be the winners.”

I think another reason we are afraid to prune like that is if we have people-pleasing tendencies and we are unwilling to feel that discomfort in our body that happens when we tell someone no. Because, instead, we are just so much more willing to throw ourselves underneath the bus in that moment and say yes, and then just feel mad or resentful quietly, or tell ourselves, “It’s not so bad, I really do care about doing this work and I’m helping.”

Which is all true, and it can all be good, but if you’re really being honest, does it feel good to go another year of not writing your book because you are giving your energy to other people’s dreams and other people’s agendas? And this was something I talked about with my client too because she wants to be generous and she wants to be giving, but we have to pull back and say, if we really believe who we think we are, who we know ourselves to be, am I not going to be able to contribute and give in much greater ways once I give myself the chance to grow and really be more powerful.

Because, I’ve done this myself, like, given away so much or made myself available for all people at all times, and it was hard for me, still is, to learn how to say no. But once I come back to, “What is my opinion of myself? Who am I defining myself to be and what do I want to contribute in life?” and then I can see that who I really want to be is very generous and I know exactly how I want to be generous and exactly how I want to contribute. And it’s something that I define proactively and I don’t just reactively say yes to every request for my time, attention, energy, and money that comes along, but I’m deciding in advance, what is my contribution going to be?

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What is my legacy going to be? How do I want to give and how do I want to show up?

And that's something else that came up in the conversation with this client is showing up unapologetically. More than showing up unapologetically – being unabashed and unapologetic in our lives, because something that she was working through is allowing herself to want what she wants. And that's, again, one of those reasons during the conversation when I'm like, "Oh, I wish we could have this conversation in front of and with so many other people, because this is a message I know so many women need to hear."

It is not selfish to be unapologetically you, that we've just been taught to stay small, we've been taught to want less in what we want and they put labels on it, like, be selfless, be self-sacrificing. And, meanwhile, we could give and create so much more for the world and we could come from a place of loving ourselves too, not needing to reject ourselves or sacrifice ourselves for others. It doesn't need to be a zero-sum game because when we take care of ourselves, we are like the golden goose. You take care of the golden goose and it lays golden eggs and you can share those all around.

If you kill the golden goose and have it for the family dinner, guess what – no more goose, no more eggs. But we're taught, as women, that that's what we should do and that to instead honor who we really are and honor what we could create if we're taking care of ourselves, that that's enough because we are also people. And then also, once we are taken care of, we can do such a much more powerful job of taking care of others.

And so, with this client, we are talking about really the difference between intellectually knowing how we need more powerful examples of unapologetic women in the world, women who are unapologetic about their creativity and also about what they want, about their ambitions and about

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what they want to create and who'd go out and do that and that being that kind of example is so much more a gift to the world than being someone who's slightly ashamed of who she is, of how she just came into the world and of her desires to create and her desires to create the kind of life she wants.

When we're apologetic, there is shame under there and we just need to stop setting examples for one another that's really like, I'm slightly ashamed of who I am and what I want. And instead, being unapologetic, like, "I'm in love with me and I'm in love with my work and I'm in love with my vision, and even when I mess up, I love myself enough to go on because, hey, I'm also human."

So then, the other thing I also talked about with this client was, again, going back to the calendar. And it's tied very much in also with being unapologetic about what you want. So this is a very practical example that I would encourage you all to do. And I wrote a newsletter about this a couple of weeks ago. But take out your calendar and take out – hopefully, you have it like all filled out so you're organized. If not, do that first. That will be a different podcast episode.

But take out your calendar and then take a red Sharpie and X-out everything that's on there that you actually do not want to do. And then, with another color Sharpie, pick out like three priorities for the year; things you actually want to accomplish, build, create, experience. And include in that too plenty, plenty, plenty, ample, abundant time for you just to be restored. Because, this is another thing, you can't be a powerful creative on fumes.

You can't be a powerful creative if you're trying to fit your artist life into the margins of the day, if you're trying to wake up at 3am to write emails to people about gigs you might want to have or if you're staying up until 3am

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finishing paintings and then waking up to make everybody breakfast at six. I know that of which I speak.

I've tried to be an artist and an entrepreneur in the margins of the day. Not only is it just only then marginally successful, but then it's like my inner artist gets so resentful and also just kind of shrivels up and is so tired from not actually being a priority. So you want to look at your calendar and say, "Are my priorities actually reflected on this calendar?" And when I look at this calendar, if I am an artist, and if I am an artist that wants to take myself seriously, is that what my calendar looks like? If I'm an entrepreneur that wants to take myself seriously, is that reflected in my calendar?

As the writer Annie Dillard says, "The way we live our days is the way we live our lives." So you want your calendar to be a reflection of that. And the places where it's not, you're going to have to practice whatever emotion it is that's keeping you from saying yes to you and no to other people. You're going to have to practice feeling the discomfort of whatever emotion it is that, in the moment, makes you want to throw yourself under the bus and commit yourself to something you do not want to do in order to have them approve of or like you in the moment.

A good resource to revisit on these topics are the podcast episodes I created on emotional container and processing emotions and emotional mastery, because being unapologetic is going to require that you get in touch with certain emotions that, right now to you if you're not accustomed to doing this, probably feel bad and that you're labeling as negative. But once you go beneath the labels and just experience the emotion itself, I know what you're going to find is that that is actually where your power is. Those places you've been labeling it as negative emotion hold some really potent power for you.

I know this has been true for myself even, cases where I was labeling, like, inappropriate anger, or rage even, or being bitchy; places I would not

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allow myself to go. Once I did this emotional processing and mastery work and went down into the actual experience of the emotion, what I found is, in those moments, the sensation is that my heart feels very solid and very full and vibrating with a lot of power.

It feels like the imagery I had was like a nuclear core. And so, the more comfortable that I've been able to become with that, the more comfortable I have been able to become with my own power and with being an authority in situations where I used to give my authority away, and of being true to myself and honest with myself and others in places where I used to trade my integrity for the cheap toy of somebody, the cheap in-the-moment gratification of someone liking me.

And then finally, the last thing I wanted to leave you with today that I just loved in this conversation was, we were talking about, yes, we do our thought work. And my client was saying, you know, she feels like she has this tangle of hard knotted thoughts to get through before she can become the next level artist that she knows she's meant to become.

So we talked about that and here's what we came to; that it's actually that thought, that you have to rid yourself of a tangle of knotted mess and of thoughts in your mind, or rid yourself of difficult emotion, or of fear, or of the fear of fear before you can become the next level artist, but actually turn that on its head. And what makes a next level artist, those artists that we look at that just blow us away because they seem to be touching something superhuman and divine, is that they're actually touching humanity.

They're actually coming from their humanity. They're not trying to cure themselves of any part of the human condition, including a tangled mess of thoughts in the mind or emotions that are really difficult. But they're able to create from those places. They're able to use those things as the raw material of their life.

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We were talking about, for instance, artists like Brandi Carlisle, whose music, whose writing, just seemed to come from this core visceral place, and at the same time, be something really extraordinary is not because they're superhuman, but it's because they are so human. They are so terribly honest. And this is what I saw in my client too, is that she has this quality of terrible honesty about her.

And I use terrible in the sense of, like, the old testament biblical version of terrible, where terrible meant something that came from god, that there was this mighty force-of-nature-like quality to it, like more than magnificent. It's not pretty and it's not wrapped up, but, man, is it honest, is it pure, is it ever raw? So, learning how then to love yourself where you are, learning how to love like the human condition – because even becoming the next level artist, you're still going to be a human with a human mind that gets tangled in knots at times and emotions experienced that are very difficult.,

But what you want to be able to do and what is absolutely possible and within your reach is to expand your capacity to hold and to practice the courage and the grace and the resilience that expanding your capacity to hold those kinds of emotions is necessary for. Because it's just good to know that courage and grace and resilience don't always feel good. They don't often feel good.

But what does feel good is knowing that you can handle that, that you are big enough to contain all of that and also create something from that place, create something from a raw place, create something being terribly honest about what it is to be human and not in a way that's victimized, but a way that is just empowered and clear and true.

This brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to lean in and work with me and coach with me. and for today's episode, in this segment, I just want to make sure that, when I'm talking about pruning the rosebush, that you're not hearing it as I often

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heard it through the years, being that multi-passionate renaissance-loving person that I am.

I kind of always heard that as a criticism of the many things that I love to do, like poetry, visual arts, music, dance, literature, because all of those things really feed and nourish me. I want you to think of it instead as what do you love to pour your energy into, and then just pruning away those things that aren't really feeding that, and that if you have your dream projects, like say, for the next year or the next 18 months or two years, and that those dream projects are like your three, two to three rose blooms.

If you knew that within the next two, three, five, even 10 years, if you gave those all of your best energy and the best sunlight and the best care, attention, cultivation you could, that they would be these beautiful champion award-winning blooms, or they'd bear fruit, whatever metaphor you like, you would have an easier time pruning away the other things.

So think about it that way, because I think there were so many times when I heard that gardening analogy over the years and I kind of felt almost criticized by it. And so, for all of you out there too who just are fed by so many things, I don't want you to feel discouraged about yourself. But I do want to invite you to focus on a few of those big dreams, that maybe if you've had them for a while and you are getting a little frustrated that you're not getting more traction, what if you told yourself, "Okay, for this next era of my life, I'm really going to give these everything I've got and see this all the way through?"

So, what would those blooms be for you? Just to think about that, and what could you prune away? What, if you knew that it was going to turn out amazing, what would you really pour your heart and soul into?

Thank you again for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I hope you have enjoyed these episodes. And if you have, I

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would love it if you would take the time to leave a review on iTunes. You can do that on iTunes, or by going to my website, www.leahcb.com/itunes.

I can't tell you how grateful I am for those of you that have written to me and told me that you're listening and that you're enjoying these podcasts. And then those of you who take the time out of your day to leave a review, that just makes my cup overflow. And then, like, including people I don't know who say, "I feel like this podcast was written for me..." and, "Does she know me?" That means so much to me.

That tells me that what I'm doing here is resonating with you. And if there's things you want to hear more of or topics you want to hear, please write in and let me know. Write directly to me at leah@leahcb.com. You can ask me coaching questions, or you can just tell me topics that are of interest to you.

So, thank you so much, everyone, for listening in. and for the closing thought for today's podcast, what I thought I really wanted to share with you today was, again, I wish you could be a fly on the wall for some of our *Art School* group coaching conversations because the dynamic is so much bigger than any one person. It also is every one person. I'm just so blown away by the women in the group and their contributions and taking notes myself from things they say.

And so, today was like a really rousing conversation and everybody rallying around one another, like stepping into these next greatest versions of themselves and flexing their courage. And we're talking about how courage just, you have to know, courage doesn't feel good. And that's what's so helpful about a community like this, is we're like, "That's right, courage doesn't feel good." But we're reminding ourselves that we want to explore this way. The point of life is not to get out unscathed. So it really helps to rally around one another.

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And one of the specific topics today was making offers, whether you're pitching your poetry for submissions, or whether you're pitching your paintings for sale, or whether you're pitching offers to clients. One of the women in the group is a brilliant saleswoman. I like to call her The Sacred Rainmaker because she makes it rain. And she's so great at teaching other women too how to step into their power as rainmakers.

The idea that she brought forward today in encouraging other members of the group is that sales don't end with a no. Sales begin with a no. Sales begin at the point when you hear a no. That's, like, when the negotiation starts. For any place where you're hearing a no in your life right now, I want you to think about that, that that's not actually where the conversation ends, but that's where the conversation begins.

And this is from a woman who, like a deal-closer of multi multi-million-dollar deals. So, whether you are literally in sales, or whether you're just putting your work out into the world – not just – but any place in your life where you're offering or contributing to the world and you hear a no, be excited about it and be like, "Yeah, that's the starting point. Now, the game has begun." Have an awesome week, everyone, and I will see you next time.