

Ep #18: Writing the Script of Who You Want to Become



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Leah Badertscher

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In his book, *The Power of Intention*, Wayne Dyer writes, “Discarding doubt is a decision to reconnect to your original self. This is the mark of people who live self-actualized lives. They think in no-limit infinite ways. One of the no-limit qualities is the ability to think and act as if what they’d like to have is already present.”

You may have heard of acting as if or faking it until you make it. Maybe you’ve tried both of those approaches and had varying degrees of success. Today though, we’re going to take these concepts, this concept of acting as if, or what I like to call beginning at the end, and give it some real teeth so that it actually works and works wonders in your own life.

Today, we’re going to talk about becoming a true creative director of your life by writing the literal script for who you want to become and exactly what you want to create.

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 back. So, trying something different today, this is a different time of day than when I usually record this podcast, and what I’d forgotten about is that it’s the time of day when you can hear more traffic because people are coming home from school and leaving work. And I’ve mentioned before, we live on these 40 acres out in the country, and the farmhouse that we’re currently living in is closer to the intersection, whereas where we’re building our new home is nice and tucked back behind some trees and way away from the road. So until the day when I can get into that house and record this podcast for you there, please excuse traffic in the background.

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So, I feel like it's been weeks since I recorded this podcast last, but it hasn't. I've been rolling consistently every week, but it seems like there's so much to tell you all, including – can you hear that? I won't hold it right next to the microphone and blow your eardrums out, that would be rude – that is the cowbell that I bought for *The Art School* because I wanted to do something to kind of ramp up the excitement and the energy around when people have things to celebrate, including sometimes we celebrate, quote en quote, failure; where we attempted something that was completely aligned with results you wanted to create. And so we want to celebrate that that was a quality action step taken and that that is an opportunity to exercise and flex that courage muscle and flex believability, that that just gets you one step closer.

So, to kind of be silly, but also celebratory, I got the cowbell. And I've been ringing it a lot lately for *The Art School* because we've had some awesome things happening, people making amazing offers, getting lots of yeses actually, and really moving things forward. So, the cowbell, and also this talk of making progress and moving things forward is so very relevant to what I want to talk to you about today; acting as if and beginning at the end.

I just gave the Art Schoolers, for instance, last week, like I said, a pop quiz. It was Thursday, I'm like, "We're going to imagine as if, a creative exercise, at all of a sudden these 12 weeks were compressed into a week and that now, no longer do you have nine weeks left to create your result, you get to do it in a week. Now go." And also because I always stress having that scared twin intention, the dream that you want to create, and also this intentional way of being that you're cultivating along the way, I also emphasize that this was to all of a sudden put people underneath a bunch of pressure and stress and all of a sudden working all hours of the night and burning the candle at both ends, that I wanted them to do the best they could while also coming from a very healthy and creative and enjoyable way of being, that it might be difficult, yes, but to embrace a healthy discomfort with not going over the edge.

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So, for sure, I kind of set them up for an impossible task, but part of the reason I did this was so that in the situations like that, it gives us a great opportunity to practice managing our thoughts, manage our mind, and manage our emotions. And the other reason I did it is because I really wanted to see what it would bring up in terms of obstacles, because I'd much rather have a look at people's obstacles, inner and outer, at week three and four rather than wait until week 12 to know what's really going on.

So, a compressed imaginary deadline like this brings all of those things up to the surface and gives us real tangible places to practice what I'm talking to you about today. And that is this acting as if, beginning at the end strategy. So, a lot of this strategy, what I have boiled it down into, it's like a script. You think about what you want to create and if you think back to the episode I did about Brooke Castillo's self-coaching model and mastering your creative mindset, if we think about it in terms of that model – and I'm going to kind of go back and forth talking about the model and talking about it more abstractly for those of you that might not have mastered the self-coaching model yet or had an opportunity to listen to that podcast.

Definitely listen to that podcast, but here's what we do; beginning at the end, we think about what do you want to create in terms of the model, what is it that's in that result line that you're desiring to create. So, maybe it's a new job, maybe you write your book, maybe you get a book deal, maybe you sell your screenplay, maybe you double your income.

For me, the one that I'm actively working on in my result line is making \$50,000 from art in one week. So for you, as you go, we're going to do a coach-with-me at the end, but you can kind of play along in your mind as we think about this and think about what do you want to create. Because then we take it a step further, because beginning at the end and acting as if means that we are putting ourselves in the shoes of the person that has created this.

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Now, Brooke Castillo, in her work, calls this an aligned model. And I love that. It's a self-coaching model where your circumstance line matches your result line. So, another way of saying that, your result has become your circumstance. That result that you've been desiring to create is now your new reality. So, for instance, for my example, an aligned model for me would be I'd have not only that \$50,000 of art in the result line, but that that's also my new reality in the circumstance line. I've done it. It's right up there.

And the reason I love this is because it puts you in that place of not just thinking about that as a possibility, but it puts you more into that embodied place where you start to get a sense of how you would be thinking, feeling, and acting – so those are the middle three lines in the self-coaching model. What would be your way of being, thinking, feeling, acting, if that were my reality?

And another way I like to think about this, like a creative tool that I use for myself and for my clients is think of it as if it was a memory. So, again, to just really drive this example home by way of illustrating it, I would think, "Okay, last week, I did that. Last week, I made \$50,000 from art in a week. How does that feel? What must I have been thinking to get me there? What did that look like? How did that play out?"

And again, the thing I'm really going for too is an embodied feeling, not that it's a stretch or something I'm striving to do or straining to do. I hear people use the word striving a lot, and you can keep it if you love it and if it works for you. But I would also just invite you to try this exercise on, where you're not striving, you're fully embodied in that place and reliving it as if it's a memory. And from that place, then reflecting on how did I do that, how did that go down – keeping in mind too what I teach about having the sacred twin intention, "If I did do that and I did it within integrity for myself, meaning I did not kill myself in order to get that done, how did that work?" And then I

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back it up from there and basically reverse-engineer the process of getting there.

Because if my thoughts create my results and I imagine that I've just created a reality where my result is \$50,000 of art in a week, then I back it up and think, "Well, what must have I been thinking in order to feel a certain way, to create action, an impetus for action, and what kind of actions did I take to then create that result?" Or, for me, a lot of times I know personally the best inroad for me is to think about it in terms of feeling, like how did that feel to me? And then I put myself in sort of that feeling space and then have a look around in my mind. Like, when I'm feeling that way, how am I thinking? And when I'm feeling that way, how do I act?

And when I'm acting in a way that's aligned with this sort of, for me, it's like a very at-home, settled, but very focused and determined clear feeling place, I know that I make decisions quickly. I don't second-guess. I don't ruminate or self-obsess about whether things are good enough. I just follow through with sort of the direction that my artist self has given to my craftsman self.

So I want you to play with that; beginning at the end, beginning with the result that you want to create. Now, imagine that that result is your new reality. What had to happen? Reverse-engineer the process to create that reality and pay close attention to how you are feeling and thinking. And now, one caveat, because a place people often get hung up is they imagine that their future selves are somehow, like, not human and no longer experience any negative emotion at all.

And I want to invite you to consider that that's not the case, to consider that there's a certain amount of painful or difficult emotions or experiences that will always be a part of the human experience, maybe unless you just sleep off into enlightenment. And that could be possible, but let's say that it's not, that it doesn't happen. So you're living down here in the realm of what it is

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to be a human and to experience the range of emotions that humans experience.

So, this came up in a coaching call last week where I had – and we'll get to this specific exercise in a moment, where I was encouraging someone who wants to write and send her writing off into the world to think about an author she really admires and to think about what goes through this woman's head; this admired, decorated, celebrated author when she sends things out.

And kind of the consensus we arrived to as a group is not probably that this woman experiences no doubt or no fear of rejection or no thoughts about how her work probably isn't good enough yet, but that she has been in the creative habit of being a professional and just submitting the work anyway, and that over time, if you do this over and over again, maybe there just becomes a point where you're like, you know what, I'm tired of my emotional drama about this. If I'm committed to being a creative and to sending things out into the world in a timely way, then I guess I can continue to make this harder on myself, or, and a question I ask my clients myself and I want to ask you, how can I make this easier on myself?

And one way is always to give so much less weight to those voices of doubt and self-criticism. Because if you wait until you entirely eliminate them, it just can be another form of procrastination. So I'm definitely all for cultivating greater and greater more powerful voices of kindness and belief and encouragement, and trust that if you are making any progress towards your work, even just thinking about it, consider that the greater weight of you does want to do this thing. And let the greater weight of that carry the day.

So, an example from my own life when this kind of dawned on me years ago is when I was still kind of struggling to get myself to go out for these regular training runs. And I knew, like, once the run got started, I was never

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sorry that I went and did the run, but I just dreaded this sort of back and forth in my own mind, until one day.

I went out and I was watching this back and forth in my own mind and feeling so fatigued and tired of it all and it just dawned on me that the greater part of me had her shoes on, was outside, was moving along, was moving forward, and that that voice that was like so loud that was like, “But we don’t want to do this, but we want to be back in our warm bed and what’s this going to matter...” that that voice was actually so much smaller than its volume seemed to indicate, that really, the greater part of me, the greater weight of my energy and self was doing the hard thing already, had gotten up, had gotten out of bed, had put my shoes on, was outside, was barreling down the street and the sidewalk.

And so that really put it in perspective for me and helped me calm down and quiet and soothe a little bit that voice that seemed so loud. And from then on, that’s been such a touchstone for me to think about in terms of other places where I experience resistance, to remind myself that even just taking the smallest step forward, even the fact that I still have a desire to create something in the face of resistance tells me that the greater part of me does want to do this thing and that I can line up and give more power to that greater part of me.

So, I want you to think about what do you want to create, what do you want to put in the result line, and we are going to now go into the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than listen. I want you to lean in and work with me and really coach with me. I’m going to continue to give you a lot of new substance and content as we go through these exercises. But this is really something that you have to do the work to make it kind of work the wonders.

So, I want you to listen to this the first time through, if that’s how you roll. But for sure, for sure, do not cheat yourself of actually doing this. It makes

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all the difference in the world, the difference between just thinking about this and then making it your own and embodying it.

So, we're going to think about approaching this as dress rehearsing. And the first thing that you want to do is you want to look at what your current script is. So that's going to be your assignment number one here. What is the current script? And if you need to dial it down to simplify it, think about what result are you currently getting that doesn't match the result you want to get. Or is there a result you're creating that you just don't like or you're dissatisfied with? And then you can back that out and see, okay, if that's my result, I know there's a thought creating that.

I know that thought is creating a feeling and a feeling is driving a certain set of actions. So you can fill out your template for a script that way. And I'm going to make an awesome handy-dandy worksheet that you can download, if you would like, that will be there for you. You can use your own journal or you can use this worksheet template that I will provide for you.

So, look at what your current script is. And you might want to take some time with this to really do a thought download and dump out all of the thoughts you're thinking that are currently creating your result or creating a lack of a result. And then, once you've done that, the second part to this number one, so like one-B, is going through and being very compassionate with yourself, but very firm about what you must edit out of your script in order to become the hero of the story that you do want to live and write.

And I can tell you places that you definitely want to edit out are places where there is self-pity, excuses, a lot of victimization or victimhood, blaming others, waiting for things to happen, waiting to be noticed, waiting to be saved, waiting to be given permission, or otherwise externally validated or anointed. That's not how we write our hero's script. That's now how the hero's story goes. And those are not effective ways to get the

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results that you want. In fact, those are ways to sabotage yourself from getting the result that you want.

So, then second, I want you to tell me about the result that you want. So keep that in your mind. Then list all of the reasons you haven't done it yet. And again, I want you to do this clear-eyed, clear-minded, clear-hearted, without judgment, and with a lot of compassion, because this is not an invitation or an excuse to beat yourself up. This is just an example of what I just did with my *Art School* clients, where we compressed the 12 weeks into a week, so it brought to surface all the reasons why we haven't done things yet.

And one of the reasons might be time. And that's great, and we'll get to that in a minute. But you want to bring to the surface all the reasons you haven't done something yet, because then that's going to take us to the third part. I want you to write a script for those obstacles and how you're going to encounter them. So we're going to use that list of obstacles to sort of be like prompts for your script, because this is part of turning obstacles into strategies.

You're going to look at those obstacles, and then from your future self who has overcome those obstacles, you're going to take dictation on how did you do it, how were you feeling as you did it, what did you have to overcome, how did you overcome it, how did you overcome the feelings of discomfort that had kept you from achieving that before? What are you going to do differently this time that you've never done before? How are you going to set yourself up for success?

Ask your future self who has that aligned model – again, an aligned model is where, beginning at the end, the result we want to create is now in our circumstance line. It's our new reality. So, from that end place, ask your future self, how did I do that? How did I do that thing that I've never been able to do before? And then all of the information, all of the wisdom and

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direction that comes from your future self is going to be that script for how do you act as if.

How do you embody one who is doing the thing, because again, you want your focus to be on you are creating the thing and not you're trying to create the thing or you're trying to close the gap, because the focus on not having done it yet will just continue to produce results of striving, of trying, of not having done it yet, where you want to have your focus on the having of the results and how, as a person who creates that powerfully, how do they create when there's nothing that they need to create and it's more just their self-actualized and the creation flows from them.

So, Maslow defined self-actualization as what a man can be, he must be, at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It's also been described as that psychological process aimed at maximizing the use of a person's abilities and resources. And this process may vary from one person to another. So, in other words, self-actualization can be thought of as this process of acting as if, as this coming into your own as the full realization of your creative potential.

So, one thing that I learned from when I did this myself years ago, began at the end, and I did it long before I was introduced from coaching, but just from a space of introspection and reflection where I realized I could look at things two ways; either that this dream that I had inside of me of these creative dreams were put there to torment me and just always be reminded that my reach was greater than my grasp. Or I could believe that the knowing that put those dreams inside of me, the knowing that I was meant to do those things was the same sort of knowing that I could tap for how to go about doing those things and how to become a person that I dreamed of becoming.

And so, when I leaned into that and thought about that woman I dreamed of becoming, of her self-actualized, the wisdom I got from her was this line,

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“Act as if guided on everything.” And I’m looking at that line right now because I have it written in gold ink and hanging on my bulletin board. But I don’t need to look at it because I know it by heart. And it’s helped me over and over again. It is a core line in the script I have written for myself.

You know, I have different thoughts about reaching your potential and self-actualization. I really think we are ever-evolving and that you are able to do one thing and then you sense your limits have moved out even further, which is a beautiful thing. For this exercise though, I find it really helpful, this concept of putting that result in the circumstance line, because you can kind of put to the side whether or not that means you’ve reached your potential, but you’re focused instead on that specific thing that you do want to create.

And here again, I want to point out the importance of focusing on that thing you want to create and thinking about thoughts that align with creating that, and that thoughts that absolutely you do want in your script and you want to be aware of are lines that focus on how you’re not good enough or how you’re not good enough yet. Because even if you think that’s going to be motivation for helping you to create the thing, all you’re going to be doing as you practice that script and that thought is further and more deeply imprinting this idea that you’re not enough.

So instead, shift it to maybe obstacles, maybe a list of reasons you haven’t gotten there yet, is it because there are some legitimate skills that you need to acquire or there is a legitimate level of product and service that you need to improve upon and reach? And so make those objectives though and say, for instance, instead of I want to be a better artist, make it something clear and objective, like this year, I want to master figure drawing, or this year, I want to dive into and master color theory, you know, et cetera, et cetera. Make it something where you can see the needle moving and it is about developing a skill and a mindset and not about you fundamentally or something that you do fundamentally not being good enough.

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And so, another thing, and this is such an exciting topic. This is one of my favorite things to talk about is, as you're writing this script, how do you really start to think in ways that are new for you but actually embody the truth of who you are and what you want to be able to accomplish? And this is something that I stumbled into by just becoming more familiar with how I actually learn, because at some point, it occurred to me that I'm an energetic learner. And I have never heard that phrase described anywhere, but it would just be how I started to understand myself and how I best learn, that if I'm with someone or can study someone's being that I want to learn from, I learn so much just from being in close proximity and watching them so much more than – I mean, I obviously love to read and I learn that way too, but there's just something about being in someone's presence or hearing their voice where I pick up so much more about their way of being.

And that seems to instruct parts of me that are pre-verbal beyond verbal, that resonate and teach those pre-verbal beyond verbal aspects of me. And I talk to my clients about how to harness this, like the power of energetic learning. And I've many different approaches to it. But one that I recommend over and over is this concept of training wheels.

So if you're writing your script, and we're being like method actors, right, like who do you need to be? How do they think feel and act, in order to really have a persuasive performance, to really become that person? So for when people are feeling like it's a stretch, like I want to be somebody who is a prolific poet but I'm not there yet, then I would suggest to them that they find, like, the biography or watch videos. Whoever it is that seems to embody a certain essence of what they want to become, to really study them and do some research so that you have this sort of treasure trove of research material to draw upon for how does somebody who creates something like you want to create, how do they think, feel, and act?

And you don't have to copycat them exactly because it won't work for you just to become someone else. But it can become like training wheels to try

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on their thoughts, to try on their feelings, to try on their actions. You're basically trying on their way of being and inevitably you are going to make it your own.

And I was just reading Twyla Tharp's book on creative habit, and I was so excited to read that she had actually done this herself. And she talks about it in terms of – she doesn't call it energetic learning, but she talks about it in terms of muscle memory, which I think applies absolutely, and also makes a lot of sense coming from a choreographer and a dancer. But she talked about when she was still deliberating becoming an art historian or being a dancer that she would go to the New York City library and call up, from the archives, all of their old photographs of these amazing dancers, so like Isadora Duncan or Martha Graham, and there are a host of others.

And she would pour over those photographs and study, like, the way they pointed their foot or the curve of their waist or their gaze looking down and that she was imprinting all of this information about their physicality onto herself to ingrain it deeply within herself and make it part of her muscle memory. And I just loved that because I had never heard of anyone else doing that before, but it's exactly what I'm talking about with energetic learning.

And she also described some other creatives who had different ways of doing this, and they're things I've also done. So, for instance, for poetry, one of my training wheel methods for poetry is that I will write out, longhand on a legal pad, poems until I know them by heart. But there's a little bit more to it than just rote memorization, because what I'm trying to do is I try to read it. And then I try to get to the point where I'm not leaning so much on looking back on the text, but I'm putting myself in a place of if I were the poet writing this, what would be the next line? Like, what would be the next word? What is the next pause or stanza break? What seems to be inevitable.

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And then, as I'm doing this too, I'm trying to imagine what's not on the page, what didn't make it into this final version, and what decisions must they have had to make; trying to just put myself in their creative process that was distilled down into this finished piece, and then also trying to get inside of their process of what decisions did they have to make in order to decide that this indeed was the best way to say what they wanted to say at a certain time.

And I'd done this long ago too with novels. I typed out Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* five times because I wanted to get in my muscle memory something so profound and beautifully crafted like that. And I couldn't have written it out – well I suppose I could have, but for a novel, typing seemed the way to go.

So I've also found it hugely instructional to, like when I've taken a painting workshop for instance. One time, I took a workshop with Felicia Forte, who is phenomenal. And just by watching her, I learned so much about the energy of confidence and decisiveness. And she taught many other remarkable things and techniques of painting, and she's an incredible teacher.

And one of the greatest things I took away was the way she made decisions and the energy about her, her way of being when making decisions. So, for you, as you're going about writing your script, think about people that you can use as sort of your training wheel instructors and who you can learn from energetically. What are they thinking? How do they think? How do they feel? How do they move through the world? How do they act? And then trying those things on, they'll feel unfamiliar at first, but I want to offer you to open up this space for a while to allow it to feel unfamiliar and to question, if learning this could help me create this dream inside of me, does that make it inauthentic? Because a lot of times, I think people discard this as inauthenticity, but I feel like it is learning to become

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natural, to become who you were meant to be is to be most naturally and powerfully you.

And just like we would never consider it inauthentic to learn how to read or learn how to play the piano or learn how to paint, we learn all of those things by imitation. We learn how to speak by imitation. And to embrace that this is why we are here in community and not isolated is because we're allowed to learn from one another and that you're using these again as training wheels and not just copying someone else, but it's allowing you to feel your way into that own inner balance that is your sense of authenticity, that is you being most powerfully creative, is you living in integrity with yourself.

So again, think about that result that is just calling you to create. It's that music that you don't want to die still within you. Then think about the script that's going to be your aid until you know that part by heart. You want to look, feel, act the part that is that person that is the truest most powerful most fully expressed beautiful version of you.

Thank you so much for joining me for another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you've enjoyed this episode, I would love it if you would take the time and leave a review. You can do that straight away on iTunes or by going to my website www.leahcb.com/itunes, and there you'll see a set of instructions for how to leave a review.

Also, I'd love to hear from you if you're enjoying this podcast. If you have any questions you'd like coaching on, you can email me at leah@leahcb.com. Also, find me on Instagram. I'm always posting studio shots there, things from my work, inspirational coaching. I really try to provide substance and beauty and inspiration and it's a great place to connect with community. So I would love it too if you would come find me on Instagram.

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So, for your closing thought today, this closing bookend thought, I wanted to give you the prompt that I gave myself so long ago; the one that resulted in me hearing, “Act as if guided on everything.” So, if you were to lean into your own deepest inner knowing and think about a dream that’s in your result line, think about even a challenge that you’re facing and lean into that deep knowing and ask it, what does it know, what’s a thought, what’s a golden line that you can hold and that will help you craft your own hero’s story going forward? And then just listen.

Thank you, everyone, again for listening. I love knowing that you’re out there. I hope you have a beautiful week and I look forward to talking to you next time.