

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

Have you heard the phrase, "Sometimes you make the right decision and sometimes you make the decision, right?" Well, what I want to offer you today is that if you're going to do something that really moves you towards your creative dreams, that moves you down the path of mastery no matter what your particular medium or craft or genre or area is, what you will need to do is master the skill of decision making.

And a large part of that is the skill of mastering yourself. I have spent thousands, now, upon thousands of hours over the last several years talking to people about creating their lives and creating their art and creating business and raising families, sometimes even the decision to create a baby.

And what so much of this creative process boils down to, it is clear to me, is decision-making. And so, today, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. It's this meta-life-skill, this meta-creative skill of decision-making and how you can put aside, in the past, the overanalyzing and the angst and the regret and that you can move forward powerfully, having confidence in your decision-making ability and having confidence that no matter what happens you're going to love the outcome of that decision.

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, hey, everybody. How are you doing? Welcome back. So, I am glad to once again be recording the podcast. I don't know if I mentioned last week, but after my 40th birthday, it was fabulous, my husband threw a surprise birthday party, even after I said no parties.

But it was really, really wonderful. And so wonderful that I was even thinking on the way home – my friend Laura wrote this thing for me that I thought, okay, well now she's in charge, along with my siblings, of my eulogy because my life can clearly not get any better. So, of course, this must mean that I'm going to die soon.

That's like what Brené Brown says, like we get to this point where there's so much joy and we're like, "Oh god, now the other she is going to drop." And my mind is not immune to that. And I've had this feeling that, like, oh my god, my 40s are going to be awesome, I can just feel it. Like, I'm just hitting my stride. This is going to be amazing. And my heart, my cup, was just overflowing sitting at this surprise dinner party with these beautiful friends. And again, I'm already assigning Laura the job of writing my eulogy along with my siblings and my friend Anna is going to direct the party because she can throw a party and inspire people like none other.

So, that's the road I was tripping down. And then, the next day, sure enough I got the flu. I got Influenza-A. And then from there, then my family got it. And then, from there, I got pneumonia. Happy 40th birthday...

But here's the things; I definitely had to slow down and sleep a ton and was in bed by six for like two weeks straight, and I still did not also skip a beat too much. I couldn't workout. Made all my client appointments, made all my *Art School* calls, like coached my face off and very well. It's like – can I just pause for a second and talk about how bomb this *Art School* class is? Because they're blowing me away.

We are not even halfway through and everybody is just killing it, like crushing their goals, crushing financial goals, creative goals, writing poetry left and right, submitting manuscripts, knocking sales targets out of the water, building businesses, and then also just having all these beautiful personal breakthroughs and epiphanies. And you guys are going to think I'm making this all up, I swear, I am not.

So, I'm going to have to pull together some testimonials or invite these fabulous women on to talk because it's really inspiring. And the way this community rallies around one another is also amazing to see. It just makes me feel very, very good about the state of the world and so very fortunate about this work that I get to do, because as you know, this podcast is called *The Art School Podcast* – excuse me, because this pneumonia is – I'm dedicated, I'm here for you all, but goodness, my lungs are struggling at times.

So yes, so this podcast is called *The Art School*. My group coaching program is called *The Art School*. And though like long, long ago, back when I was in a cubicle in law school and I had this dream of pursuing this creative lifestyle for myself as an artist and that it would also involve, somehow, I had a feeling, helping others and empowering other's creativity.

And I just knew that there was something powerful afoot, like this tide was rising and it was a creative tide. And to me, it had this very feminine creative sense too. Not in the sense that it's just for women, but in the sense of maybe balancing out the more traditionally thought to be masculine aspects of intellect and that this creativity was also going to incorporate a lot more spirituality and intuition and a resonance with nature and the environment.

And the name at that time, I thought I'm going to have a company and it's going to be called Renascence. So again, like the Renaissance, a flourishing of a creative time, but also Renascence has this feminine connotation and is this up-swelling of energy, and also obviously renascence; the Latin is a rebirth. And to me too, the other word that occurred at that time and the phrase that's been with me since is that there is this creative revolution happening.

And the way I saw that phrase in my mind was like with the R of revolution, like in parentheses, that there is some sort of paradigm that is going to be overthrown. And not necessarily in a violent sense, but any sort of

upheaval is not always comfortable or pleasant, but that this revolution also embedded within that is this revolution on a personal level that is also a collective level and that this evolution and revolution and shifting of a paradigm was very much tied to creativity.

And when I think of creativity, I think of it with a capital C. And I am all for hobbies and crafts and all sort s of art forms. And then too, I'm also, like, my life's work is this creativity with a capital C. Like, I love working with people who feel like they have a calling, like there is a calling, like something has chosen them, whether it's a book idea that won't leave them alone, whether they have felt like since first grade since they were a little girl they were meant to be a writer, whether they just knew someday they'd be belting out a song onstage.

I do not know why, but that's part of my calling is that I will move mountains to help people with a calling like that, to help them follow that call, to pursue that heart's calling until they make it real in the world. So, I love taking that which you feel on the inside, that which you know to be the truth, and then making it real in the world. It's that intersection of those plains between, whether you want to call it the spiritual, the consciousness, the abstract, and then the material, and marrying those.

And I love doing that work with others through coaching. That's what a lot of my own visual art, my own painting my own artwork is about, are taking these intuitions I have and these spiritual senses or these knowings I have and making that, as Kahlil Gibran said, making that, like, work is love made visible. So that's why so much of my own artwork reflects that is that which I feel but can't see, the faith-based aspect of things, and then making that real. Because I feel like that's our great honor and opportunity as creatives and visionaries and artists. And that's just one particular medium in which I do it as an artist.

But I, again, also am just so passionate about doing whatever I can to inspire and fortify and uplift and encourage other artists. It can be

entrepreneurs, it can be anybody with a seemingly impossible dream, and helping them to not just wait for it to happen, not just hope to be selected, but to anoint themselves and to take their creative power back and go make that happen in the world and to have that opportunity to truly step into their power by owning that creativity.

Because again, like I said, I believe in creativity as a capital C, and I think of it not as just something you do, but I think of it as something that's fundamental to every human. It's this aspect of humanity that we all have the opportunity to activate. And I think the thing is, when you do activate it, you realize that it is like a vain of energy or life force. And I see it over and over again.

And it can be a synergistic thing where it's a healing energy because it is a life-giving energy. Just as I've said before, like, if you only had one lung, which I can appreciate now having kind of one lung down with pneumonia, and then all of a sudden both functioned, you'd be like, "Whoa, what is this? This is amazing."

And I think knowing you're creative and then stepping into that power that creativity gives, gives you that same sort of transfusion of aliveness into your life. So, creativity heals and then also you can engage in the creativity and it heals the life, but I think also sometimes healing your life first then helps you be more creative, and it's kind of an art to the awakeness you have to have to know which one to go to back and forth, because sometimes people can get too addicted to the healing process, the self-improvement process, and get bound up in that and give their creative energy to that rather than to what they're being called to create in the world.

So, all of this is to say, it is very relevant to today's topic because what do you need to do to own your own creativity and to answer that call and really decide to go for it and decide to take your destiny into your own hands and

make it work is deciding, and just deciding and then recommitting to that over and over again.

And as I said in the intro, I talk to people about their creative process and their lives all the time, and if I can boil so many of those thousands of hours of conversations down to one thing and give people one thing to master to walk away with – there'd be several things, but one of those several metaskills I would say is mastering the art of decision-making.

And here's why that is; because you've heard, I'm sure by now, about this concept of there being 10,000 hours, that it requires 10,000 hours until you master something. Well, what is that process of mastery, but this process of, to paraphrase something Linda Ronstadt said, you want to refine your skills until they support your instincts. So, there's three things going on there.

There's the refining new skills part, there is the supporting your instincts part, but that assumes that you have a really strong connection to your instincts and that you trust your instincts. And then there is that third part of where you know how to connect that whole process together. You know how to use your skills, not to override your instincts. You know how to use your training, not to override what occurs organically and naturally through you, what is your own quickening vitality that comes through you, but you use that in service of your instincts.

So, what needs to happen though for all of that to happen, no matter what you're creating, whether it's a multi-million-dollar empire or a book or a poem, is the ability to trust your decision-making, because you will expedite both the process of refining your skills and strengthening your connection to your instincts by learning to be amazing at making decisions. Because, if you break all of those skills down into their tiny parts, the creative process is one decision after another.

And, like anything, the ability to learn to be amazing at making decisions begins with deciding to believe you can be amazing at making decisions, and then committing to believing that no matter what. And now, I know this sounds backwards to what we're usually taught to think about what makes for an amazing decision.

Usually, we're taught to think that the outcome will tell us whether the decision we made was amazing. But that is not creative power. That is giving all of your power away to the world outside of you and believing that the world outside of you is going to determine your inner experience, when being truly creative and truly empowered means taking responsibility, and that no matter what happens on the outside, you're still going to assume creative responsibility and that you do create then your outer experience based on what you feel on the inside.

So, something to backup that you have to know ahead of time if you're going to be amazing at making decisions – and that's something I definitely would commit to – decide, "I am going to be incredible at making decisions." One thing you need to decide first is to know that you are worthy, because you are. You are already complete, whole, infinitely lovable and an infinitely worthy human being. There is nothing, nothing, nothing, my friends, you can do to improve on your worthiness, nothing you can do to diminish your worthiness.

I also love the word dignity. So dignity comes from the Latin, dignitas, which means worthiness. So you have dignity by virtue of being a human being. So what happens when you decide to know this and commit to believing in your inherent worth, your inherent dignity is then this amazing liberation, the beginning of your creative revolution evolution happens.

Once you know your inherent worth, you then get to take worthiness of the table. You then get to take dignity off the table. Those aren't up for debate anymore. Those aren't in question. Those are not up for decision anymore. You have already decided. I can't get any worthier, I can't get any less

worthy. So the amazing thing is, once that is decided, life gets a lot more interesting, a lot more fun, because no longer is your mental real estate endlessly tangled up in trying to decide, "Am I worthy, am I not? Look at that great thing I just accomplished there, maybe I am worthy. Look at how I just messed up over there. Maybe I'm a schmuck. Maybe I'm not worthy. Now, let me think about what I can do quick again to feel okay again, to prove my worthiness again to myself and to the world."

So you can see how always having your worthiness in question makes you a very self-focused, and you're in danger of becoming a self-absorbed, very neurotic person. And when you have your worthiness in question and it's undecided, then it's going to be this thing you obsess with. It's going to become one of your favorite obsessions and hobbies and distractions. And it will be one of your worst creative distractions and one of the worst saboteurs of your creativity and your great work in the world will be to endlessly perseverate and try to figure out and solve for your worthiness. Because if you don't just decide and to know and believe you are worthy, you're going to wrestle with it and struggle and overanalyze when it comes to then every decision, because every decision to you then will be this, subconsciously or consciously will be somehow, to you and to your psyche, a reflection of your worth. The outcome of that decision will feel like your worth hinges on it.

So, if you experience a lot of weight and dread and pressure around making decisions, this is probably what's going on. It's probably because whether you mean for this to happen or not, if your worthiness is in question, every choice becomes like an existential decision or determinant. You're hoping that whatever the next move is, whether it's picking the next right job or a move or even just where to eat, as ridiculous as that sounds, you're hoping that it will be the thing that takes you to a place of peace and self-acceptance for even a little bit. And then it alleviates, even for a short while, that ongoing steady droning undercurrent hum of what is essentially, if you're not believing you're worthy yet, it's doubt.

And every time I have followed doubt down to its core – and I'm not talking about discernment, I'm talking about doubting whether you're worthy – I have yet to find that that is anything other than self-loathing. So, when worthiness is still in question, it jams up your decision-making process because then every single decision, you're going to be so concerned about whether you get it right or not because subconsciously if you haven't decided you're worthy, then every single time you make a decision and you feel you're tied up in knots about what is the right decision to make, what is the best decision to make, it's because you think that the outcome of that decision is going to mean something about you, that the outcome of that decision has power over your life.

And it doesn't. And especially if you're afraid that there might be negative consequences and what they might mean and if they might mean that you'll regret your decision, what you're fearing so much is not the negative consequences, but it's not you're going to encounter yourself and react to yourself when you experience those negative consequences. Because if you're somebody who doesn't know your worthiness and who doesn't have your own back no matter what, you're going to experience regret.

And if you know that going in, "I don't want to regret," then you're going to try to make everything to avoid regret. And that is not a good energy from which to create; trying to avoid regret, because that's basically coming from fear and that's basically coming from scarcity. And as I said, making decisions is a creative process and decision-making is a creative tool. And as I say, with all of creativity, I believe that the energy with which you create goes into that creation. And so, the same goes for decisions, because decisions are this awesome creative tool. And the energy that you are embodying around decision-making will flow through to what you experience on the back end of that decision, not to mention throughout the whole decision-making process itself.

So, if you think about why we care so much about making the right decision, it's because we want to feel good on the backend. So, what would make us feel good? And it is knowing we can trust ourselves, knowing that we are going to have our own back, and it's that prerequisite for trusting ourselves that comes back to knowing that, no matter what the outcome is, that you are going to have your own back, love yourself unconditionally, and not beat yourself up for the results of that decision, no matter what.

You do not want to make a decision because you have a hope that you'll feel good once you get there, because if you believe in you, then it takes the weight of the decision about the thing, whether that's college, a job, who to marry, a career, you know that that next thing doesn't make or break your life. You know that you don't bet on something outside of yourself from making or breaking your life. You know that that is an inner job. So bet on you and you're going to have an easier process of deciding.

So, one thing that you absolutely need to remember is if you're deciding between two things, know this; whether you do this thing or don't do this thing, your life is going to be amazing either way. And if you know that, if you know that going in, that either way my life is going to be amazing, then, which option do you choose and why?

I like to tell my clients, you know, remember those – like, when I was growing up, I loved those choose your own adventure books. And you know, you'd read your way through one path, like choosing one adventure, and then I'd finish that, like that was awesome, and then I'd go back and I'd read my way through the other adventure, and be like that was awesome too.

But the thing is, both ways in the adventure had their monsters. They had their obstacles. It had its climax. It had its good things. And then it had, like, you know, the epic part of the hero's journey where the hero is challenged, because that's an adventure, just like a life. Like, that's a story. No matter

what you choose, life is going to be 50-50; 50% hard things, painful things, 50% good things. Choose option B, it's the same way.

So, going back to that phrase that I mentioned in the intro of, "Sometimes you make the right decision, sometimes you make the decision right," I want to say, the best way to go is to just know you always make the decision right. Like, you always love your decision and have your own back no matter what. And I really think that mastering decision-making and the prerequisites of knowing that your worthiness is not on the table and knowing that you can trust yourself – Rumi said, you know, that line – I don't know if it's Rumi or Hafiz, I'm going to have to check on that, but, "Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there."

And I think it's out in that field where the like creative process lives, out beyond ideas of rightdoing or wrongdoing, because one thing that I like to think of that's helped me tremendously is this phrase that I use in my art. And that's that there's no wrong moves and there are no wrong marks. And I painted it on my wall in my studio even to remind me. I actually just posted a picture of it on Instagram if you want to go look and check it out, because we can get so caught up in this binary, right, wrong, good, bad.

And if you're doing that when you're painting or writing a poem or making a business decision, you know what it does; it just paralyzes you and stops any forward movement. Where if I shift out of that realm, out of that paradigm and go out into the field beyond that, I just know I move, I follow my intuition, which gives me some information about something to do, and in response to what I do, the mark I make, the brush stroke I lay down, the color I choose, there's then a new landscape and a new conversation happening. And then my intuition responds in conversation with that.

And that judgment isn't helpful. Judgment is always looking to administer a final decree; good, bad, right, wrong. Whereas awakeness and intuition just gives you nudges and information and movements. And again, for me, like,

trusting decision-making has been very much about learning to deepen my connection to my intuition because when I'm in flow, my decision-making is awesome. It's almost nearly, I want to say, simultaneous, but not quite. And almost it feels seamless because when I'm in flow, my thought process is very simple.

I'm not overthinking, I'm not second-guessing. I'm not thinking much at all except for it's very simple, this brush, this color, go here, this mark, go there, move back, move in. It's just more responsive and it's just more visceral. It almost sounds primitive when you use language, but it also feels like a very elevated consciousness and an elevated intelligence. I'm not hemming and hawing, I'm not full of indecision, I'm just moving, which is why it feels so delicious, which is why it's called flow.

Again, there's no right way, there's no wrong way, there's just marks and they create something new to respond to, and then again, there's no right response. There's just a mark that then creates other new things to respond to. You know, and juxtapose that, like contrast that, when we're so afraid of getting it wrong or so afraid that if we don't agonize over our decision, that somehow, we're being irresponsible and that somehow that our agonizing and overanalyzing is some sort of insurance that we'll make a better decision. But it's actually just we're jamming up the connection to our own inherent inspiration and wisdom.

And again, it lends itself to that tendency to become self-obsessed, and instead of flowing what we have to flow out into the world, we start to hoard it and worry about is what I want to give here is the mark that I want to make in my art or out in the world, is it right, is it wrong? And we just start to hoard it and it gets stagnant and dies within us instead of flowing out into the world.

And we aren't being courageous in those moments, but we call it being responsible and I actually think it's very irresponsible. And the other thing is when we do that, when we give too much power to our tendencies to overthink or overanalyze or judge or agonize, we are really discounting the power of this greater intelligence within us that is always revising and learning as we go.

I like to tell my kids - I give them this imagery that there's a part of their brain that is so powerful and fast and mysterious even in how powerful it is, that if for instance, they're struggling with a math problem or a piano piece, that if they just go to the edge where they're struggling and let themselves make some mistakes and we'll go through it a few times and we'll try but we're not going to get frustrated and upset with ourselves, and then we'll go to bed.

And as we sleep, I tell them there's a team in the back of their head, a team of people who are working away at all that information that they were handing back to them every time they ran through the piano piece, all the mistakes they made, it was all information for that team. Every time they tried the fractions and couldn't understand it, it was all information that got thrown back to that team and that team was working on it as they sleep and working on it as they go and play with their friends.

And then watch, the next time you sit down, isn't it amazing the connections that are made and that come together. So I think that goes for any of us to know that there is that part in us too where we go to the edge of our learning and we can do this making our marks but if we're not willing to go to our edge because we're afraid of making that decision, then we never get that information to hand back to that more powerful team in the back of our brain.

So if you find yourself constantly overanalyzing and stuck in analysis paralysis or having a creative block, it is likely because you're believing that the external world determines how you feel. And when you believe the

external world determines how you feel, then you feel like you have to be so cautious about doing all the right things, including making all the "right" decisions and you feel you have to manipulate the outside world so that you can protect yourself from the bad things, avoid all the negative things, or to put yourself in the way of good things.

And one way we try to do this is by making, again, the "right" decision but the entire time you're doing this, what you're really doing is trying to control the outside world so that certain things don't happen that will cause you to have negative, harsh, painful thoughts about yourself. You want to make the right decision so that then, you can feel good, but that is the backwards way.

The thing is, you get to feel good when you take your creative power back by knowing that the responsibility to feel good begins with you and then once that's off the table, just like once your worthiness is off the table, then you get to play. Then you get to choose your own adventure and know that either way, you get to love the outcome and you're going to make it right and it's going to be an adventure, and again, life is 50/50 either way.

So the way not to have regret and second-guess yourself is not by making the best decision. The only way to not have regret and second-guess yourself is by deciding not to have regret and second-guess yourself. So you cannot give your power away to a decision or the outcomes of it. The creative power has to stay with you. If you want to be a real artist and a real master, you want to remain creatively empowered. And that means that the ability to make beauty, meaning, money, success, things happen, whatever, always stays with you and within the realm of your mind and the mastery of your mind and not with how things turn out out there.

So here's the tool. Decide that the decisions turn out great no matter what adventure you choose because you are the one making them turn out great. So before we get to the coach with my segment of the episode, I want to offer you a couple examples. One is because I get a lot of request,

people who want to talk to me about whether they should leave their job and make the leap into coaching or whether they should do a particular life coach certification.

And I also have a lot of conversations with people about whether they should really go for their creative dream or go with a more traditional route of making money. So here is how I like to break that down as a decision tree. So let's say you're in a corporate job and right now you're making upwards of a quarter million dollars to 300K a year. And then you ask me, "Well, should I be a coach?"

This is how I would suggest that you frame that for yourself. Let's say in your current job you're going to continue making a quarter million dollars a year in your corporate job, or you go the route of becoming a coach and let's say in whatever time you deem is reasonable for you, you will also be making a quarter of a million dollars a year. With those two things being equal, what do you choose?

And then so to use an illustration, for the creative career side, let's say you're an artist and you're like, you know what, my family really needs me to make at least 150K a year so maybe I should be selling pharmaceuticals, maybe I should be a drug rep. So what should I do? I would say make your decision, do I want to make 150K as a sales rep or do I want to make 150K as an artist? Because if you don't do that, you're still saying oh well, it might happen for me as an artist but it surely seems more likely that it's going to happen for me as a drug rep. And that's sort of the same undertone that's in a lot of the questions or the conversations I have with people who are wanting to leave corporate careers or legal careers or medical careers.

It's assumed that it's not apples to apples, and I'm saying if you make a decision that you're going to love your outcome and that no matter what happens you're going to create a certain outcome, then you can make a decision. Then you can decide with those two things, and I'm using

finances because that's often at the forefront of people's minds. If those two things are equal, then what would you choose?

Because the places then where your mind comes up and says but that's not possible for me as a coach or that's not possible for me as an artist, well then, we're no longer really having a conversation about decisions. We're having a decision about how can we coach you into the mindset where you know you're capable of creating anything you want? Because that's another part of the creative process.

So now we get to the part of the program where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to do more than just take in the information. I want you to take it and use it and apply it to your life and make it transformational. I want you to lean in and work with me and really coach with me. And today, I want to offer you a question for your contemplation. How would your creative process change? How would your art change, your career, your life change, your relationships change if you promised yourself you would never judge your decisions as being wrong or bad, if you promised yourself to never have regret? What would be different? What would you do?

I can tell you that when I do this work myself, a specific example of one of the answers I have and it relates directly to our conversation last week about creative scripting is that a creative script I have written for myself is that I no longer judge my work. And that doesn't mean I let go of my intuition or my discernment and that I'm not always learning and not always awake. But I'm letting go of judging it.

And that, to me, it just liberates my creativity and lights my fire and makes a - just creates this momentum and helps me tap in so much more deeply to my love of the process and my inherent joy and love, and also curiosity and fascination with the work. So mastering this process of decision-making and sort of the underlying prerequisites where worthiness is off the table, judgment is off the table, for me, that really has been a major part of my

own creative revolution evolution. And it's too good to keep to myself, and that is really what I hope for everyone listening to this podcast and I think that if you take this and you run with it, you are going to blow your own mind with what you can create.

So thank you again for listening to *The Art School Podcast*. Speaking of blowing your mind with what you can create and liberating your creative process, I wanted to let you know that I've been working on a new body of work. It's a body of work within my series called Victory Paintings, and that whole series is inspired by this quote from Yogi Bhajan and I'll share that quote, it's beautiful, it's one of my favorites, as the closing at the end of today's episode.

But those new works, those original works are going to drop by the end of the month and a few are already spoken for but I am going to try and keep some that will just remain available for sale. It will be released probably the 28th of March. So if you would like to see those, there's kind of a preview of one you can see on my Instagram account. It's not up on my website yet so you can find one of those up on Instagram but there's going to be more to follow and they are - I love them.

They are turning out so amazing and for me too, it is fulfilling, something again that occurred to me like 15 years ago in a law school cubicle when I was daydreaming and downloading ideas about pursuing this dream of being an artist and I had written in the margin of my notes that I want to make art that not only turns heads but turns souls. And to me, this series, this Victory series really embodies that and I'm really excited to share it.

And so without further ado, here is that closing quote I promised you from Yogi Bhajan. "Whenever you face anything and you don't know the answer, just call yourself inside and say victory. Make it a guide word. Make it a previous word. Don't ask questions. Don't try to solve problems. Just utter the word victory. Try it. You'll find the strength of a hundred angels behind you."

Thank you again so much everyone for listening and I look forward to seeing you next time. Have a beautiful week.