

## Ep #21: How to Master the Art of Practice



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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

## Ep #21: How to Master the Art of Practice

“We learn by practice; whether it means to learn to dance by practicing dancing, or to learn to live by practicing living, the principles are the same. One becomes, in some area, an athlete of God.” Martha Graham. What if I told you that everything you dream of creating, everything you’ve ever wanted to experience in this lifetime is entirely within your grasp, if only you were willing to learn how to become the person that both surrenders and empowers themselves to create that dream.

That is what today’s episode is dedicated to; to you, no matter where you currently are on that journey, whether you’re at a high or whether you’re down at the lowest of lows. Today, we’re going to talk about how you can become unstoppable by thinking of yourself as an athlete of god or an athlete of the soul or creativity, and how that will help you bridge that gap between where you are and where you know you are meant to be.

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, welcome back. I so want to say every week, like, nice to see you, even though it would be nice to see you, it really would. I hope you are doing fantastic. I feel like we’ve turned the corner on spring here and it feels awesome.

The last few weeks have been pretty amazing, and by amazing, I mean, all the things. Things have been up, things have been down, for my clients, for me, like it’s all of life and that makes it perfect for today’s topic and for talking about being a soul athlete and what helps you stay you and stay consistent and keep your eyes on the prize, no matter what’s going on around you.

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I had so many variations on how to start this podcast tonight, and I will tell you once, usually, I just really constrain myself to like one or two takes to begin with, and then I roll through, but today, I have taken a number of takes and gone all the way back to the beginning a few times because I really want to get the message across that I feel needs to get across now.

And that is the importance of practice. I thought, how can I make people listen to the importance of practice, because I think it's something that sounds maybe like a boring topic and people want to be like, yeah, I know, practice, practice, yeah of course, I get it, let's move on. But it is one of those things that if you do not give it the importance that it deserves – it's a fundamental and if you are not practicing the fundamentals and cultivating the mindset and cultivating the physiology and the spirit you need in order to create the extraordinary new reality, the transformation in life you want to create, then it's not going to happen just by thinking of it once and by having the idea and then letting it pass.

My first program years ago, when I was a baby coach, the idea that I had for a program was I named it Soul Genius Athletes, or Soul Athletes, something like that; kind of clunky marketing-wise, but the spirit of it, to me, it's amazing how much it still resonates, because it's the difference-maker. It's the difference between having a book idea in your head for years and then actually writing the book, finding agents, finding publishers. It's the difference between just entertaining creativity and innovating in your mind, being a creator and being a mover and shaker and out in the world and doing things.

There is a backbone and there is a blood and muscle to creativity, and it's a spiritual backbone and it will sustain you when times are tough. And so, I'm really pretty fired up about today's podcast because I've helped shepherd some people. Numbers of times, they've wanted to give up or felt like at rock bottom, and had really beautiful dreams and have so many things going for them, except for, in the moment, certain circumstances, and the

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sort of circumstances that makes the rest of the world look in and be like, “Oh, she’s not doing so well, she’s not going to make it, so much for that dream.”

And those are all the things that, like, when people watch movies, they like to see that triumph, but in real life, it’s actually much harder because you don’t have that cheering section and people don’t know how the end is going to go, so you’re proceeding on your own grit and your own belief in yourself and your own love for yourself and your dream. At least I hope that’s what you’re proceeding on. And I want to make sure that that’s one of the things you get from today’s episode. It is a practice of power over force.

And even if that makes no sense to you today, I just want to offer that to you, that one of the core things I teach and that I always intend to impart and give to my students and to my clients is that love truly is the most powerful force in the world, like Dr. Sinichi Suzuki said, “Where love is deep, much can be accomplished.” Because I spent years forcing and pushing myself, and I achieved quite a bit, but at my own expense.

I will never forget this dream. I think Carl Jung said that in a person’s life you will have maybe three or four dreams that are really pivotal and life-changing, and this dream was certainly one of those for me. I had a dream that there was this beautiful horse and this little jockey on the horse on a racetrack and they were going round and round the track. The jockey was just like whipping the heck out of the horse and they just kept going and going and the horse needed to go faster and faster.

And then it got towards the finish line and then the horse just kind of keeled over out of exhaustion and just life being beaten out of it, and then so the jockey was off the horse and then trying to drag the horse over the finish line. And I woke up from that dream and my heart was pounding. When I sat with it, I really felt like the message of that dream was that I was both

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horse and jockey. The horse was really like the spirit part of me, was my soul, the greater part of me. And the jockey was like my ego.

I don't always think ego is a bad thing, let's be clear, but in this case, it was not a kind master and there was not a good relationship there, and the ego was just beating the heck out of this creature. And when it had beaten the heck out of it, then it was just going to drag its nearly dead body over the finish line. That was quite a metaphor for kind of how my law school experience was.

I didn't have this work back then. If I did, it would have been different, but everything happens as it should, because it got me to where I am today. That is just an illustration of force. I realized that something in my life needed to change, that I had been forcing myself to go harder and faster over finish lines and there was definitely an absence of love in that dream, and the more I explored it, even now I just recently occurred to me not that long ago, was my horse doesn't like racetracks. My horse likes to race but is more of a wide-open fields sort of thing. And as for a jockey whipping it, no thanks, we're doing just fine on our own.

So, power over force, and where that power comes from, I know to be love and belief in the scared dream you have and belief in your vision and those moments of clarity where you're like, I know what I'm meant for in this life. I know I came here to do something. And maybe it's to do something more than what you're currently doing, and that's okay. I know I came here to not be ashamed of who I really am and to hold back. I came here to be unapologetic and also, like, deeply settled and relaxed in my being.

And this, my friends, to me, feels like surrender. You surrender when, you know, I'm the horse, I don't want the jockey. I don't want to be on the track. I just want to say yes to my horseness, to that thing in me that just wants to run wild and fast and free, or sleep and graze in the meadow when it wants to sleep. But power, it's so not the way we're taught to think in this society,

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but power is surrendering to that isness in us. Power is saying yes to that thing in us that we cannot help but be. Power is surrendering to that thing within us that we cannot help but want to create and to explore and to take risks on and to discover. And power is also surrendering so completely to that which we are and that greater thing that wants to happen through us, that when other people or obstacles or events or circumstances in our life seem to be telling us no, seem to be putting up red flags or stop signs, we're like, "No, I don't take your no. I can't help but be what I'm going to be. I can't help but go for what I am gunning for. And I can't help but create what I'm going to create."

So that is where it's power over force, because force will try to overcome those things, or overcome that which you naturally are, or overcome other people's objections to that which you are, where power is more of a surrender. You're not trying to control other people, to convince them that you're right or that you're going to make it or that you're going to succeed or that you're not crazy or that you're worthy or lovable or worth believing in or worth investing in. Power is just surrendering to, you know it, you can't help but be it. You don't have to any more force yourself, you're not forcing yourself into being that jockey, carrying the racehorse over the finish line. And you're not having to force yourself on the world by convincing the world that you're worthy.

They can take you as worthy or not, but you're going to proceed. It reminds me of – this was brought up in our *Art School* class today. I love this quote from Andy Warhol, "people are going to judge your art, so you're going to make art, people are going to judge it. While they are out there judging your art, your only job is to get back in there and make more art."

The other beautiful thing that comes with surrender and comes with saying yes to that bigger thing is that you realize, if I'm committed, if I just know now this is just who I am, this is just what I'm going to go for with my life,

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then you can relax and your life no longer depends on the outcome of what you do or who you are.

So, either way, I've talked about this before, the principle of 50-50, if where you are right now is 50% good, 50% bad, and let's say you go for your dream and you achieve it and you're still going to have 50% good, 50% bad, then you can relax and stop trying to manipulate the world, to try to work your good, quote en quote, positive emotions, maybe up into the more 60%-70% range, or manage your negative emotions down to maybe the 10% or 15%.

When you no longer need to manipulate or control anything in the external world to make you feel better, then you are free. Then you can truly relax, and that is when you get into super creative mode, because again, relaxation and freedom are creative mode. When you're in survival mode, you are neither relaxed, and you're neither and you're neither feeling free and you don't have the energy, literally, that part of your brain shuts down. The energy that could go towards creativity is just focused on your survival.

So even if it's not being chased by lions, even if it's just looking at, let's say, credit card debt, and that puts you into survival mode, then you're not going to be as creative. But that's where the rubber hits the road, and that's where this comes back around to, why am I talking about all of this, about power over force and surrender and surrendering to the greater thing in an episode that is dedicated to and theme is all constructed around practice?

Because here's the thing, the quote, like the time to construct your parachute is not when you are flying out of the plane. And I think for this as well, the time to cultivate the kind of way of being, the time to cultivate the extraordinary psychology you need to create extraordinary things in the world, especially when things are hard, is not when the hard things happen.

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So, a practice, to me, is what is going to give you the spiritual backbone, that is also going to be the bridge between wherever you are and wherever you want to be, but you no longer have to be somewhere else in order to feel better because you have this spiritual backbone to rely on. So there is a lot of paradox going on there.

Again, we talked about how that's a tool of a creative master; embracing paradox. This comes back to my soul athlete approach, using the challenges of wherever you are in life to say not why is this happening to me but how is this happening for me? Because if you're approaching it as a soul athlete, you want to be agile. You want to be strong. You want to be nimble. You want to be responsive. You want to be graceful. You want to be powerful, so you can look at the challenges that come to you and ask yourself, how is this requiring me to become stronger, to expand my capacity, to deepen my compassion, to increase my agility, to expand my creativity and to become even more resilient and committed to the extraordinary psychology I need to develop, to the mindset I need to develop, to create those really extraordinary results and to experience that extraordinary life I want to experience?

It reminds me of these from Rumi, "How do you ever expect to be polished when you're irritated by every rub?" And I wanted to be sure to share that, those lines, today because it can be so powerful to reframe challenges, not as something that's meant to tear you down or defeat you, but instead, to look at it as something, a challenge that is given to you as a soul athlete, as a creative athlete, as a way to find strength and reserves you didn't know you had, and also as a way, as like a training place for you to really practice and do the heavy lifting of that believability that I've talked about in earlier podcasts; believability, to have to flex that muscle so that it becomes stronger and stronger, which it doesn't need to do if all the evidence is there.



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You don't need to flex your believability about your being a successful businessperson or a great artist if everything is going your way. It's when you are like down, deep in the trenches and the mire and down deep in debt and down deep into no one paying attention to your work. That's when fierceness and guts and courage and heart are required. That's when you need to flex that believability muscle, and that's what's going to grow that believability muscle so that it expands your capacity so that you can grow and take on more and more and evolve and truly grow into that next greatest version of yourself that's able to take on so much more.

And again, as I've said, you can do all that work, but without the struggle, because the struggle is always going to be that voice that says, "Yeah, you're working hard, but is it worth it. Yeah, you're working hard, but are you ever going to make it? Yeah, you're working hard, but you're never good enough." That's where the struggle piece comes from.

But just pure work without that voice of self-doubt, without those self-loathing voices, just pure work is really blissful. Just pure work can put you in the sweet spot and flow of life. And so this is something that, again, coming back to practice, practicing loving yourself, practicing having the mental discipline to not allow self-loathing and those doubtful voices in. And that being said, here's not so much an exception or a caveat, but here is a nuance to it; it doesn't also work to just gloss over what you're actually truly thinking and feeling.

So, if you are feeling terrible about something, bring it to the surface. Let there be awareness, but in a constructive way. So you can see what you are thinking and decide, is creating all of my emotion and my angst, which is very real. It's not to undermine that experience. But out in the open, now that I see what's there and I can see what it creates, that self-defeating thoughts create self-defeat, do I want to continue to think that?

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Because continuing to think that but still also continuing to want to go forward is what creates the struggle. So, if you knew that things were going to turn out amazing, everything was going to turn out how you wanted, then in the moment, you could give up that struggle and you could just relax into the work of it.

So, an example of this, a specific example, I received a message from someone who is in a job search and is starting to feel down because they were running out of ideas for massive action. They felt like they were running out of inspiration. That's what they said when they wrote to me.

And so, what I responded with was, that's actually a great sign and a great opportunity and a great place to be because this is the point at which you have the opportunity to switch over from and make the leap from mediocrity to greatness, by relying on commitment and love for yourself, rather than a disempowered dependency on inspiration. So you want to think and imagine greater than you feel.

This is the heavy lifting and the focus that will raise your vibration in all areas, will help you up-level, and make you a match for what you're dreaming of. Because the thing I really believe, and what I told this person and tell myself all the time and tell clients, because I've seen it for myself, I had to just proceed on the faith that this was true, but it's born out and now for my clients, telling them what I've lived and seen for many other clients, the greater part of you is already out ahead of you and matched up with everything you want. And so now, your job, is to work on your mind and actions to catch up to that part of you.

So, in those times when you're not feeling like it and when you have no external reason to feel like it, because it doesn't seem like things are going your way, maybe the bank account's running down, job opportunities aren't coming in, those are the times when you need to tap into your strength, your fierceness, your beauty, your talent, because you know you have

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those qualities, because you believe in you and you have to know you have everything it takes, and now you're just acting on the belief that it's all done, it's a done deal and that you can relax. You don't have to struggle. You can surrender into the greater yes and just say, what's the next step?

And then also, surrender to the greater yes is so aided by relying on the spiritual backbone that practice is. I've had to do this myself, and again, it's one of those things I'm grateful for because I'm not just making this up when I tell you this, I've been in the trenches and I know. There was a time when I was making the leap in my business, I knew the kind of clients I dreamed of working with. I could envision it. I could imagine the sort of creative giants and the powerhouses and the visionaries and leaders that I would be working with, and it seemed like a scary leap to step into that role because I didn't have a docket full of those clients at the time and I was scared to give up the steady income from the really amazing wonderful people I did have as clients who I love.

And I was also worried about letting go of that identity, of serving people, and who did I think I was to step into this world class creative genius coach role. But something in me was like, you have to say yes to this. This has been a pattern over and over again. I've been through it enough times. You have the feeling and that's what you have to go on and surrendering to what wants to happen. And in the meantime, it sometimes puts you in this scary transitional space where I put myself into the world as that kind of coach when I didn't have those kinds of clients yet.

I put myself into the world as that kind of coach when I also still had very real financial obligations to meet. And then there was a period of time when I watched my bank account go down, down, down and nothing new was coming in. But in my mind, here's what edified me through that process; the spiritual backbone of a practice, a very intentional practice of managing my mind and aligning my thoughts with what I knew deep inside me, with what I knew the truth to be. So aligning my thoughts with what my higher

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purpose was, with my dream, intentionally having a practice of aligning my thoughts with that vision.

And very pragmatically speaking, this is something that's so important and I really want to drive home; by practice, I don't mean I just thought of it while I was in the car, like oh yeah, I have that practice. By practice, I put hours into thinking about this. I got coaching on this. I joined coaching groups. I read books. I journaled. I self-coached. I meditated. I visualized. I imagined. I took this for walks. I went to the pool and swam laps where I just worked on training my mind over and over again of the caliber of people that I was serving and trained my mind to visualize the kind of extraordinary coaching I provided and the kind of extraordinary results I got for people.

And I also visualized having a wait list and being able to have just a handful of private clients, but really work with these giants that were visionaries and thought leaders and creative powerhouses who would have great impact and let the work ripple out to all of their audience. I did all of that in a scary transitional time when I had to relax and not allow in those thoughts that would have caused it to be a struggle, where I had to believe before I had any external evidence to believe.

And I can tell you, I just did that on repeat over and over and over again. And for a long time, the only evidence I had coming in, lots of other people would tell you, was just evidence that I should quit and that I was delusional. But I stuck with it and I persisted and the theme here is basically – it's going to sound like the storyline from Finding Nemo, like Dory's script, keep on swimming, keep on swimming.

Because, literally, that's a lot of times what I did, when I needed to re-center myself and get clear in my head, I would go swimming and swim laps where I just focused on that and got myself back into a place of belief. The word manifested is thrown around a lot, but it has manifested. But I also created that and I also, because I was thinking bigger and from that

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end place, that's how I started to hold myself out to the world, and then those were the kind of opportunities that I started to create and accept and receive and make the most of. That's where I am today.

I said – a friend was laughing the other day. She's like, "You said you wanted to work with rockstars and you work with rockstars." And, like, I told you so. But that makes it sound easier than it was, but really, it was like finding the ease in that process was really facilitated by having a practice around my mental discipline, around managing my mind and around managing my emotions and working towards mastery in those areas and working towards developing an extraordinary mindset, ability to manage my emotions, and reconnecting to that vision and really loving myself fiercely through all the ups and downs and having a radical practice of gratitude.

All times, a part of that mental practice, was just giving thanks for all things, even the things that were really hard. Because I think that practice too of giving thanks for all things just contributes to the strength of that spiritual backbone and to your believability muscle, that what you set your sight on, the vision that you have, you absolutely have what it takes to create that, that there's no one that is better suited to carry out the dream and the vision that you've received than you.

And then this is something I do as a coach too for my clients because I believe so much in the energy of conviction and belief that I have them tell me over and over again, what is it that you dream of, what's your goal, what's your end desired result here, what would feel like a miracle for you? And then I take that vision of theirs, their intentions, and I walk with it and I visualize for them until I can see it and feel it and taste it and touch it so clearly like it has already happened. Some people call it, like, pre-membering.

Like, I think of it as if it has already happened so that when I go back and work with them, I am holding an energy of belief. I know that's a palpable

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real thing. It's more than an idea. It's an energy that's contagious and you arrive at it not just by hoping to every once in a while, but with practice.

Another Martha Graham quote that is amazing is, "Practice means to perform over and over again, in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired." And by perfection, I don't read that as meaning, like, perfect, like you must be perfect. But it's inviting that perfect realization of your vision, of your dream, of your goal, and that practicing that belief and that envisioning of it and then also when you are just immersed in that kind of belief, you start to act and show up in different ways.

And those actions and that way of showing up and that energy that you have then starts to attract different opportunities and to create different results. So, this brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you do more than just listen. I want you to lean in and work with me and coach with me.

So, the assignment I have for you today is first I want you to define what practice means to you. Because, as I've said, I think it's a word that gets thrown around a little bit too easily. So we need to nail it down and really define, what do you think makes for a practice that really works? So take some time to write that.

Think about whatever it is you're wanting to create. So, for instance, I had a conversation earlier this week with a woman who is a professional dancer and one of her big goals now is she has some really amazing financial goals that I love and I love that's he's so unapologetic and going for it, such exciting work. And so a great place to think about – think of the hours and the training that a dancer puts into being able to dance in that easy that just makes it look so easy but you know it's not, and looks so breath-taking. You want to develop that kind of mind that can move like that, that can

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create in ways, you're like, can a human move like that? Can a mind create like that? Can a mind create that kind of abundance?

And how much time and attention and focus and nuance is required? So, with that answer in mind, if you did the homework or the assignment from the podcast on creative scripting, who you want to become, I want you to compare those two. If you did that script, how have you been trying to implement it? How often? How often do you self-coach or look at your thoughts or look at how your way of being is creating your results in your life?

Because a very specific example – so I've talked about how I'm creating the result of \$50,000 art weeks once a month on the regular and from a place of joy and ease, and I'm very process-oriented, and I'm also result-oriented. And I want to love the process as well. So the one way I practice that is I take that, I know that is, like, a meta-result or meta-thought I want. But then I bring it down into the micro and very specific.

So, for instance, this last weekend, I was working on a particular victory painting for someone who said they were interested in a certain kind of piece and I could feel myself starting to kind of clam up and cramp up around – and the thought was, are they going to like this? And then I just decided, that's not what I want to practice.

What I'm intentionally practicing, what I've learned from doing this practice of, how does somebody who has the capacity to make amazing art and in a way that's very financially lucrative, how does she think and how does she operate? Well, I could see that she's very prolific and she sort of has just this let it rip, unbuttoned, unbridled, just creative unleashing. And she also loves her work and really believes in it. She loves the process of it and she also really loves her own work.

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So I also realized again there that I could take the struggle out by deciding, whatever way it turned out was already amazing and that then the mindset that I was meant to practice and that process was just one of relaxation. And how do you get into relaxation, but by enjoying the process and saying how can this be fun for me or what excites me? And over and over again, just attending to my mental process and reminding myself, hey, you're doing an amazing job. Whatever way this turns out, it's going to be okay either way.

So that's an example of taking the script and then bringing it down to the micro, but then making it an intentional part of your practice. And I really want to highlight a part of Martha Graham's quote where she said, "In the face of all obstacles." She doesn't just say when the going is good, but in the face of all obstacles; so particularly those where you think, oh, nope, now that one right there, that debt, or that setback or that person being upset with me, those are legitimate obstacles so I'll stop my practice and I'll stop moving forward.

So just be onto yourself there because a practice is a practice, and that's part of the strength of it, that a practice is a physical manifestation of your commitment. And so it's a way, a back and forth, from the internal world to the external world where you've decided you believe on the internal world and the way you manifest that is through a practice which you just do. You don't have to judge. You can just show up and do it and do it over and over again and relieve yourself. Tell yourself it's above your pay grade to judge. Just continue to do your work and continue to do the practice of believing.

Remember, you can get there from here and you don't need to struggle.

Thank you so much for joining me for another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have enjoyed this episode, I would love it if you'd share it, if you would take the time and leave a review and leave a rating on iTunes. That helps tremendously to move the podcast up in rankings and reach a

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broader audience. And I really am grateful for each and every review and each and every share.

The final thought I want to leave you with today is something that may or may not make sense right now, but I want to offer it to you as something to chew on or to take into your own practice around cultivating your way of being and your mindset. And it's just to consider what this might mean for you in your life and your process, whether that's your art or your relationships, your finances, just life in general.

And that's this idea of allowing power over force and how that might also be the same thing as serenity and surrender, but not in a giving up or a giving in sense, but in a sense that you're surrendering to the bigger thing that's happening; that thing that wants you to say yes to it, that thing that wants to affirm to you that it's real and that you're not just imagining it and you're not making it up. And that thing that wants you to say yes to it and tells you, it's okay, you can surrender to me and don't take no as an answer from anyone or any external event that seems to stop you, and for sure, do not take no as an answer from yourself.

So, surrendering is saying yes to yourself, to the sacred dream, and to the bigger force. Surrendering is, for sure, settling into power over force. Surrendering is an act of great trust and love that allows for an unleashing of your creativity.