

## Ep #25: Creating a Creative Dream Squad



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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Motivational speaker, mentor, and coach, Jim Rohn said, “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” Author Darren Hardy expanded on this in his book *The Compound Effect* when we wrote, “According to research by social psychologist Doctor David McClelland of Harvard, the people you habitually associate with determine as much as 95% of your success or failure in life.”

So maybe you’re looking around at your current community and thinking, “Well, that’s awesome, judging by this group that bodes really well for my success.” But what if that’s not how you feel? What if you’re feeling that currently your dreams, your goals, your vision for your life are no longer a fit for your current community? What is a person to do then?

Well, for starters, you can take the advice of a true creative powerhouse, Oprah Winfrey, who advised, “Surround yourself with people who are only going to lift you higher.” And then, you can listen to today’s podcast, because we’re going to fill in the gaps there and learn more about cultivating an intentional creative community and how it’s one of the most powerful ways that you can empower and accelerate your growth, your success, your personal creative revolution, and we’re going to talk about just how to cultivate your dream squad.

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. How are you? I am doing amazing here. Spring has sprung. Things are blooming, things are greening. Just the other day, my daughter, Blaze and I planted four new lilac bushes out around where the approach to our new house is going to be and my husband has been planting trees like crazy. I think yesterday he put in another 25. And we

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have been prepping the acres where the wildflowers and the grass, the CRP for the conservation program we're going to go.

So we are so looking forward to things growing and greening and blooming and to the summer. So I hope spring is also blooming in your part of the world. Although, hey, speaking of community today, I see that we broke into the top 50 in Australia. So I know, unfortunately, down there it's probably not spring time, but thank you so much for those who are listening in from down under.

And also, we hit 16 in Hong Kong and I had a wonderful tag from some listeners in the UK, including First Mommies Club. I wanted to give her a shout out for saying that she loves the podcast and sharing it and tagging me on social media and *The Art School Podcast*, so thank you so much to all of you who have been giving shouts out on social media and listening in and leaving reviews.

If you haven't yet, I would love it if you did. I really love connecting with you any way I can. So if you want to write in and tell me what's most interesting to you and I can keep that in mind for future podcasts. And I also love connecting with you on social media. So the best place to find me there is Instagram. And my handle is @leahcb1.

So I share a variety of things there, inspirational things, coaching things, art things, some snippets from my personal life. So it's a great community and I would love to connect with you there. I also wanted to let you know about a special member of our community that I'm featuring at the end of today's podcast. Annabeth McNamara is an exceptional singer songwriter, performer, musician. She is truly a renaissance woman, a woman of many talents, and I'm really excited to be able to share her music with you today, so please listen in at the end of the podcast.

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Her music, to me, is both this ethereal but also very grounded and earthy. So it's of this world, not of this world. And the result is just pure poetry and magic, so I know you are going to really love her music. And I also too of course be including links in the show notes to how you can find more of her. She has a Patreon page. She's putting out a new album. She does these special offers, you can even get your name in the credits. So the world is going to be hearing more and more from this woman. She is a star. So you can say you got in when and you knew her when.

So today, we are talking about- community and I had to cut back on my notes because there is so much that I have to say about this. This is something I feel so passionate about because, again, I am all about helping people find things that actually work and work the best, and not only work to help you have a mediocre, okay, life is working kind of life, but a really extraordinary life. Because I believe that is available to all of us. I believe your dreams are there for a reason and I know that community is an essential part of that; of you being able to create your dreams, of you being able to really express your fullest potential and become the greatest version of yourself and create and give and contribute and receive what you came here to do.

And I'm actually kind of feeling emotional about this topic today. It's like, what's going on with me? Did I have too much coffee? But no, I didn't, I think I just feel so strongly about how having a very beautiful and generative positive community, what a life-changer that is and how that really can be available to us. We have to give ourselves permission and work through the places where maybe we're not willing to give ourselves permission and maybe we've just thought community is something that happens on default. You either have a great one or you don't, or maybe you don't think it's as essential and transformative and life-changing as it can be. But it truly is.

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And I think the other reason I'm feeling so emotional about it is because this is the 11<sup>th</sup> week of this current session of *Art School*, the 12<sup>th</sup> and final week for this session is next week and this community is just blowing me away in the way that they show up for one another and the extraordinary people they are and their gifts and the ways that they have lifted each other up and what they've done in 12 weeks, not only for themselves but also as a collective and for one another.

I've received several messages from women in the group who have said that they've never been in a community like this, they didn't know it was possible, and they have never been in a community of women like this. And I could choose to think that that's sad, but I don't. I choose to think that that's extraordinary and that this is an extraordinary time in which we live. And once again, I really believe there's something bigger going on. There's this rising of collective creative spiritual intuitive energy that is feminine yin in nature; not just belonging to women, but as we have ascribed many qualities that have a feminine characteristic, so not to gender things, because I also coach men and I would also love to have more men in *The Art School*.

At the last minute yesterday, I sent out an email to my current *Art School* students and said, "Hey I am writing about community and what I think it is and what it means to me, what my experience has been in being in one and cultivating one, curating one, creating one, facilitating one. But I would really love to hear from you."

So throughout this episode, I'm going to include some of what they had to say, because they were so great about it being last minute and I had people get back to me actually right away. So I have a few of those to share for you here. And here's one from Hope Dunbar.

So she writes, "Cultivating creative community creates momentum and fire that passes from one person to another, no matter the diversity of goals

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and dreams. When we come together to encourage each other, lift each other up, and show up to celebrate with one another through the journey, then in the moments where we're feeling discouraged or losing forward momentum, we're surrounded by fellow dreamers who are willing to help you up and inspire you to keep going. The myth of the lone wolf really is just a myth. Truly, we gain energy and inspiration from one another and I've loved experiencing that magic firsthand in *The Art School*."

So, I wanted to lead with what Hope had to say there because I also wanted to start this particular podcast talking about that myth of the lone wolf and of lone genius, because really, if you look throughout time, pockets when there were these leaps forward in human thought and human evolution, it was done where there was a concentration, a geographic concentration of big thinkers; the Renaissance, you looked at what happened in the salons in France, you look at democracy, you look today in modern times and we are not so limited by geography.

In *The Art School*, for instance, a few people live in my town here, my area here in Southwest Michigan, but most are from around the country and around the world even. So we're no longer limited by that. But we do still need this coming together and this concentrated collective and ability to be together and exchange ideas and have that experience truly of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

I talked last week about creating structures that facilitate flow and creating underlying structures in your life that create the path of least resistance, the path of least resistance towards your goals, towards the greatest expression of yourself, towards your dream. And I talked about this in the context of creating your ideal creative ecosystem. And community is such a huge important part of that. And it's one of those things too where community can also be an obstacle. Community could be an underlying structure in your life that is currently impeding your progress or causing habitual frustrating patterns of failure or struggle or you try to go forward

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but no matter how much you pour into it, your efforts just seem to really be diluted.

So not all community is created equally, but the thing is, you also don't have to accept the default. And I see it as community being absolutely one of the most powerful things you can do to transform your life and tap your genius and accelerate your progress and your momentum. And I also see community as being one of the greatest things that holds people back.

And when I say that, the first thing you want to remember is to take your power back, because a community only has as much power over you as you give it. And so to realize that you are the one in control now – maybe it didn't feel like that as a child, maybe you're born where you're born, the family in which you're born or the community.

And again, this is another thing where people tend to have obstacles is they feel that if they got to cultivate an intentional creative community, that they're inherently rejecting where they came from and people that they really love and think the world of. And that's not the case.

This is looking at your dreams and thinking, who is thinking the way I'm thinking? How can I help uplift them and how also are they being in the world in a way that I'd like to emulate and also make my own? So, creating a new community does not imply a divorcing or a rejection or a dislike or a disowning of people that you love; not at all. They do not have to be mutually exclusive unless you feel that that's necessary. Because again, no community has power over you, it just has the power that you give it in your thoughts. And if you're around people who you're constantly, over and over again, giving your power away to them, you can learn to manage your mind so that you don't do that. Or you may decide that you don't want to spend that much energy managing your mind or that you need some distance in order to manage your mind.

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But those are all empowered and awake and conscious decisions that you can make. But again, one thing I see with community, where it either propels people forward or holds them back is because fundamentally a sense of belonging is one of the deepest human needs. It's one of the highest attributes on Maslow's pyramid of self-actualization, this need to know that I belong, I belong to a community and that I am not alone.

So that's core to remember as you go about cultivating community to even make a mantra that no matter where you go, you own the power to belong and to know that you are not alone. And again, as you do this work of cultivating community, I would really encourage you to remind yourself to never abandon yourself and that you belong to yourself and that you can love anyone anywhere and that's always available to you and that's a choice that leads you into a higher and higher energy, and also simultaneously be conscious and intentional about the dream squad you are cultivating, about the community that you do want to be a member of, about the five people that you would love to be the average of, harking back to Jim Rohn's quote about us being the average of the five people that we're around the most.

So the summary of what I want you to leave with today is knowing why community is essential to overcoming the limitations of your own mindset that might be standing in the way of your dreams, how community can help you expand the bandwidth and the capacity that you need in order to create and contribute and receive what you really want to in this life, why community is essential for supporting you through this journey of becoming the greatest version of yourself, some standards and guidelines to keep in mind when cultivating an intentional community where some of your stuck places around changing your community situation may be, and then also, at the end, in the coach with me section, some actionable principles, tools, and takeaways for you to work on.



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I think one of the biggest reasons community is so profound, the right fit for you kind of community, the creative, the intentional creative community is because your success and your capacity to expand is always going to be limited only by your mindset. And also those chronic frustrations and struggles and negative habits and patterns that are on maddening repeat in your life are also dictated by your mindset.

So if you act in isolation, it's really difficult to get out of your own head. So this is why a mentor or a coach is so helpful, and this is why a community is so powerful, because in a community, you have many different perspectives that can challenge your thinking about the upper limits of what you think is possible for you.

Can I be a good mother and an artist? Can I be an artist and wealthy? Can I be a wealthy woman and an artist and a mother and a successful business owner and have amazing friendships and have a well-balanced life? So on your own, you might continually but up against limiting beliefs that tell you, no, you can't have all those things, no you can't be all those things, whatever all those things are for you.

But in a community, you'll have people to challenge that and people who, in their extraordinary example of living will prove those limiting beliefs that you have wrong and who will also, in the right kind of community, will also be telling you, yes you can, yes you can, yes you can.

A community can also challenge the places where you are your own worst enemy and tend to get stuck and stay there and they can provide alternative thoughts and beliefs. So what I like to tell my clients a lot and what *The Art School* community has really taken on and made their own too is we have this saying of you can borrow my belief in your as your own grows and strengthens, but now the whole community is saying, we see you. We see you as a star. We see your talent. We see your potential. We see how hard you work. We see the goodness in you. Borrow our belief in

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you. Borrow our knowing and experience of your power and your goodness and everything you have to offer. Lean into that and out of your self-doubt and out of your shame or those old patterns, lean into how we see you and our belief in you as your own grows.

I know that for me, for my potential to be really unleashed, I need to surround myself with people who don't have my own self-imposed mental limitations. And they're limitations that I just take for granted because I'm so close to the things that I can't see them objectively. So I need people who can see from the outside looking in, see my gifts, see my skills, see the embryo of greatness or a great idea, and sometimes the big amorphous messy idea I first present with.

We really need these people outside of us, these why-seers and people that are only going to lift you higher, because oftentimes, we can't see our value ourselves because it's the water that we swim in. so we want to be surrounded by people who can see possibilities for us that we can't see maybe right now, who can see we might think we have a horizon but they can see far beyond that for us.

One example of this was when I was talking with a woman who is one of my mentors and coaches and I'm in her mastermind this year, Susan Hyatt, and I was at a lunch with her and several other amazing women entrepreneurs last October and I was telling her about this great experience I had of my highest income months ever. I had a \$50,000 month, and how that came to be. And she turned and looked at me and pointed a finger and said, "That's every month for you," and just so nonplussed by it, that that one encounter really shifted things for me, where I had known that and known I wanted to do that and know that's possible for me, but there was something else that happened when I saw her see me and also see that in me.

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Also, in a great community, being stuck for long periods of time just doesn't happen. You have to be really, really attached to your stuckness or your suffering if that's going to happen. And that's because there is this greater collective energy that is so much bigger than any one individual's stuckness. It's that upward momentum. And like I always tell my *Art School* group, hey in here, like, now way out but up, and us contributing to that elevating, that rising tide of energy lifts everybody, even when they might be experiencing a dip or feeling down, that emotional refractory period of negativity is really mitigated and shortened by the collective positive energy in the group.

And two, there's so many more eyes and minds and hearts there to help pull you up and out of that muck, whereas in isolation, what in good collective energy might be a bad day or a bad week, in isolation, it might turn into bad months or a bad year or a bad era. And again, that just doesn't happen in a really powerful creative generative community.

I also love, and I always want this to be a part of my life forever and ever going forward, I love being a part of a community where everyone is committed to being the best that they can be. There's this Einstein quote that says, "As humans, we must be the best that we can be. This is our sacred human responsibility." And I believe it is and I also believe it's fun. And I want to be with people who I don't have to apologize for believing that, I don't have to explain why I believe that, we're just on the similar vibe where we're all like, yeah, we're here, this is our one wild and precious life, we really want to make the most of it and experience everything we can experience and be everything that we can be and we don't want to be slowed down by having people poopoo that or wonder why we have to be that way.

So I love being a part of a community where everyone is committed to this; being the best that they can be, being awake, being truly creative, and truly emotional adults, taking responsibility for their own thoughts, taking

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responsibility for their own lives, their emotions, and their results, and also where everyone is there to hold each other's highest intentions and dreams sacred and everyone is there to support and encourage each other's growth.

So, this is the creative paradigm. This is what I see as one of those essential parts of the renaissance I talked about, the creative revolution that is an individual and a collective evolution, and that is that away from the idea of a zero sum game, away from the idea that me winning, me having an achievement or progress or growing somehow takes away from someone else, but instead into the paradigm where everyone's individual success or triumph, it belongs to everybody and it lifts everyone up and it moves everyone forward and that we celebrate that collectively.

The other things is that community is just F-U-N. It is so much fun. And this is coming from an extreme introvert. So I definitely need large amounts of alone time, and that's probably why I resisted community for so long, but also because I don't think I knew how awesome community could be and I also didn't know how to take care of myself and I didn't know how to trust myself to know when I need to be in community and when I need to go back and be alone and just recharge and refuel that way.

And I don't want you to dismiss, because it's fun, the importance of fun as fuel and that that's not just a metaphor, but I want you to really think about this; that if you were asking me, how can I create, how can I get the energy and resources I need to create this huge dream of mine without it burning me out and without me having to force and push and burn through my bank account and burn the candle at both ends? Don't dismiss this when I tell you, get more fun in your life and get the right kind of community, because the right kind of community is fuel. The right kind of fun is fuel. And a community that's fun is like rocket fuel.

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The things that bothered you earlier, you'll wonder why they ever bothered you or slowed you down. You'll wonder where you got these reserves of energy. It was from the fun, the intentional, the creative community. So don't just think that, oh just one more of those life coachy things where yes we should have more fun in my life but I have serious things to do, I have dreams. I'm telling you, if you want to know something that is a difference-maker and a game-changer, the right kind of community and especially a community that is really a delight to be a part of and that you love being a part of.

In her book, *Big Magic*, Liz Gilbert has a great example of this when she talks about her girlfriend, Brené Brown – I'm sure many of you are familiar with her work, but she was talking about how Brené used to have such an angst-ridden relationship with her writing. And this was in the chapter where Liz Gilbert talks about Martyr energy versus trickster energy, and how trickster energy, if you want to be a creative powerhouse, trickster energy is where it's at.

So she was talking about how Brené used to try to suffer in isolation to get these books out and that it was a very arduous tortuous process for Brené, until Liz told her about trickster energy. And so, what Brené did then was got two of her great girlfriends, who were also colleagues, they went to a beach house, they talked a lot, they giggle a lot. Brené told stories, which she's a natural at, while her girlfriends asked her questions. The girlfriends took notes and then Brené would scramble to a back bedroom to transcribe her book from the notes.

So that creative community didn't look like Brené sitting at her desk, you know, with piles of research, pouring through it, and Brené is a serious researcher, she's a serious academician, and her books are incredible. But instead, using that trickster energy and also leveraging the energy of fun and a fun community, she was able to not only have the best writing process ever, but also write a brilliant and very successful book.

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So you might be thinking, well that's great for Brené, but I'm not friends with Liz Gilbert. I don't have two colleagues that would come giggle with me at a beach house. So that's where I want you to take your power back and decide right now that you are going to create your ideal creative community, that you are going to find your dream squad.

And I also want to let you know of an obstacle that will likely come up if you haven't done that already, if you're not currently in your ideal community. Because if you're growing and evolving and becoming the next greatest version of yourself and you don't have that community yet, likely your creative evolution is going to challenge some of the mindsets in your current community.

And I see this over and over again, as I said in the beginning, where community can be the rocket fuel for your growth, but community can also be one of the number one things that holds people back. The fear that we're going to abandon people, the fear that we're going to lose friends if we become who we really are and if we go for our dreams and live into who we need to be in order to be the truest version of ourselves and to create those dreams.

So one story I always like to share is a story I heard from Martha Beck about this. This is Martha Beck's elevator speech, which is not the elevator speech you are probably accustomed to hearing, but it goes something like this; that as you grow through life, think of like you're riding up an elevator and some people are going to the same floor you're going to, they're on a similar journey, and other people will need to get off on a different floor because they're on a different journey.

So you might be going up and then decide a lot of your current crowd wants to get off at the fourth floor. And you're like, this is not really my floor but all my people are getting off. Should I get off and just stay at the fourth floor, even though it's not really what I'm dreaming of?

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So, you fight that fear and stay in the elevator, but all of your friends, all of your community gets off, and you're alone. So for a while, you have this vacuum in your life, and that's very scary because, as I said, belonging is a fundamental human need. So it can feel isolating.

So in this space of the empty elevator, there's a few things you can do. You can reframe it and think of it as creating space for the people that are going to come, because nature abhors a vacuum. And if you create the space and are committed to going up to where you know you're meant to go, the people will come. And as you go up now, there will be room for those people to get on, but you do, for a while, almost inevitably, pass through these stages of isolation and loneliness and that fear of not belonging and it can be so intense that you're really tempted to go back down to the floor that you don't really think you belong, you know you don't belong to, but subconsciously it seems like a lesser sacrifice to sacrifice yourself, to stay with the community, but you really want to think about that.

Do I want to sacrifice myself in order to belong? Do I want to stay stuck and struggling, blocked and not growing, not moving forward, but hey at least I won't be alone? Because the thing is, that's never a winning situation because you can never truly belong if you've abandoned yourself. You can never truly connect with another or with a community if you have abandoned yourself, abdicated yourself and disconnected from yourself.

So I have clients tell me all the time, well if I go this route, I'm going to lose friends or I'm going to make people in my life upset. And I don't argue with them because that does happen. But the thing is, you can decide how you want to think and feel about that. You can decide first and foremost that you are going to love them anyway and you are going to love yourself anyway, no matter what they say, what they think, or what they do. Because the thing is, there will be people that you love, that you have liked, that have been part of your community that will want to stay in default non-creative disempowered reactive mode. They will want to continue to

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complain about things and tolerating things and they'll want to continue tolerating shame and staying stuck and they'll want to continue criticizing and judging themselves and others and they won't like your talk about loving yourself and unconditional love and managing your mind and managing and mastering your emotions.

It will feel like you're poking them, to hear you talk about wanting to become the next greatest version of yourself or this idea of becoming responsible for our lives and becoming creatively empowered. But the thing is, they don't have to like it and you don't need for them to change in order for you to continue loving them. And you also don't need for them to change to come along with you.

You can love them for where they are. They're on their own journey. And then you also love yourself and don't abandon yourself and return to this commitment of taking extraordinary care of yourself. And that brings me to the next point I really wanted to emphasize. What's the roadmap? How do you create this kind of dream community?

And the most simplest answer I have for you is that you want this new standard for your community to be amazing. You want people who are crazy about life, crazy in love with life and who are crazy about you and you're crazy about them. And at the same time, you don't need for them to be crazy about you because you're all emotional adults, all very masterful at meeting your own needs, and yet, the thing is, when you no longer need anything from one another, you can belong to this community more joyfully and more freely. You are liberated because you're no longer in this desperate transactional conditional relationship mode where, I'll like you if you like me, and if you like me then I can be in this community.

No more of that, you love yourself, you stay in integrity with yourself, you trust them to be emotional adults responsible for their own thoughts and emotions and do the same. And then, what you get to focus on when all



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that old paradigm of a transactional conditional relationship is out of the way, what you get to focus on is what do you want to create individually and collectively? How can you lift each other up when you no longer need anything from one another and yet you belong, you no longer need anything from one another and yet you want the best for each individual and for the group as a community.

There is this quote, and I cannot find the source of it, but it was a positive psychologist talking about every child needs in their life one adult who is just irrationally crazy about them and their potential. And I love that. And I love approaching parenthood or any child that way. And I also think we need that as adults. And so it's also how I approach coaching. I know, for me, to have somebody see me and see either the embryo of potential in me, or just to see me like I hung the moon, is like rocket fuel. And I do think that that is also the superpower I have with my clients is seeing them truly in that way. It's not even I have to try, it's just how they appear to me.

And then taking that even a step further and having this community of people who give one another the benefit of the doubt, and even more than that, are big enough to hold a space for everyone's biggest vision of themselves and also big enough to hold a space for every single person's humanity, for not only their positive attributes, but also for the places in which they disappoint themselves and the places in which, in the past, they've been perhaps ashamed or embarrassed or have criticized or loathed themselves for.

We hold a big enough space for all of that so people are free to come as they are, the messiness, the beauty, the magnificence, all of it, and just being in a space like that itself is transformational. So many times, conversations I had with my clients where they have the most heartache is where people that they love or people that they want to have accept them or love them or love their work, just seem incapable of it. And I want to

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remind them and I want to remind you that you have to always keep in mind that most people see you not as you actually are but as they are.

So keep that in mind and then also know that there are people out there who really work to see you as you are because they've done the work of seeing and accepting themselves as they are. And again, that doesn't come from just looking at the bright spots and the beautiful spots and the successes. That kind of wisdom and mature spirit comes from holding a big enough space for themselves for all of their humanity, for a good honest, and also compassionate loving look at it.

So having that as one of your criteria for the new standard for your ideal community, people who are big enough to hold all of their humanity and big enough and mature enough to hold all of yours, people who are crazy about you unconditionally, even when you are feeling like a jerk or like you really screwed up love you anyway. And it helps to get there and vibrate at the same level as these people if you do that in our work along the way yourself.

The other standard I would invite you to adopt as your own is a community that normalizes thriving and a community that has left behind old paradigms of martyrdom and we have to struggle and suffer in order to be good and succeed, but instead a community that normalizes and looks for ways to support thriving at every turn, a community that normalizes emotional adulthood, which is taking responsibility for all of your results because you know they stem from your thoughts and your feelings, having a new standard for your community being those who are big enough to dream and dream big and hold a space for your greatest shining, and also your places where you're most afraid or still processing shame, so a community that's big enough and safe enough to support true vulnerability.

You want to find a space where people can support your biggest self so that she can relax into being and become more real and feel more real and

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solid in the world; so a space where you don't have to tone it down, you don't have to apologize for yourself or your big dreams, you don't have to apologize for the places you screw up. You just want to mine them for wisdom and learn and move on; so people that have a big enough capacity to hold everything that you want to become and are becoming.

Also, a creative paradigm, like I mentioned earlier, not one that's zero sum but one where everybody's individual wins are seen as a collective win and we call out the wins of the individual because that person is part of the group and we love that person, and it's also seen as a win for the group, acknowledging out interconnectedness that way.

Abby Wambach has a book that I'm dying to read, WOLFPACK, because a lot of my clients have suggested it to me now. And she has this quote – I'm not sure if it's from this book but it's one I'm familiar with of hers that I love and that's that never in her career did she score a goal where there wasn't someone that had passed it to her. And I feel like that too speaks to the nature of this new creative positive generative paradigm.

So here are more hallmarks of this new standard for community. You get the sense that you're being rooted for, cheered on, and encouraged and that everyone is trying to help you expand yourself, your perspective, your opportunities, your possibilities, your life. And it's a place where you can go to ditch the drama of life and not add drama, where people will challenge you to be honest and take responsibility for your life. You feel like yourself there and you feel more yourself for belonging there. The conversation is a balance. It's not just one person talking. It's not just you talking. It's not just you solving someone else's challenge and it's not just always around your challenge, but we're looking for universal themes.

You feel like you have more energy because of the group. You do contribute and if you're an introvert like me, you definitely need to take care of yourself and build in enough time in your life and in your schedule for

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alone time and the things that really recharge you, but you feel like, overall, the group is energizing and it's life-plus. You're centered and rejuvenated after time together, even for introverts who need to recharge.

The feedback is constructive, never destructive. There's a safe place to come as you are and brainstorm and spitball half-formed ideas without the fear of being put down or shut down, but rather coming as you are with half-formed ideas is fun and encouraged and seen as a necessary and powerful part of the organic creative process.

A really good example of this is if you listen to – go to Malcom Gladwell's Broken Record podcast. I may have mentioned this in last week's podcast. But when he interviews the Love Junkies. I love following any story about the Love Junkies, and I'm just going to say right now, I would love to have them on my podcast someday. But these three female singer songwriters and the way that they talk about their little community of three there and the creative process I think is a great illustration and example of the kind of dream squad.

So, this brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to really lean in and take this information and integrate it in your own life, move beyond information into transformation. And I have for you today a few suggestions about how to do this. So here are your assignments, should you choose to accept them today.

The first is a mantra, because first and foremost, your ability to succeed within a community, or anywhere, the foundational piece you need for that is a sense of belonging to yourself and belonging to this world and to know that even when you are alone, you belong as you are and where you are.

So one mantra I love for this is, I belong as I am where I am. And whether or not people accept you or reject you, whatever has nothing to do with nothing with your ability to belong, nobody can take from you your

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belongingness. But we can forget it. So it's helpful to come back and center this and remind ourselves and remind ourselves and know you can always continue to love yourself and you can always continue to love them. And again, here's a mantra for that; I belong as I am, where I am, I belong to me, I belong to the whole world. And you might riff on that and make it your own, but that's one of my personal ones that I love.

The second is similar. It's always to choose yourself. So when you see a crown, even if it's been a crowd that you love, get off the elevator and you know it's not your floor. Choose yourself, trust that your life is going up, trust that vision, trust that inner voice and come back to yourself. Send them love. Send them love for their journey and then come back to loving yourself and trust that the elevator is going to take you to a greater and greater knowing of yourself.

My third suggestion for you today, here is your assignment, to start to articulate what your dream squad, what your ideal creative community looks like. Again, you can be as concrete, specific as you want to be, like who might be in it. If you're not sure who yet, you can start to describe the qualities. You can describe how you want to be in this group. And that's the piece you can begin working on immediately; you starting to show up as someone who belongs to this group, a group that normalizes thriving, that normalizes all the dream visions that you have for your life.

*The Art School* is right now a living breathing example of a manifestation of one of my dream communities and I'm growing that too and growing more specific visions, for instance, creating a mastermind down the road where we normalize wealthy powerful women artists, a cohort or collective of women artists who come together to continue to tap their creative genius, their earning potential, their ability to create good in the world.

So that's part of my vision going forward. So do this exercise of detailing yours. Write it out. If you want to hashtag #theartschooldreamsquad on

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Instagram, I would love to see what your ideals for a dream squad or creative community are.

And then the fourth part of your assignment, should you choose to accept it today, is to do something today that creates forward momentum to ensure that this creative community comes out of your imagination and into your world. So commit to doing something today and that's another thing you can hashtag #theartschooldreamsquad on if you'd like some accountability. And then, within the next month, take three more steps to finding these people and to becoming that energetic match that resonates with these kindreds of yours that are out there just waiting for you.

Thank you again for listening to *The Art School Podcast*. I hope you really enjoyed this episode. If you are looking for an extraordinary creative community and a dream squad, I highly recommend that you check out *The Art School*. We are enrolling already for the fall of 2019 and I'm also offering a series of bridge classes to bridge the gap between this current session and the one beginning in the fall.

There will be one class a month, May, June, July, August. You can sign up for one or for all of them. You can email me at [leah@leahcb.com](mailto:leah@leahcb.com) to learn more or to schedule a discovery consult.

So, before I let Annabeth McNamara take it away and let you enjoy her music, I'll also let you enjoy the words she had to write about community, "Community makes me feel like I'm no longer marooned on an island. Suddenly, I'm stepping into a larger ocean of possibilities with the added breadth of our collective experience giving me a glimpse of some vast as yet uncharted creative waters. When some of us are uplifted, we all rise in that wave, so we can't even feel the ground anymore. We're floating together and it feels like some kind of flying. And when the tide draws back and goes low, we can circle and remind each other that the waves come and go and that we're here because we love to swim in open water. We

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love to feel that creative force swirling around and through us, and none of us are going to sink in an irretrievable depth because we've got a hold of each other and see each other's best selves and remind each other of that every day. Being part of a community is like a trip to the beach. It's so much fun."

Thank you for that Annabeth and thank you so much for sharing your music with us today, and thank you all for being part of this podcast community and listening in. I hope you all have an amazing week and I look forward to talking to you soon.