

Ep #30: The Creative Liberation of Paradox



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Leah Badertscher

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"Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am vast. I contain multitudes." Walt Whitman.

One of the core tools that I teach to my clients and in *The Art School* is the creative and liberating tool of paradox. Today we're talking about paradox, and specifically as it relates to a tool that might sound like it contradicts some of my earlier teachings, but in the context of my greater work, which is about this creative revolution, this personal evolution, it's all about finding ways that make your life and your art work. So it's very much aligned and I think you're going to love this concept and this tool.

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 my beautiful creative genius listeners. Thank you for being here and welcome back. I hope you all are doing amazing. I've had an awesome morning. I dropped some paintings off at a gallery that's opening up here in South Bend, which I love in the Michiana area. I live in Michigan.

So Anna Drew and her sister Maggie Drew, who are dear friends of mine and also are outstanding alumni of *The Art School* are joining together and opening a really amazing shop in downtown, in the historical district of downtown South Bend. Women artists and the name of the shop is - okay, this is perfect. The Alchemist Stars.

Their mother was also an artist and these two women are alchemists themselves. They take the raw material of life and make magic, which is the kind of art making that really resonates with me too, so I am honored and thrilled to be a part of this and have some pieces down there.

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So my daughter and I dropped some of my work off there this morning and then I came home and I just had a call with this client. I love her to death and something that we were talking about made me think you know what, this would be timely for a podcast episode too. So this client of mine who is beautiful inside out, brilliant amazing, highly accomplished. Just all around very dynamic woman.

And she was presenting at the coaching session with something that I have been so familiar with in the past, and it's something that comes up for a lot of my clients who are high-achieving, very conscientious, big-hearted, and used to being the person that has it all together for everybody else. And that has its wonderful sides because these type of people tend to be leaders and healers and they get things done and they're major contributors.

And then the side that can hold us back is then when we go for help ourselves, even though we're asking for help, it's like we have this hidden barrier where we almost don't feel we're allowed to say what we need to say, that we don't have permission to express the most difficult things we're going through, our most difficult emotions, our most difficult thoughts.

And that obviously is a major impediment to coaching, which because all of these people are very intelligent are well aware of, just as I'm well aware of what an impediment it is to coaching. But still for these clients and for myself, it can sometimes be tricky to get over that inner filter of you're not allowed to say that, or you should know better, or you hear yourself trying to coach yourself along the way and do the therapist or the psychologist or the coach's work for them, but you don't feel any better.

On the surface, you've given them the illusion because you're also somebody that's empathic and wants to make others feel better, like they're doing a good job, you may have given them an illusion. I can usually tell when my clients are doing this though, that you're doing better, but it really hasn't solved the underlying problem.

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And this client had a brilliant phrase for this. She called it false improvement. So I want better than false improvement for my clients, for myself, and I want better than false improvement for you. And so one thing this client said that made me think this is a timely time to talk about this particular subject is because she had listened to the podcast on complaining and not saying I don't know, so she was anticipating my coaching, that she wouldn't be allowed to say I don't know, that she wouldn't be allowed to complain.

But here is where the tool, the concept of paradox is so liberating. It's one of the core concepts and practices, tools that I cover in *The Art School* but then also introduce into my personal practice with clients. Because the tool of paradox just makes our mind big enough to grasp the vastness that is being human and is the universe because the universe is complex. It's nuanced. It's dynamic. There is diversity.

And our minds want to reduce things to a binary. Well, if this, then not that, and if not that, then it must be this. And so here is then where I find the nuance in between the teachings about going complaint-free, abstaining from complaint, and abstaining from I don't know because those things can be major blockers.

So I teach those tools because they are very empowering and they help you see where you might be blocking your intuition and your own wisdom by saying I don't know, you might be keeping yourself stuck by saying I don't know and why I teach abstaining from complaining because you might not realize what a negative filter you have overlaying your whole entire life. And it just might be a habit.

But once you're aware of those, it's time to go deeper. It's time to go into what - when you say I don't know, what are you really saying? What's beneath the I don't know? I talked to one client last week who for her, I don't know just really meant she wanted to have a solution that was going to give her the path and the way forward that would map out the next five to

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10 years and would be completely and totally successful. Pretty much pain-free and financially lucrative.

So this person is a doctor and they were wanting to branch out and also have a stream of income from creative work. And so I said becoming a doctor, you laid a lot of foundation from that. Granted, you graduated from school and then you got a well-paying job, but really the foundation that was laid by years and years of prior work.

So when we say I don't know in that context, what we're really saying is I just don't think I'm down for the uncertainty and the trial and error that I might have to go through again. But for someone else, I don't know could be completely different. So for someone else, I don't know could mean I think I do know, but I don't want to say it because I don't think I have the authority to say what I want to say.

But if they hear somebody with a big title and a lot of letters behind their name and a lot of books published and they already have a public platform saying it, they'll be like, oh my gosh, that person is saying the same thing I'm saying and thinking and experiencing, but I'm not allowed to say it because I don't have the authority. That could be an I don't know for one person.

I don't know could also mean you know what, I think what I would have to say would be so ill received or would be so negative and I don't want to be negative, and I don't want to be offensive and I don't want to ruffle feathers, or I don't want to be wrong. So all of those things can lie below the surface of that simple three-word phrase, I don't know.

So allowing yourself to then hang in that space of I want to say I don't know, what's really going on? What does that really mean for me? And here's where having a crackerjack coach can really help because crackerjack coach, like I like to think of it as deep listening and it's this

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listening for what the person's saying that they're not saying in words or audibly.

The same goes for complaining. When I hear someone continually complaining about something, I'm listening closely for what's beneath the complaining. What is really going on for them that they're not allowing themselves to say or do? How are they disempowering themselves that comes out constantly complaining about a boss or a spouse or about their repeated failures, seeming failures, or even a benign complaint like the weather or the traffic?

So I'm always listening deeply to what's beneath that complaint. So a coach can help with that. A really good psychologist therapist can help with that and then here is a tool I also want to share with you today that can also help you with that if right now you're not ready to invest in a coach or a therapist psychologist or other sort of deep listening healer.

And that tool is something we'll call today your very own magical book of ranting and raging because I know those things, again, seem like they contradict what I told you in previous episodes about complaining and I don't know, but here is where they are really aligned with my overall mission, which is to help you creatively revolutionize and evolutionize your life and move forward and not be stuck and give yourself access to your full potential and power.

It's a tool that helps make your life work. Just in the ways that abstaining from complaining and abstaining from I don't know are also meant to help your life work and empower your creativity and your genius. So here's how it works. You can take a notebook. My personal favorite for these are the Moleskins that are unlined and paper covers and solid cover on front and then I like to write in a gold Sharpie. This is being very specific. Do this however you want.

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But here is an important part. On the front cover and the back cover, you're going to write love in capital letters. And then what goes on those pages is everything you feel you can't say because it's too negative, it's too hateful, it's too wrong, you're not entitled to say it, who are you to say it. I want you to put the worst and also the most entitled, the most superior, whatever you think is within you that you're not allowed to say, I want you to get it out on these pages.

I want you to rant, I want you to rave, I want you to rage, and just empty it all out on these pages. I could just as well call this book an honesty book, which is also how I like to think of it because to me, this is an energetic clearing tool. If you have heard people talk about blocks to their creativity or blocks to their ability to earn money or love, I think this tool is so powerful in helping to remove those blocks.

Because here's why I had you put love on the front cover and back. You're doing this within the space of unconditional love, in the space of conditional love where love can handle the worst that you think you have. So it's a place where you get to acknowledge your humanity, the full spectrum of it. Not just the good stuff.

Not just the parts where you're trying to evolve and improve, but put your doubts, put your despairs, put the most difficult emotional thing you're going through right now, pour it out in those pages and it's bookended - I like to think of it as like, love's hands being the front and the back of the book, and it's all held within this safe container where you're emptying it out and getting it out of your body and out of your psyche and handing it over to a higher loving force.

And just like you wouldn't want to - if you were cleaning out an old house, you wouldn't want to leave the corner of the gross old bathroom unscrubbed and uncleaned out. Scrub out every corner because you hand it over to this and it's really going to help clear it. And I know some people

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who are familiar with the law of attraction will say, well, don't you attract negativity by being negative?

And here is the thing; if we're talking in terms of law of attraction, the law of attraction responds to the vibration that you're offering, the truth that you hold within you, and not just the words that you're offering, and not the thoughts that you're trying to force and impose and lay as a sugar coating underneath the truth of what's happening to you.

So that's why I call this an honesty book. You're getting out what's really in you so it's no longer in you and allowing a higher consciousness, beginning with yours to just hold it with compassion. So you hold a very compassionate space for yourself as you're doing this work. Not judging yourself for the hurtful, hateful, whatever sort of way you might judge it as being ugly or unevolved. You're not judging.

You're holding a wholly holistic, unconditional, loving space because that's the kind of attention and consciousness that heals and transforms and allows for true improvement and true evolution and true growth and not like my client said, this false improvement or a sugar coating of it but nothing inside really changes. As my friend and outstanding coach Christie Inge likes to say, she's like, don't try to be more spiritually evolved than you are.

So when you show up to these pages, be petty. Just get it all out. Be honest because it's that vibration of honesty is a very powerful vibration. It's the vibration of humanity, and none of us gets to escape that. And this instead gives us an opportunity to hold this unconditionally loving space for it.

So this brings me to the part of the episode where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to lean in, take this information, and make it transformational. So lean in, work with me. Really do this work and coach

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with me. So you've already gotten the main tool, which is your honesty book or the magical book of ranting and raging.

The other beautiful thing I forgot to mention about this is you're not allowed to self-coach in this book. You're not allowed to climb for better thoughts. You're just supposed to get everything out and show up as you are on the page and it's not a part of your regular ongoing journaling, writing practice, or morning page practice if you have it.

So this book you can burn and if that feels good to you and you don't want anyone else to find it ever, I suggest that you do burn it and let that be a healing and releasing process as well. So in additional part I'd like to add on to this exercise suggestion is the three-layer question excavation process.

So if you're having a hard time getting past that lump in your throat, that block or filter that doesn't allow you to say what you really want to say, start with this question. What do I really want to say right now? Write that out. Read it. Then ask yourself again. What's beneath that? What do I really, really want to say? Write that out, read it. And then ask yourself a third time, but no really, what is it underneath this if I let myself say it, if I was being really, really honest, what do I really want to say? What am I really feeling? What do I really want to get off my chest and out?

So follow this three-layer excavation process to really unearth and turn over again kind of that stuff that gets stuck and stagnant and put it between these pages that are bound with love. And I'd love to hear what your experience with this process is like. I'd love to hear if you're relieved, I'd love to hear if then something really fortunate shows up in your life, or new insight or clarity or love or luck or money or creativity.

This works wonders for me and it's a tool that has worked wonders for my clients too who have been plagued with this burden of always trying to have

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it together and of always trying to do the right things. Really admirable things, but here again, allow yourself the vibration of honesty, allow yourself the vibration of humanity. Allow yourself the possibility that you can get out what you think is the worst thing within you and that you are still so very loved.

Thank you again listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you enjoy this content, these episodes, and you wondering how to take this work deeper and apply it to your own life, you would love the work that we do both in private coaching and in *The Art School*. So while the next *Art School* starts up this fall in September, we are already filling up both the master class and the open class for that fall session.

Also, there's currently early bird pricing for both of those programs, so the price that's on my website, www.leahcb.com is the early bird price and that price expires at the end of July. So if you're interested in reserving your spot and taking advantage of the early bird pricing, you can sign up at my website.

I also still have discovery consult spots open in June and in July if you'd like to talk with me and learn more about *The Art School* and private coaching. You can also schedule those discovery consults through the link on my website or by emailing me with discovery consult in the subject line at leah@leahcb.com.

Also this summer, I'm offering a summer workshop series to both bridge the gap between this last session of *The Art School* and the one coming up in the fall, and also as a way for people to just put a toe in the water and commit to just one class at a time and see if they like it and you're going to love it. And then sign up for all of them if you like or just stick with the one.

This next class we have coming up is going to be outstanding because it's one of my favorite subjects because it is sacred work and it's very

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pragmatic work, and I love marrying those two worlds together. It's about making money. To me, that is another avenue of creativity and it's one that I have a very unique perspective on, given my various backgrounds, and it's one that I've learned a lot through the school of hard knocks.

And I like to share that in a succinct form to hopefully save you some of your own hard knocks because I really love to help people find that space where they're leaving money on the table or to begin a plan to start making more money going forward because what breaks my heart is when I talk to people in coaching session or on consults and over and over again I hear that what's holding them back is limited finances or the fear that they will always have limited finances.

And that, my friends, is not a life sentence. That is something if you can create anything in this world, you can create money. You have to adopt a wealth mindset and a money mindset, and then you also have to have a strategy that fits you. And I am not one for formulas or templates or blueprints. I really love working intuitively with people, and while I know that there are universal truths and mindsets, what I want to do in this workshop is I keep them small enough so that I receive all of your questions and we have an active workshop portion.

Because I want you to find the strategy and the mindset that's going to serve you in making money forward, and I want to challenge people in this workshop to set money goals and from what they learn in this workshop to really start moving towards those, moving the needle and seeing numbers change, and having different tiers of goals and to check back in with me and let me know how it's going.

And so we can layer on in later workshops adjust that because it's a lot of the goals that people have in the full 12-week *Art School*, a lot of people have financial goals as part of their goals. So it's work I love to do because I think it's sacred work. I think it's so tied to our feelings of worth and value and our feelings of empowerment and it's also - not contradicting because

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they all go together - sacred and it's this very pragmatic aspect of being a creative human on this planet.

It is an amazing feeling to know that you can support yourself in this world and it's an amazing feeling to know that if you want to be unlimited, you get to be unlimited. It's not the sky is the limit. The mind is the limit. So this is going to be such a fun and fascinating and powerful workshop. I think money work is such life-changing work.

If you're interested in signing up for this workshop, again, if you're already registered for *The Art School*, you're already in. It's included. If you just want to do this one workshop or one workshop at a time, it's \$247 for the 90-minute workshop, which includes coaching with me and all my best content on this subject. If you have questions, you're going to get individual attention.

So if you're interested in being part of this workshop, again, it's June 18th, 12pm Eastern time, and the only way to register because I want to make sure this stays a small group and that I know everyone that's in it is by emailing me at leah@leahcb.com and just put summer workshop series in the subject line and I will get you enrolled and signed up and ready to go.

So this brings me to this closing bookend portion of the podcast. When I do this part, in preparation for this part, I was trying to tune into my intuition and trust that whatever comes to me as something that someone or someones out there need to hear right now or it'll be meaningful for you to hear it right now. And right now, a lot of the inspiration that is right in front of me is over and over again this theme of wings.

And wings make their way into my art quite a bit. I've made a number of new pieces recently in my victory series and I'll talk about those more on an upcoming podcast, but I have a few of the new pieces I've just done casual

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shots of on my Instagram if you want to see them. They turned out so beautifully and I took a few of them to a new gallery tonight.

But one of the reasons that I love the motif of wings, in particular, angel's wings on these victory pieces that I do is because I love in my artwork to take what I sense and what I know to be a very real part of my experience and for me, the world. And then to make a physical representation of that because I feel that that nourishes us. That yes, it's important to have faith and it's important to believe in things that we can't see, but then sometimes it is so reassuring to have something beautiful, something tangible for this human earthbound aspects of ourselves that is a physical visual.

You can reach out and touch it, representative of something that we sense. It's like it links those two worlds together so the motif of wings comes up quite a bit in my art. And so then today when my youngest, my daughter Blaise was reciting to me this poem that was one of the poems that she and her little classmates in kindergarten had memorized for their closing kindergarten ceremony because it's one of her favorite poems, today I thought well that's it.

This is what I'm meant to share with you today because the motif of wings come up yet again. I'm sure many of you have heard this poem before and I'm happy to share it with you again now. Dreams by Langston Hughes. Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams for when dreams go, life is a barren field, frozen with snow.

So I'm wishing, intending for all of you that you hold fast to your dreams and that your life and your dreams have wings and soar. Have a beautiful week everyone and I look forward to talking to you next time. Take care. Bye-bye.