

Ep #47: Dropping Language and Dropping into Being



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Leah Badertscher

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“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way; things I had no words for,” Georgia O’Keeffe. In today’s episode, I want to talk to you about how you can access the things for which you have no words and how developing an ability to do that through an intentional practice can help you to liberate yourself from old patterns that are keeping your creativity and your potential stuck or plateaued and how this practice can also help you access a way of being that you have always known is possible, a potential you have always known is possible but you just haven’t been using the right key to unlock that door.

I think, in today’s episode, you might find that key.

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.

Welcome back, everyone. I hope you’re having a great week. I am really excited to dive into today’s topic. It’s something that has been coming up a lot in the current Art School, and as I’ve mentioned before, I’m really fascinated – borderline obsessed – with finding those things in life that really work. I want to find the things that work for me to help me move the needle and unleash creative depths and abilities I didn’t know I had and to cultivate those, and to do that for my clients too, to find ways that just really help make life work.

As I mentioned in the intro, I do feel like so many of us have this sense that there is, like, another way for us to be in the world. And it’s not erasing the human condition. It’s not taking out pain and difficulty. It’s none of that at all, but it’s this sense that if we could sink into like a wisdom in ourselves, that we could navigate life in more powerful ways, that we could relax into our lives and really live full out without this ongoing sense of am I doing this

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right, those neurotic self-obsessing thoughts, but just to be who we came to be in the world and flow.

And so today's tool, I will just cut to the chase, it's called dropping language and dropping into being. I led with that Georgia O'Keeffe quote because when I first read that years and years ago, I knew exactly what she'd said. And I hadn't come across anyone else saying that before and reading her words, that she needed color and shapes to say things that she sensed by had no words for validated something in me that I didn't know I knew until I saw it reflected in someone else's experience outside of me.

And I feel like that's so much of where we are in the world today. Like, how many of us know things that we almost quite don't know, but if we could only have them reflected outside of us, or only make this leap into trusting our own intuition, then those ideas might develop, then that potential might develop.

I feel like there's so much that wants to flow through all of us that if we could just get out of our way and stop questioning whether we are worthy of the inspiration that occurs to us, that we really would be, like, popping with genius left and right. I do believe that, as Deepak Chopra says, there is a god seed in all of us. And for so many of us, it's wanting to awaken. And I think what it needs is to hear, yes, there is a god seed in you.

And one of the ways I have found to access those places where we aren't limiting ourselves by who we have been conditioned to think we are or can be in the world, we're not limited by what we've been taught we can or can't accomplish, is to drop language.

And I think this was something that I was fortunate to stumble into as a child when I lived out on a farm in what some people would call Flyover part of America, which is such sacred mystical ground to me. And I know a lot of people too think there's nothing going on there. And in some ways,

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it's blessedly true, but I think in the ways that matter it's not true at all because that's, those wide open spaces, those big horizons, that vast sky, those long open hours were times when I felt like I was connected to a knowing that I didn't have words for.

And that was something, I think, such a deep experience that has stayed with me, even through experiences and education, which was all great, but that tends to be scornful or condescending or dismissive of that kind of knowing, that you can't put language around.

And so too, while you all know, if you've been listening to this podcast, that one of the tools I use is a thought model. One of the challenges I've often had and always had with the thought model is that I don't believe that the thought always comes first because a thought is a sentence in language, and I know for me, for my experience, there's so much of a knowing that comes as this, like the big energy that I talked about last week. It comes as a knowing and I can't immediately put words around it, but all my life, I've sensed that it takes some time to pay attention to it, for it to reveal itself and then for you to develop a relationship with it and know it.

And I think this is why I love poets because part of what poetry is to me, the kind of poetry I love, is that poets have interacted with this mystery, this great intelligence that we can't immediately understand and distill into words, and if we were to do it, it would no longer be that thing, that alive thing. So poets instead take words, and by arranging them with space and breath and vowel and consonant sounds and all of the other meanings that words have for us, they almost make this energetic hologram where a poem is so much more than a bunch of sentences strung together. Where a poem done in this way creates and conjures up something that is closer to that energy of truth that the poet was sensing.

And for Georgia O'Keeffe, the artist, the truths that she was sensing, that she just found no words for and instead, well maybe if she could use color

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and shape, and also for her scale, and make you pay attention in a different way.

And I think that's what so many great artists and mystics are saying is that to know this kind of wisdom, this kind of knowing, whether it's your own, or whether it's something greater that we're all connected to, there's a certain quality of attention that has to be paid, and it's sitting with it. And it's also this dropping into a space where you're willing to be with it and not understand it entirely.

I have heard before this definition of wisdom that I love so much and it's that wisdom is the ability to have many contradictory truths in your mind that create so much dissonance and be able to hold space for all of that without it contradicting itself. And I think that's the kind of wisdom and truth that I'm really fascinated in and that I think creativity helps to channel because words, language and word structure, are all wonderful.

But if you think about it, so much of it is what we have inherited. So we are thinking is often, if we limit it to language, is limited by the language we have inherited. So think about, if we have this, such a religious devotion almost, to language where if we can't speak it then it doesn't exist, if we have an experience but we don't have words that then we can relay to other people to help them understand what that experience is, then it's really hard for us to believe that we had an experience.

You may have heard about how it's believed that in ancient times, perhaps people didn't see the color blue, because if you look for instance at the Odyssey, that originally the Odyssey, every time the water was described, it was described as this wine dark color. And the sky also was never attributed a name that we would call blue. So people have posited that, at one point in time, people didn't see the color blue until maybe some people began to see the color blue and others couldn't, and then they came up

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with the word blue that allowed then everybody to have this collective experience of blue.

Or you could think in the more modern sense of the urban dictionary and words that we come up with now to describe things that are modern phenomenon that once it's named a thing, it becomes a thing. because before we had a word for it, what were all the pictures of people taking photos of themselves in the bathroom and things like that, we called it people taking self-portraits. It was not a think until there was this word selfie put around it. And then that really describes what that selfie has zeitgeist behind it. It has an energy behind it.

So I find this a really fascinating thing to consider. Where are we limiting what we know because we want to grab so quickly for words. And so how does this pertain to what I said in the intro, of like how can this have the potential to liberate you from old patterns?

So here is where I would bring the thought model in to be useful and a thought download is download the language that you use to describe your everyday. Because that language describes it, but it also circumscribes the experience of your everyday. It defines it and it limits it just as much as it accurately describes it.

So if you look at that language, and a lot of the time, our language is the same from day to day, it has the same sort of tenor or notes, it would have the same range or octave and probably the same sort of melody and bass notes over and over again. But if we wanted to be able to play a new song in our lives, to cultivate a new energy, to give ourselves a fresh take on things, you'd look at that list and then try to imagine your day, or even a moment, without language.

Imagine you couldn't describe it. How would you just experience it? So Degas said, when you're drawing, when you're an artist, that you need to

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see. You need to really see. And that to see is to forget the name of that which you see. And I think this applies whether you are drawing a person, doing a figure drawing, drawing a chair, painting sunflowers as Van Gough did.

Think of those famous paintings of his that were the chair and then the sunflower. Many people have said that he painted not a chair and not a sunflower, but the essence of that. Which to me speaks of dropping language, dropping the known, the way we know things, the way we think in our brains that we know things and therefore we prevent ourselves from ever really knowing them.

And this, I think, is the danger, but also, the very exciting opportunity in our lives that when we think we know ourselves, we limit ourselves. It's when we drop our language and our thoughts, our thinking about who we think we are and allow ourselves to be in this space of knowing our essence and knowing the essence of life around us, knowing the essence of what may be out in front of us, of essence that wants to flow through us, then things feel alive and pulsing. Then you're not doing what I described in last week's episode about trying to take this big energy, this aliveness, this life force and put it through a small channel of, hey I'm Leah, I'm a mother of four, I live in Southwest Michigan, I'm an artist, I'm a coach, I'm a writer.

And we all know we are so much more than that, and yet, do we give ourselves the time and the space to know ourselves, to drop language, and just drop into the experience of knowing ourselves? Because I think then we come in contact with a life force that has an energy of its own and we come back into our lives with this renewed energy and this renewed knowing.

I had a really interesting question on one of the Art School forums this last week of this beautiful woman, beautiful artist, thinker said sometimes she sees others that are so quick to say things, to know what to say, and she

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feels like she's slow because she feels like she's always having to feel her way into knowing.

And I thought that was such a beautiful thing, such a beautiful thing to be somebody who feels your way into knowing. It's a beautiful thing and I also get that it can still be a challenging thing out in the world that wants you to be, like if you're having a conversation, wants there to be no awkward silences, wants you to just be bright and chipper and have the next thing to say all the time.

I know the challenge, even with this podcast, because I am for sure someone who likes to take her time feeling into the knowing before then I put words around it, before I just rush to the thing that somebody else has said or rush to the thing that I have read in a book or rush to what I think the right answer is. When I'm sitting with a client, it's very different than what I do with the podcast.

When I'm sitting with a client, it's deep listening, which to me is also not just to the words, but I'm listening with presence, to presence. I'm in energy, feeling, sensing the energy. And then for sure, in coaching sessions, I take my time feeling into the knowing. I don't just say things because I think that's what they want to hear or that's what I have been told you should say as a coach. I really treasure and I find that that's where the greatest potential is in those sessions for the client is for me to feel my way, to sense my way into what they know, and then I take that and translate it, taking my time into words, into something that then allows them to have that key in the lock that opens that door to a knowing they've always had.

They just needed somebody to be able to translate it to them, to help them validate that it's even real. The other way I use this, and particularly with clients who are familiar with the thought model and processes of thought query, is I say, okay now we're going to enter in through the feeling line.

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And I like to enter in through the feeling line and then blow everything up from there and stay with the feeling line. I can stay, myself, with the feeling line for months and months and months.

There are things I'm currently working on creating that are, in the end, going to have words associated with them, that are going to have words offered with them, that are going to be wrapped in words, where the essence is going to be delivered in words. But I am also taking my time, sensing my way into the feeling of things and knowing it in that space first without having to rush to put a name on it.

I think there's been many sages and mystics that have said once you name god, it's no longer god. You can know that you're no longer talking about god once you have named god.

So there is that ineffable. And that doesn't mean that we still don't reach for our poetry, and that's what's so satisfying to us. And I find that's what's so magical about art. It's this relationship with mystery that knows it can never completely tidy it up in just one sentence, that knows we're so much more complex and mysterious and vast than that, that we can't take this huge energy that we are. And to me it always feels like trying to contain Niagara Falls in a Tupperware container.

So I like to come from the big energy first, doing that by dropping language, which does take practice. It's not the same as meditation practices where you may have been instructed to stop all thinking. I don't believe in that. I believe this is like downshifting. I'm sure it's probably more of theta state. It's where, that, you're looking off into the middle distance but you're not asleep. And it's not that your brain isn't working. It's just the wisdom is coming from a different place. It's whatever space we go into when we enter that flow state. And then we come back and then maybe we do look for words because perhaps we have a poverty of language currently.

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Another time this was so eye-opening and changed my world was when I studied abroad in San Sebastian, Spain, and it was a complete immersion program. So no English in my college courses during the day and I lived in an entirely Spanish-speaking household and I took Spanish poetry, 20th century Spanish poetry.

It was the first real poetry class I had ever taken and it was what made me fall in love with poetry. Antonio Machado was one of the first poets I was introduced to in that class. And my mind was blown away, blown open, and I was blown away by the fact that there were words in Spanish – and you got this in a poetry class on, like, a typical straight up class where you're learning *donde esta*, because they were trying to convey some deep truths about human experience.

And the way there would be a word that was used and all of a sudden, I felt that, because of that particular word, I touched an aspect of the human experience that I had experienced before, but I hadn't quite been able to fully access or touch because I didn't know it was a thing. It was something about having this language around the thing that made me realize, that is a thing, that is a truth, that is such a beautiful aspect of the world. And then it's like worlds upon worlds open to you and it just really lifted a veil and made me think, how many other places in life am I limiting my experience of life because of language?

And so I had returned to that childhood practice of trying to be without language and sensing what there is to know, feeling my way into a knowing without words. And then it came up again, as I mentioned in earlier podcasts for me when I was training as a triathlete because I'd be very focused and my mind wasn't wondering and I'd be on 100-mile bike rides or these long runs and there would be this beautiful clarity to my mind that allowed a certain quality of, I'd say, thought to come up, but it wasn't in words. It was just certain knowings would come up and they wouldn't come

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in language, but I would realize I knew something and later I'd be able to put into words what I knew.

And for a while, it was like the knowing of the paintings and the feeling of the energy and essence of painting. So I didn't necessarily put those things into words. I did what Georgia O'Keeffe did and said those things with images and colors and shapes, things – I could tell you what my paintings look like, which is always why I'm a little flummoxed by when someone says, "Oh, what do you paint." Because now I have to put into words what I put in paint and color and imagery and shape and scale because I didn't have words for it. But I get it. It's part of just being a normal human.

So it was there again too that I felt like, with creativity, it didn't occur to me in thoughts. It didn't occur to me as paint a woman, now paint a flower, make it red, make this blue. It was more a knowing that was so immediate it didn't have to go through my language center. Like, I could feel it and then just grab for the color that seemed to match with that, or move my hands in a way that was resonant and aligned with what I was experiencing as a knowing that was just coming up through me.

So those are some examples of how I've used it in my own creative life. And I have guided clients through this as well and some come to me and they're like, oh my gosh, I've always done or sensed something similarly myself and I never knew anybody else did this, I just thought it was a weird thing I did. And other clients I introduce it to and they think it's just a weird thing that I do.

But they're game and they're wanting to explore and they're wanting to explore their limits and what they think their limits currently are. And a lot of times, the language that we're using is absolutely defining our limits. And so you can work with different language, but I think it's so much more powerful and something to use in conjunction with to drop all language and to be with the feeling.

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Think of, like, your response to listening to great music. Like, what is that? That is you. So if you think you can't do this, think about something like that. Think about listening to great music. You're sensing something. What is that? Can you feel your way into that more deeply?

Think of if you're a sports fan and you watch a game and you can't help but move your body with it. There is something that we know that we're all connected to that if we could drop into that would unlock so much within us that we currently don't have access to because we're trying to open it with the wrong key. We're trying to open it with the key to language, which is, again, only what we have been able to know so far.

And that's not, I think for many of us, where that key is. I think too, dropping language is a key for gaining emotional and mental intellectual liberation. Because I see too, when there's a poverty of language for emotions, when you're not emotionally fluent, meaning a couple of things, that you're not really in touch with the experience of emotion in your body, and then two, when your vocabulary, your language for emotions is very limited.

We already know that there is research about this. Brené Brown has spoken about this too, about people's emotional IQ goes up when they have more words to describe what they're feeling. But still, I think too, we can say, I'm elated, and at the same time, if we're being honest and we drop into the experience of it, there is so much more going on in any given moment, elated is a convenient shorthand. But I think, if we're really wanting to know ourselves and the energy that drives our life, and emotion is one of the manifestations of that energy, one of our connections to it, that it can be useful to drop language, like I'm feeling anxious.

Drop language and drop into your body and drop into the experience of that energy without needing to label it for a while, without needing to judge it as good or bad, positive or negative, without needing to put thought label on it, like sad, mad, angry. Just be with it.

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I think, a long time ago, I was reading the Care of the Soul, by Thomas Moore, which reminds me I want to read that book again. But somewhere in there, he was talking about one of the roots of the world violence is vis, which means life force, that when we suppress life force, that actually, what it comes out as, it comes out sideways and comes out as violence.

And so I think this practice of dropping language around emotion and our thoughts and dropping into the pure experience of it helps us feel that energy where we're not right away rushing to suppress it because we're judging it as negative. And instead, to be with it without acting on it because, if at the root of violence is life force, and so if violence is life force that's been suppressed and comes out sideways, then what can happen to us if that is just really creative, a lot of big potential creative energy that if we could sit with and know more intimately, know the essence of who we are, know the essence of what that which wants to come through us be with the essence of other people out in the world, I think we would approach a much more profound sublime and true understanding and we might need to invent new words and new language. But we'd be better equipped to do so and we wouldn't be continuing to create our world in a way that's limited by the definition of the past.

So, this brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to lean in and not just be entertained by this, but work with me and really coach with me. For today's coach with me, I know this will be a challenge for some, but this truly is the sort of thing that is life-changing. It's one thing to hear an idea like this and be like, well that's kind of wonky, I don't know about that, or to be like, yeah I think I've heard something like that before, interesting, and then you never do anything about it.

But here is what I want to challenge you to do. I want you to challenge yourself to drop language and just to drop into experience. And if your mind

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then protests, I don't know how to do that, think about how the reason you don't know how is because you can't explain it.

So what if all you were to do is to set the intention that you'd be with an experience and close your eyes, feel whatever you feel. There's no right way, there's no wrong way. What if you just assumed that you sensed something and one of the reasons your thought nothing was working was because you don't have language for it yet. Just think about that.

That's a mind-bender. I think so many of us don't do these things and don't meditate and don't sense our way into feeling or knowing because our mind's like, not feeling anything, nothing's happening, not working yet. And that's just because nothing is happening that has happened before, so we don't have language for it, so we don't have a record of, now this is happening. How do you know that? Just ask yourself that and play with that.

The other question that I want to leave you with is what do you almost know? Sit with that. Take it for a walk. Stare off into middle space. Stare off into the horizon. Stare at a wall and ask yourself what do I almost know? What do I almost know? And feel your brain drop language, drop out of language and reach far beyond the limits of how you are currently defining and thinking about your world.

Drop out of thinking and drop into sensing and knowing. You can always drop back in, but for a while, give yourself your potential, your creativity, the opportunity to be a dropout so that you can really drop into a more profound understanding and knowing of your essence and that which wants to be known to you.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have enjoyed this podcast, if these episodes have been useful for you, the best thing you can do to support this podcast is to go to

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iTunes and leave a review. I know that that requires time out of your day and I know it's an inconvenience even because, trust me, the last thing that I often want to do is spend more time in front of a screen.

So I just really wanted to let you know how much it means to me when you leave a review. It lets me know that this work is resonating, it's on point, and it helps me reach more people.

This podcast really is a labor of love for me. I fund it all myself. I'm not doing ads. It's really me following a lot of internal inspiration and I will talk in an upcoming episode, once I get to the year point, about so much of the behind the scenes for me and what this podcast has meant for me personally and what it's meant for me to hear from so many of you. So just let me say thank you again for listening. I so appreciate that you are out there.

And those of you that write in and do leave reviews, please know how truly grateful I am for every single message and every single review. And if this work is something that is really calling to you and you're wondering, I wonder what working with Leah would be like, I wonder what coaching is like, I wanted to take just a couple of minutes and let you know about that process.

As you've heard me speak about The Art School, you've heard me talk about the group coaching end of things. And I have loved group coaching because it's been a dream to take these kinds of tools, this kind of transformational knowledge and practices and then embed it within this extraordinary community of people.

It's been beyond my wildest expectations and I'm so grateful. And it has also been such a gift to have that many people have access to coaching because it is at a different price point. It is at a price point that is currently, for a lot of my clients, a more economically accessible price point.

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And it's one of my intentions too that, with this work, in retrospect, they know it to be some of the best money they've ever spent and to be one of the best investments they've ever made for themselves, for their lives, for their dreams.

And then I also have my private coaching practice, which these days is pretty limited given the time that I give to The Art School and then the time I spend on my own creative work, and then, of course, obviously with my family. So in my private practice, I take a limited number of clients at a time. And I plan to do an upcoming podcast about what I see as potential for the future of coaching because, oftentimes, right in line with this podcast, I feel like the language, the word coaching, doesn't quite hit what it really is, and that sometimes, all of the connotations and the assumptions that people bring into coaching can sometimes limit their experience and what the potential for the work really is.

So I talk to clients about that. And in the meantime, I'm also plumbing my own depths and psyching creativity for what is the better language to describe what I do, how I do it, what it's about? Some people think it's problem-oriented, and it's really not. I am there for everything for my clients.

So there's no "problem" or challenge or difficulty that we can't handle. And I'm also there as somebody to really get them, to see them, to have them feel understood and known, sometimes in a way that they have never been seen, known, understood before. I know how invaluable those times in my life have been when somebody has seen me or I have confessed a dream and it was to the right person, a person who looked me in the eyes and was like, yeah, totally, even if that dream or where I was in my skill set or what I was creating at that time was currently in a very embryonic neophyte kind of state, they were able to see, like, that seed within me and they mirrored that back to me.

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I felt like they really saw me and got me and those moments were transformational. So that, to me, is just one of the gifts of what coaching can be, that it is a process of discovery.

I listen very deeply. I listen to my clients' words, but I also listen between the sentences. And just as I described on today's podcast, I sense beyond the language. I feel my way into the sensing for what wants to be known through them and what wants to be created through them. And I honor that.

I honor everything they tell me. I hang on every word because I know it's leading me somewhere, even if I can't quite put the pieces together in the beginning. I trust that every word is significant and I'm really listening for how that soul is speaking to me through this personality of a person because people tell you what they need to hear themselves if you're really listening.

So if private coaching has been something you've been interested in, something speaking to you about it, you can email me, leah@leahcb.com with discovery consult in the subject line and we can schedule a time to visit. It can be a question and answer, or you can treat it as a complimentary mini laser coaching session and find out if coaching with me is that next step that you've been looking for.

So this brings me to the closing inspiration portion of the podcast. And today's inspiration comes to you courtesy of one of my beautiful, brilliant, amazing clients who I had the opportunity to talk with this morning. And as life, fortune, fate, synchronicity would have it, she had something to share with me that was so on point for this episode. I had recorded the content, the bulk of the content of this podcast last night, this morning, finished it up this morning and I had yet to do this outro.

And I was wondering what I was going to use for the closing today. And then she so graciously shared it with me. She had been at an Eckhart Tolle

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event, an Omega event, and she knew I'd love a lot of the things he was talking about and it's like so on point with the things I love to think about and the way she loves to operate in the world.

So what she shared that Eckhart said was this, "There is a difference between knowing something and knowing about it."

So, thank you to you know who you are for sharing that and for sharing those words with all of us. That's what I want to offer all of you to think about this coming week, to give yourself the kind of space you need to not assume that you knowing about something is knowing it, including yourself.

Give yourself the space in this lifetime to really drop language and drop into the essence of who you really are and what's really around you and who is really around you. Give yourself the space to really know something and not just stay on the surface of knowing about it. I hope you all have an amazing week. Thank you so much for listening. I'll talk to you next time.