

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

Writing is rewriting, says pretty much anyone who has ever written anything and shared it with the world. We know that writing requires revision – revision – the vision that you have – think of the word “Re,” in Latin means to call it back. So we’re calling the vision back to get a clear picture about what we’re actually trying to say, what we know that maybe we don’t quite know as well until we can get it out on the paper and see it, and then we continue to revise it.

So, this applies not only to writing, but into so many creative endeavors. Think of iterations even in technology, prototypes, and business ventures as well. So we all know that revision, editing, revising, iterations are all part of the creative process, but how do we go about it? Because sometimes, we get stuck. Sometimes, we go down rabbit holes. Sometimes we continue to revise and we don’t move our work forward.

So, in today’s episode, I want to continue to build on the themes and continue this conversation that I started a couple episodes back, about this concept of a self-organizing inherent intelligence and how we can develop our voice, develop our art, make more money, develop our relationships, cultivate a way of being in the world that we can be proud of, that allows us to be fully expressed, that doesn’t rely on judgment but does allow for discernment.

So, today, I’m so excited to talk to you about the concept of vertical versus horizontal revision.

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.

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

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

Welcome back, everyone. Thank you so much for joining me again this week. I feel like I haven't talked to you forever, even though it's been a week. I had an awesome time with my mastermind at our latest business retreat. And once again, kind of reflecting on the year, I was just really grateful for this group of women, for their support, for the community, and also I read a letter before I went that I wrote to myself a year ago at this time.

And I wrote this letter from my future self. So I wrote this letter as me, Leah, October 2019, to the Leah that was back there a year ago, October 2018. And I gave her some advice. I told her about the year ahead, and it was pretty powerful. And this group of women definitely was an important part, this community that was big enough to receive my vision, and there was all sorts of laughter and pragmatic advice. So, super grateful to all of them.

And I wanted to give one of them in particular a shout-out because she just made my weekend by telling me that she has binge-listened to all the podcasts and that she loves them and she shares them with everyone. And this is someone who is a coach and an entrepreneur, a businesswoman, a mother that I respect and admire so much.

She has worked with Tony Robbins. She was a business coach for Tony Robbins and worked with him and Chet Holmes, and you know what, Tony Robbins and Chet Holmes got to work with her. She is a world class coach and her name is Stacey Hylan. So she really just made my weekend and more by telling me that she often listens to the podcast as she's driving. She lives in Canada and then drives to her lake home on the weekend with her family in New Hampshire and listens to my podcast as she's going through the mountains and the woods.

And that just gave me the chills and warmed my heart. And knowing her and seeing her behind the scenes too, I know what she's destined for is that kind of Tony Robbins caliber of world class coaching and that kind of

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

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

impact, and in her own way. So, Stacey Hylan, she does optimize your business. She's writing a book and does workshops and personal retreats and group retreats around hidden profits. She's amazing. Stacey, thank you so very much for listening.

And thank you to all of you that have been listening; Netherlands, Sweden, Japan again, and then in the United States, thank you, United States. We are almost breaking through to the top 100 in the US. So I want to thank you for downloading, for subscribing, for sharing. Because it's not the number of the ranking that matters, it's that what it communicates to me is that's something is resonating with you and something is valuable.

Because I know time is precious. And I know that the precious time I get to myself to be in my own head when I have earbuds in, I'm selective about what I listen to, so it really is so very awesome to me when I hear from you and you say, "I listen to you in the car, I take you on walks and runs with me, I share you with my friends and my loved ones." That is the best gift ever.

So thank you so very much for doing that. Thank you for this conversation. I love when I get to let you talk and hear from you. And please, any time you feel inspired to share, please just keep paying it forward because this is a labor of love. And if you like what you're listening, yeah, please share. I appreciate it so much.

So, diving into today's topic, I was thinking about this again so much at the mastermind retreat this weekend because I'm for sure up-leveling again. I'm knowing it's coming; I'm feeling it's coming; I'm planning. This is part of the plan. And so I'm really ready for the fact that with any up-level, there's a saying; new level, same old devil.

And I tell you what, my little fun friend, little devil, is the thought that I'm not organized enough. That is usually my resistance and my block. I can see

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

myself doing the thing, and then it's the thought of the organization that it requires, and then that's when the inner critic pops up and likes to beret me for basically the way that I'm wired to think and be in the world and just wants to say – I'm sure you can all relate to this – that it's not good enough.

But I'm kind of bored with that though and I'm kind of used to that. and still, I'm human, so new level, same old devil, that comes up and I'm looking at that and thinking it's so interesting too because that's what I've been talking to you about, this owning this self-organizing intelligence.

So an idea I started to play with this past weekend, I started to think about the root of the word organized and how it shares the work organ, it shares the root organ, just as organic does. Because to me, my strength seems to be an organic intelligence, when I lean into an organic intelligence and let things flow, that's when life works for me. That's when money works for me. That's when creativity works for me. That's when coaching works for me.

When I don't over-think it, when I don't force things from my prefrontal cortex and don't over-plan, over-strategize, but when I trust and let things flow. Because to me, a flow state feels like a very organic state.

So another really interesting revelation for me this weekend was we did this exercise where we were prompted to think about basically the last time we experienced what I would describe as a flow state. That was not the prompt, but that's how I took the prompt. When was the last time you just felt so yourself, and describe that in three words.

So, one of the three words that I came up with – well, one of them is always flow. The feeling of flow, I feel like I've found my place in the universe. In those moments, there's no knocking me from it and I can't believe I ever forgot what it was or how I got there. And another word that I came up with was – it's not a word, it's a phrase, lack of self-consciousness. And I

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

thought, well, that phrase is pretty clunky, so let's think instead of what is a synonym for lack of self-consciousness.

So I started to think about, well what is the antonym for self-consciousness? And I realized, the antonym of self-consciousness, for me, is achieved by taking the self out of the equation. For me, the antonym of self-consciousness is consciousness. And that is what feels so amazing about those times, when I'm just in the sweet spot of life for me. I'm not thinking about me, but I am feeling more truly me, I'm feeling the truth of what it is to be alive and be me more than any other time.

There's not this ongoing self-reflection or self-judgment or second guessing or evaluating. It is consciousness. I am being consciousness. And that, to me, really relates to everything we've been talking about in this little mini-series about self-organizing intelligence.

It is consciousness. It is cultivating ways where you can release the self and just be consciousness more and more and that that consciousness doesn't need your harsh self-criticism and the critic and judgment and berating yourself and comparing and measuring in order to learn and grow and to evoke the art in you that's meant to be born and live out in the world.

Consciousness is watching and learning all the time and figuring things out, and that kind of small thinking that the prefrontal cortex achieves, it's useful. That critical thinking is useful, but not at this stage in the creative process, and especially not if you are trying to heal your creativity and your voice. If you're trying to come back to a place of just flowing more of who you are organically, letting that self-organizing intelligence flow in the world, trust that being in consciousness will help you develop. It will help your work develop and it will help your art develop. It will help your business develop. It will help your money relationships develop. It will help your interpersonal relationships develop. It will help your relationship with yourself and with life.

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

So, this now brings me to the specific practice and tool that I wanted to share with you today. And you've heard me talk about the now infamous Fran Quinn, my poetry mentor and just poet teacher extraordinaire many times before.

And he introduced me to this concept of vertical versus horizontal revision and I think I just went slack-jawed and looked at him like dumbfounded. Like, how could I have gone over three decades – I was almost 40 by that time, maybe 35 – and not have heard of this concept before? Because it so changed my relationship with creating anything in life and it showed me where, in the past, I'd gotten so hung up.

And as a recovering perfectionist, it was really one of these tools that shifted things in deep and meaningful and sustainable ways. Again, it's this concept of vertical versus horizontal revision. And I'll tell you, how it came about is I was working on a poem with Fran, and I had worked on other poems too, so he had kind of grown to know my style. And there is this poem that I started and I was reworking and reworking and reworking and, at one point, he's like, "Why are you still on this poem? You kind of seem like you're killing it, you're not really enjoying the process."

And I was like, well I can't get it right. And the not fun thing I would do to myself when I couldn't get something right is, I can be as tenacious as a bulldog and I would not let it go. And he's like, "I see I think what's going on here is you have a tendency to go down into vertical revision and you get stuck in vertical revision. What I think you need..." and I'm paraphrasing how he said this here, "Is a healthy dose of practicing horizontal revision."

And so what that means, vertical revision, if we take this specific case of me working on the poem, vertical revision is me taking this one poem and reworking it, reworking it, reworking it, like for weeks at a time, going

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

deeper and deeper and deeper. And my experience of that poem was it is not getting better. I was just going down rabbit holes and getting lost.

And I was trying to revise, but revision, again, thinking of what the Latin roots are, re means to call back, so you're calling the vision back. I wasn't calling the vision back. I had lost touch with what the original energy of the poem was, so that's when Fran said, "Alright, I think you're done here with this vertical revision. You're going down, down, down, down, down into this poem. And basically, for me, it was down the rabbit hole. I wasn't moving the poem forward. I wasn't moving myself forward. I wasn't moving any of my writing forward. I was just actually feeling really frustrated and stuck.

And so then he explained horizontal revision. With horizontal revision, again with this poetry metaphor, he said, "You'll write – let's say you're on this poem, write 30 more poems. The 31<sup>st</sup> poem you write may actually be the revision of this poem number one here, but you needed to write one to 30 to work through some in yourself and to live through some life, and at 31, 31 might not be a brand-new poem. 31 might be what you were trying to say all along in number one, but you needed one through 30 to get there. That was the process that was required for you to get there. Not going down, down into number one, not going down vertically, but moving horizontally and moving forward."

So, think about that. Think about projects in your life. And it's not to say that horizontal is always better and that vertical is bad because since I've found this framing and this language too, I can see with certain clients if they're not getting traction, one of the things I consider is, is it all horizontal energy for them? If what they tell me is, "I've been working and working and I keep at this and I'm just not getting it, I'm not moving forward," so if what I'm hearing is they're putting a lot of energy and results and they really are, and it's just resulting in a lot of heartbreak and frustration, one of the things I look at is, okay, what's their process of revising, of calling their vision back and refining it?



## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

Have they been just going horizontally, and if that's not working for them, maybe what they need to do is move vertically. So, for instance, if I have an artist who is very prolific, her or his challenge is not the making of the art, they're like a making machine, churning it out, but they're really frustrated because they're not selling anything.

So then, okay, let's go back and let's not think about selling the one through 30. Let's look at selling one. What is it to really connect and sell one painting? And even back it up earlier than sell, like this one painting, do you feel connected to it? Do you believe in its value? Do you love it? Do you love it so much that you have to price it at a point where you would feel bad if this painting left your possession for anything less than this dollar amount?

And then, once we've really identified that they're connecting to this painting and they love it and they know its belief and value, then thinking about connecting to the patron, the person that's going to love this painting, and connecting with that sale. If you can connect to one sale and you can understand what it is to create a painting that you love, you know its value, any piece of work, and then you can connect that with one person who loves it and you believe that the energetic exchange and the relationship was beautiful, you can replicate that over and over and over again.

But you can't replicate that if you're moving so fast along the horizontal plane that you haven't given yourself the chance to connect at the one by one by one level. And that can be achieved by exploring what vertical revision means for you.

And likewise, if you find yourself going down rabbit holes, if you think you have perfectionist tendencies, not always but more often than not, you get stuck in vertical revision too. And a beautiful healing practice for that is to find ways to practice horizontal revision, is to find – if you reference my

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

podcast where I talk about lowering your standards to raise your art, it's part of what I'm talking about.

If you're normally someone who cannot let something go until it's 110%, I will tell some of these clients, and it's something that has worked miracles for me, your new done is not 110%. It's not 100%. It's not 70%. It's 40% because you need to learn what it's like to complete and move on and let go, to complete and move on and let go and trust – here we come again – to that self-organizing intelligence, consciousness, trust that that is always ever watching and learning as you allow yourself to revise in the way that you're most needing.

Maybe your consciousness does want to plunge down deeper into the depths and move deeper into a single piece or move deeper into what this particular area in your business is, or maybe what your consciousness needs is more iterations and to move forward and move forward. But trust that whatever process you use, again, you do not need to beat yourself up. You need to be awake and you need to do your work and let it go and do your work and let it go.

And this is not the orientation of someone that is reckless and doesn't care. This is the orientation of someone who really believes in him or herself and is taking the long view and is saying what do I need to do to really move my craft forward, to nurture my work, to move my business forward, to reach my goals.

What I have found too is going on with using this practice of vertical versus horizontal revision is that it helps me see the places where I'm avoiding moving my work forward because I'm feeling very insecure or vulnerable.

So, for instance, with the poem, I was afraid to move onto the next because I thought if I didn't make this one perfect, then I wasn't a real poet, that I wasn't a real writer, that there was evidence that I couldn't do it. when

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

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

really, if I faced that feeling of vulnerability and I embraced it and I let myself keep writing, and when my inner critic said that's terrible how can you call that done, to call it done at 40% and move forward and move forward through those feelings of vulnerability and allowing myself to feel whatever it is I feel when I feel I'm doing something imperfect.

What I feel a lot of times is insecure. So when we're avoiding what we don't want to feel, insecure, the interesting thing is that we usually then act it out. So what I was doing was I didn't want to feel insecure, so I thought, well I will arrange my world, vis-à-vis this one little poem, by making it so perfect that everyone will love it, no one can judge it, no one can see any inadequacies I have, no one can see any vulnerabilities or insecurities I might have. I will make myself invincible by creating this one perfect poem.

But then, because I was avoiding that feeling of vulnerability, which is actually my truth in that moment, by avoiding it, I was actually acting it out and perpetuating it. I was not allowing myself to move forward to the growth process, my prefrontal cortex or my limbic brain, who knows which one, just wanted me to be safe and secure in a perfect little poem, when what I needed was to have courage to be done at 40% and move forward and move forward and move forward.

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 with me and really work with me, coach with me. So you might guess where today's coach with me is going. I want you to think about an area in your life where you are trying to improve your craft, master a craft, whether it's knitting, painting, writing a screenplay, making offers in your business.

I want you to think about how you can use this concept of vertical versus horizontal revision, to set up that self-organizing intelligence within you, consciousness within you, set up your consciousness so that it's in the best place it needs to be to do its ongoing learning. Maybe that is noticing when

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

you're impatient and you just want to get to the next thing and get to the next thing. Thank about what that impatience is really about.

Maybe you need to stay with one thing longer and let consciousness go deeper and go down deeper into whatever that is that you're working on. Maybe you're like me and you're fixated on something and wanting it to be perfect and can't let yourself go and move on, and maybe what you need is a healthy dose of horizontal revision, giving yourself 30, 50, 70, 100 goes at something before you think again about going down vertically and looking at revising that way.

Experiment with this, play with this, have fun with this and, above all, trust that that consciousness in you is so much more powerful and wise than we can wrap our minds around. So give it a chance to lay its eyes – let its eyes go deep vertically. Let its eyes go broad and far horizontally and let your creative soul and your work continue to unfold.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I love knowing you're out there. I'm so grateful that you are listening and sharing. And if you are enjoying this podcast, the best thing you can do to support it is to leave a review on iTunes. That helps me get this work to more people.

As I've said so many times before, at the heart of this work for me, it's about talking with you, sharing with you the things that I've found really work. They make life work. They make your creativity flow. They make the money flow. Life just works better when you know these things and have these tools, you find that place where you're thriving.

And what better way for us all to move forward than to heal ourselves, let our creativity flow, and find the ways that we can all thrive more. So the more that you share, my intention is the more thriving that happens and the more art babies I keep hearing about because of this podcast. I love

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

## Ep #50: Vertical vs. Horizontal Revision

hearing about all of the art babies, the amazing things you all are doing out there, so please keep those stories coming.

And, if you would like to take this work deeper, I do have one more spot for a private client in 2019, and then I'm starting a waitlist for 2020, so if you'd like to get on that. And I also have some really exciting offers for coaching coming up in 2020, some things I've never done before, including retreats. I have a really dreamy retreat in the works. So, if you'd like to be in the know about all that, you can head over to my website, [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com).

And here, my friends, is what I want to leave you with today, a quote from Willa Cather, from *The Song of The Lark*, "Artistic growth is, more than it is anything else, a refining of the sense of truthfulness. The stupid believe that to be truthful is easy. Only the artist, the great artist, knows how difficult it is." Difficult and yet be so easy, lovely, and gentle with yourself, my friends. Go forth and do those big beautiful difficult things. I know you've got it in you. Have a beautiful week, everyone and I look forward to talking to you next time.