

Ep #57: What Is Your Next Step?



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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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“Start close in. Don’t take the second step or the third. Start with the first thing close in; the step you don’t want to take,” From the poem Start Close In by David White.

There is great irony in the fact that oftentimes the biggest, the most daunting, the most insurmountable seeming obstacles that are in our path, blocking us, we think, from our dreams, our destiny, from who we know we can become in the world is in fact this next small step close in. It’s crazy that the greatest obstacle could be that next tiny thing that’s so close to us that it’s right beneath our feet.

And not only ironic, but it can be a great source of frustration and a cause of a lot of needless suffering and struggle. And that has, for sure, been the case in my own life and I’ve learned so much from my own process of overcoming this. And I’ve worked with hundreds of clients now on breaking down their own learning process and their own creative process. Because what I know is that with consistent and committed practice, that knowing how to do this process of breaking down what is the next step, knowing how to discern what that next step is, and then a consistent practice of moving through the resistance to taking it.

Doing that humble work of taking one step after another is in fact what can lead to the great work of our lives, and it is, in fact, in those small steps that we have the opportunity to infuse great courage, great love, great devotion, and great faith. So no matter what your art form is, be it business, be it painting, be it a novel, be it raising a family, an essential part of having a fulfilling healthy successful and sustainable creative process in life is consistently practicing, knowing how to take, knowing which step to take and then taking it, because one foot in front of the other, and you are unstoppable.

You are listening to *The Art School Podcast*, a show for artists and creatives who want to become the next greatest version of themselves.

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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. And welcome back. It feels like it's been three weeks since I last recorded a podcast for you, but in fact, it's not. It's just that we had Thanksgiving weekend in between there, which was wonderful. And we came home from Iowa with many great memories, and with a new farm kitty. So we have – Izzy is now a member of our family. And so now we have to find a dog that doesn't mind cats.

So, all my kids are pretty excited about that, about having a Christmas kitty. And then also this week, we got to go down to visit Dennis, the Amish woodworker artist that I've told you about. I love visiting his shop and seeing what he is doing.

The house is moving right along. And this week too, I had a really special opportunity. I was a guest speaker for a Notre Dame undergrad class, a design and innovation class that's entitled Design Your Life. The talk that I prepared was all around this theme of designing your life by designing your mind. And I shared with them three essential tools for doing that.

So, as I was preparing for that talk, I remembered something that I had not thought about in a long time when I took a class as an undergrad at the University of Iowa, and the class was called Quest for Human Destiny. It was in the humanities and I just fell in love with that class. I was crazy for that class and it was like a survey of literature from spiritual traditions and great works of art. And the professor, whose name I tried to Google earlier and I couldn't find it, he was this kind of petite and super big energy, dynamic man. I think he was a Rabbi as well.

And I just could not get enough of this class. And I hadn't thought about it for so long until I was creating slides for this Notre Dame class because it

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brought back so many memories of when I was in that class and I thought, “Well, how do I major in this? And is there a way that I can do this for the rest of my life?”

And I don’t know what vault that those memories have been locked away in, but it just came flooding back and I was like, “Oh my goodness, full-circle moment.” I don’t have a degree in human destiny, but it certainly is the work that I get to be immersed in day in and day out. And this week, holy smokes, has been no exception.

I don’t know what’s in the air. I always love client sessions in this work. And there have just been so many instances recently – and part of it, I think, are some messages I’m receiving post-Art School. But just the sessions have been so fulfilling and so gratifying to see people coming through for themselves, to see people charting their destiny and taking their creative power back, to see people hitting their financial targets and exceeding them, to see people finishing books for the first time or finishing the fourth and shipping it off to publishers, to see people recording albums with such, like, a clear calm energy that I have no doubt is coming to fruition saying, “Yeah, I think this song, this sis Grammy material.”

So, I don’t know, I just thought that was such an awesome full-circle experience this week, being able to be with those Notre Dame students and talk about this work and then having that open up this vault of memories and linking me up to my past self, whose just like heart and soul and being came on fire when I was exposed to this work and was just thinking, oh my gosh, if I could make a life being immersed in this, in human destiny, that would be extraordinary.

And so I wanted to share with you today too, I had this really wonderful testimonial review from iTunes. And thank you all so much for leaving reviews. And this one is a review and also a testimonial. Because now this listener is someone who works with me.

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So, this particular podcast listener, now client, wrote – Leah Love, is the title, which is so nice, “I started listening to Leah, I think, February 2019. Since then, I’ve experienced a confident wonderment of possibilities. Back then, Leah was a voice I listened to intently, always feeling like she’d gotten into my head and had written the episode for me. After having followed several exercises in her beautifully articulated podcast, I made a huge breakthrough in financial earnings. In October, I made the Leah leap and signed up for six months of coaching, for sure one of the scariest decisions of my life.

December marks my second month of one on one coaching and I will absolutely say this is one of the best decisions of my life. In your moment of decision, your destiny is shaped. Thank you, Leah, for being the intuitive angel you are to me and so, so many others, Romney Dodd.”

So, thank you, Romney. When we first got on the consult and she told me what she had created by listening to the podcast, it was overwhelming for me in the best way. It’s the kind of overwhelm that it’s okay to indulge in because she really just is knocking it out of the park, and Google Romney Dodd and her art. Maybe we can link it up in the show notes, because it’s incredible. She’s an artist out of Anchorage and it’s so original and gorgeous, her work. So, for sure, check that out. And thank you, Romney.

And also, from other people who have written in and said, “I started painting again. I asked for a raise. I went from having a \$5000 goal a month to \$10,000 and I’ve hit it the last three months...” those are just examples of people that I have not even talked to personally, not even on a discovery call. So absolutely, do this work because the coaching works, but you have to work the coaching. And it’s a great segue into the topic of today’s episode because it is about taking those steps.

And that David white poem is right on. It’s not the second step or the third step. It’s that next step closest in. And it for sure us the step that you don’t

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want to take. But with a consistent practice of taking that next step, you get better at moving through that resistance. And this is how it is aligned with the concept of the wind horse that I introduced last week.

Taking these small steps are energetic deposits. It's like they're energetic nourishments that feeds this base foundational energetic vitality that you need to implement a higher level of thought, to implement a higher level of action and to create greater impact from the thoughts you have and then the actions that you take.

So, that wind horse, whether you like thinking about that literally or metaphorically, that wind horse is nourished by daily care and by these daily energetic deposits. Also, you can think of it as, like, every day making a deposit into your bank account with these tiny steps that you take. And you think in the moment, what's \$10 here, \$20, or even \$1 a day going to add up to? But I'm sure you can Google tables that explain compound interest.

Google Warren Buffet talking about compound interest if you want a persuasive argument. And I think that absolutely applies to this energetic capacity and source that we have is that it is nourished by consistent daily action. And as I mentioned in the intro, too often I see people avoiding that next step because their mind is saying, "But my dream is so big, how in the world is this next step going to get me there?"

But the thing is, that's the only way there. It's that next step. And later in the poem, he talks about it's that pale ground beneath your feet. My sense of what that line in the poem means is it doesn't seem like it's sufficient to get you there, and yet it is the only thing that does. And also, as I said in the intro, it is so ironic that we can have these tremendous big dreams and we're so stunned by the fact that the insurmountable obstacle could just be this series of next tiny steps.

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And if you find yourself stalling out and spinning, look to see what you're avoiding. Are you thinking you should be further along? That also is a byproduct of not taking the next step closest in.

The other amazing energy that comes from this consistent practice of taking the next step closest in is that it is an action that begets clarity. And again, way too often, I get emails from people, like I've just been confused for so long, I don't know what to do and I'm spinning and I can't seem to get a clear sense of the big picture, you get clarity from action. So start taking these consistent small steps.

And oftentimes, people will say too, "Well I'm trying everything but things aren't working." And then I ask them to break down for me what their daily practice is. And then, within a day, what their hourly practice is, what are they doing? What are they thinking? And breaking it down moment by moment.

Because even the most infinite, the truly closest in next step is the thought. And oftentimes, you don't get to clarity in that next thought, but you put your foot down on that pale ground and you move forward. And clarity comes from that action and that too is an energetic deposit. And if you take these small steps and you let that energy compound, you'll be five years down the road and then you'll look back and see, something in me knew all along exactly what I was up to, even if my mind was confused.

Take for instance the story that I shared at the top of the episode about the quest for human destiny class that I loved. Again, something in me came alive and let up, like where has this business been all my life, this topic and this conversation? And I just couldn't get enough of it. And then I thought that kind of went dark for a while because I continued on and I graduated with a degree in finance and international business. I went on and became a lawyer, and I wasn't thinking that whole time, "Wow, I should really get back to thinking about how to make a career out of human destiny."

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Until now, it's clear to me that I've been taking small steps in tuning in and listening to myself and trusting my intuition about what that next step is and proceeding even when I felt I might be wrong. And I see that being another thing that blocks people's intuition about the next step and then can result in spinning, avoidance, procrastination, and then energetic drain then means that they have less energy and vitality available to them to move forward and carry their dreams forward. And that is needing to know that the next step is the right step.

There's no such thing. It's just the next step closest in and keep taking one after another. But it does bring me to this part where I wanted to talk about how to tune into what that next step closest in is for you and how to trust yourself. It's a decision, first of all, that you're going to be guided, and then you don't question it, and then you take steps, and then you don't judge it just because you're five steps in, or 500 steps in, and you can't see where this is going.

Something David White doesn't say in his poem is, while he says, "Don't try to take the second or the third," what I see people try to do as well is thinking that there's something wrong with the next step closest in and then trying to bite off the entire journey. And I saw this even with one of my children this last week. He was working on his homework and he was moving up to a new level in algebra, and brand new to him.

He had just had one presentation at school about it and was one problem in on the sheet and had his head down, was frustrated, and very upset. Sure that he was never going to get it, sure that this was just because he was stupid. And so I watched and I asked myself, what's going on here? What is really beneath this?

Because I could see in him something I've seen in myself before at times when I've felt overwhelmed learning something new and it seemed daunting. I see it in my clients. And then it occurred to me; he wasn't taking

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the very next step. And then it occurred to me, there is such an art of knowing how to break things down into smaller parts. And it seems too simple to be something we spend much time or give much attention to, but it really is knowing how to break things down into small parts that can help make you unstoppable and help give you the confidence that you can conquer everything and anything.

And so the way that I explained it to my son was like this; we were just at Thanksgiving. Imagine you walked in and you tried to eat the entire Thanksgiving dinner all at once. There's no way. It's beautiful. You love it. You want to enjoy it. And inhaling it all at once is just both not advisable and not possible. You would choke.

Your brain is choking because you are trying to inhale this entire next learning segment. You are trying to inhale it and you're not even chewing it. And when you do that, your brain chokes and then the way it reacts to that, it is like this desperation-like struggle for air and there are tears and it is something almost primal and visceral. And you kind of get paralyzed and panicked and you can't think at all. And then your brain can't chew anything and it just wants to spit the whole thing out and have nothing to do with it.

And I see this over and over with my clients too, that first they're excited by the sight of the feast of their dreams, and they're so enlivened by it, and they're in love with it. And then they just want to suck it in all at once, and then they're choking for air and gasping for air and want to just spit it all back out and think, this feast is not for me.

But it's just because we're skipping the part of knowing what that next step closest in is and then taking that and chewing it. And there's some trial and error involved. What is easy for you to know? What is easy for you to do? And keep breaking it down until you get to that part where, like, I can figure this out pretty easily, this is a step I can take, this is something I can bite off and chew.

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And then take some bites this size, chew them for a while so that you really work it down and really get it into your system, just like they say your food is better digested and that we absorb more nutrients when we chew it longer, that it actually breaks it down so it can be absorbed into our body as nutrients. And I think the very same thing applies with whatever we are trying to create.

You know, a client said to me – and I know she’s being a little bit facetious – a couple weeks ago about, “Well of course I would just love to skip to the part where I’m making \$20,000 a month.” And I said, “I know you’re being facetious, but you do not. You do not,” because there is so much available to you in learning how to break it down and being nourished by each step that you get. You don’t want to skip that nourishment. There’s nothing wrong with those small steps and it’s absolutely going to support your strength and your vitality.

It’s an essential part of your foundation going forward. And it’s going to give you the confidence that you know what your own learning process and path is like. You have this insight into your own creative process and that is worth gold because, once you know that about yourself – and you can pick that up and plop it down in creating whatever you want.

And then people start to get impatient again and they just want it all now. And that’s when I love the line – and believe in it absolutely, from a Course of Miracles, which is, “Infinite patience produces immediate results.” Because when we’re in such a hurry, then we’re actually no longer living our life. We are thinking that the next step in front of us is meaningless and that just because it’s a small step close in, that somehow it’s a lesser or discounted part of our life.

But that approach, thinking that whatever is closest into you is always lesser and discounted and that it’s going to eventually be better somewhere else is just a mindset that you’re going to take with you wherever you go.

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So even if you do finally reach that big dream, you will not have developed the capacity for appreciating it. You will not have developed that digestive process for actually being able to take in your life, enjoy it, chew it, get the nutrients out of it, be grateful for it. You will have just gotten really good at rushing and not being present.

I'm reminded of the concept of the hungry ghost. It's just never gratified. Everything goes in but it's never actually fed by anything, and therefore it's eternally hungry. So don't be a hungry ghost. Take the next step closest in, the step that you don't want to take.

And that's the second part. The step that you don't want to take, the more you break it down and the more you can consistently practice taking these steps you don't want to take, it might be that you still have resistance there later on, but you just understand yourself to be so much more powerful than that resistance.

You just understand that your devotion to doing this, your love of your own life and of your own dream is so much more important than whatever resistance you are feeling in the moment. You are so serving both your highest purpose in the moment and also your dream down the road by taking these small steps that, every day, nourish that dream, nourish this own internal resilience and confidence that you can be someone who does whatever she or he sets their mind to.

And doing it one step at a time, it can be humble and it can be so noble at the same time. Think this art of taking the next step closest in, the one you don't want to take, taking that next tiny step that's the insurmountable obstacle.

Always and ever, the only thing between you and your dreams only and ever is that next thing right in front of you. I think too, this is very related to

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when people experience imposter syndrome or feeling like a fraud. Think taking that next step closest in is a powerful antidote to that.

It's like that Van Gough saying, "If you hear a voice that says you cannot paint, by all means, you must paint and that voice will be silenced." So the voice that says, "You cannot achieve your dream," it's going to, over time, have less and less wait for you and less and less volume, if even in spite of that voice, you're like, "Well, but I am going to keep taking the next step."

And Chase Jarvis, great modern creator and photographer has said, "It's not so much fake it until you make it, but how about make it until you make it?"

This brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to take this information, apply it to your life, and make it transformational. So lean in here, really work with me, and coach with me. Make the coaching work for you. You do this and really shift in your life, move that needle.

So what I want to talk to you about today is what you need to make today until you make it. And I also want to offer that a coaching prompt you can use for yourself every single day is to use a powerful question. So you call to mind what that great dream of yours is. Maybe you call to mind your moon shot self. And you can say, what is the best thing I can do today to move me one step closer? What is the next step closest in on the way to that dream?

You can also, again, recall your moon shot self, that's episode seven. And if you've been doing a consistent practice of familiarizing yourself with this future self, this higher self, how he or she thinks, feels, acts, is in the world, their way of being, then you can say, well ask yourself, how would they look at this? What would be the next step that they would take but being where I am now?

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So, a lot of times, a way that I approach this, it's like, I pass things through the filter of my moon shot self, so for instance, the person that two years from now is making \$2 million a year. And I move through various parts of my day with this filter, everything passing through this filter.

So whether I am at the gym, like I did this morning, I got a great run in and then I worked out at the gym. And I was moving everything through the filter of, "Well, my future self will also be doing this, so how is she thinking and moving through this?" And then it was clear that, of course, I'm supposed to be grateful for the fact that I have my health and that I get to work out at this beautiful gym and that I feel so incredible and then I get to clear my mind and it's been a great week, and having a longer workout felt like the perfect celebration to the end of a great week.

And then I thought too about the things that she would be musing about, gently turning over in her mind, not scrambling for deadlines, but what's she excited about working on today? And then I thought, well that's exactly the excitement that I had for my day.

I knew I was going to have like three awesome client calls. I knew I was going to get to talk to you via this podcast and then my kids would then come home. So it's a practice of being her now, and then also from that place saying, okay, what is then, is there something else that I can do today that moves me one step closer to being her?

And another practice that I wanted to share with you, a version of this, is something that I heard about. There's a center in Iowa called The Prairie Winds Facility. It's the Franciscan Center for Spirituality. So it is run by Franciscan nuns in Iowa.

And a friend who has been there told me about this beautiful practice that he witnessed. He said the nuns would sit around in a circle, like with their knees touching and their hands on one another's knees. And they would

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ask of themselves and the group, you know, what are we sensing is next? Because one of their mission is to move forward the mission of peace, being Franciscans, so asking of themselves, like, what is next? What are we sensing is next in terms of what is their next step for their own mission and serving peace in the world.

And I thought two things about that were really amazing. First, the question, what are we sensing is next? And then that they were doing it in community. You can ask this question of yourself, and then perhaps there's community that you have or you can create that you can do this together with as well. And the advice I would have for you is to trust what you get.

It's not that you put your head in the sand and then don't ask yourself, as things go on, what did I learn from that? How did that go? What would I have liked to see happen differently? How could I do better next time? But there is also just this sense that you want to increase that energetic capacity and feed that wind horse and that wind horse is fed by trusting yourself and building that trust and asking these questions of yourself over and over again.

Sometimes, one of the most powerful questions can be, so now what? What do I do next? I haven't seen the new Frozen 2 movie, though I will be taking my kids soon. And I've heard – a friend who knows what I'm into has said, "Oh, wait until you hear what Anna says all the way through." Apparently, she's always asking herself what that next step closest in is for her, maybe not quoting David White, but paraphrasing something to that effect.

And I think some of the great magic in this practice can happen when you marry taking that next step closest in with this practice too of doing it from the energy of your higher self or your future self, so as you take these next steps also trying on this bigger energy and not resenting that next step

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closest in, because that's only going to build up a practice of resentment in yourself.

And resentment is the opposite of presence. It's wanting something that's currently happening to not be happening. And your future self, your highest self, the next greatest version of you will also only ever be able to take the next step closest in. So it's this meta process that not only do you want to have to learn mastery, of like, what works for you in terms of breaking it down and then having it again and again and again and again until you know what's the right size bite for you. But it's also this practice of learning to love the journey so that you can actually appreciate what you create.

And all of these things also feed back into the idea I talked about last week, that energetic wind horse, that source of vitality that you have that's available to you that's what your fuel is for creating your dreams, because things like resentment and wishing things away, resisting things, avoiding things just depletes it. But presence, awakens, trusting your intuition, gratefulness, gratitude, you feed that vitality one step at a time. You move towards your dreams one step at a time. And before you know it you'll wake and you'll be smack dab in the middle of it. You will have walked yourself home.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you enjoy this podcast, if these episodes have been useful to you, meaningful, inspiring and have helped you shift and move the needle in important areas of your life, the best thing you can do to pay it forward is to go to iTunes and leave a review. You can also share this podcast with people, friends, allies, colleagues, who you think might also benefit from this work, and in that way, help me get the information out and help this movement continue to rise.

And if you want to take this work deeper, the next full version of Art School won't be until fall 2020. And I've heard from many of you that you were

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bummed that there is not a full art school in the winter this season. But I have good reason for this.

I am taking everything I've done with the past iterations and The Art School that comes out in 2020 is going to be like better than 2.0. It's going to be, like 2020.0. I'm so clear and even more on fire than ever about what my mission is and what the opportunities are and I just don't think there is any way that people should have to struggle with how they struggle with creating the art and creating their lives on their terms and being financially free and flush while doing it.

So I'm going to take the best of what I've done and make it better. I have been collecting and studying and observing what some of my clients most painful pain points are and some of the most stubborn, and I am actively working on solutions for them. I want to be the person that finds the solution to this because it is completely figureoutable.

I've done so much of this work. I know other people have. And now what's available is to take it and put it into a system and a training program. So just as, for instance, there is the school of art and design, where you may not be a professional illustrator going in, but for sure, you are going to be professional and probably an amazing illustrator or whatever your medium is going out.

And I look at athletes and I think of the amount of resources that we put into training them psychologically, feeding, nourishing their bodies, the science around performance in sports. And that, to me, just lights me up because there are so many possibilities for all of us.

You know, my original dream for The Art School is this place where you learn how to create whatever you want, and in the way, being the person that you want, that is fundamentally what Art School is about. And so this next year, for me, is taking everything that I've taught and also learned from

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teaching and taking it to the next level so that I can serve my clients even better and help them break out, break away, break through so that it becomes the new normal, so that we really do normalize extraordinary creativity, extraordinary success, so that these people are examples of what is possible, and then other people are like, “Oh, that’s the new paradigm.”

It’s not a starving artist. It is thriving. That is what is, like, the homeostasis. And that is what should be the baseline for humans, is that extraordinary thriving way of being. So again, super fired up to take The Art School to the next level. And I will still be taking a few private clients in 2020. And I do currently have a waitlist.

I’m now full through December. And so if you want to be coached with me privately in the first part of 2020, it’s probably a great time to schedule a discover consult, even if it might not happen now until January, because I do have a waitlist.

And, as I’ve mentioned in recent episodes, I am offering an amazing retreat coming up at the end of January, 2020. So what I think is still – it harnesses that New Year energy, really, there’s all that potential energy for harnessing change and it’s at the beginning of a decade.

We’re going to be asking ourselves the big questions, but this is not just going to be theory. I not only want shifts and breakthroughs for people. I want it to be what moves the needle that changes the entire trajectory of their life and in profound ways, you know, beyond the next decade.

So it’s going to be Thursday night through Sunday. We’re staying at the Miraval Spa and Resort, so top of the line, Oprah’s favorite, how can you go wrong? You’re going to be surrounded by luxury and beauty and also you are going to get coached at such an intense and deep level.

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And because I want this not to only be a retreat or this limited container of an experience, I want this to be really a transformation for you. And I want you to know, going in, who you want to be in the next decade, so that's why it's not only a retreat, it's actually an intensive and very small coaching experience.

So we're going to start with a group call and a private session with me before, so we get really clear, move all the obstacles out of the way about that fogginess, about who you want to be, so that when we meet then and convene in Arizona at Miraval, you hit the ground running. And yes, you are going to be extraordinarily well taken care of and I want you to have to think about nothing else but doing this deep transformational work and, trust me, you've never been coached like this before.

And I can take somebody through a huge change in an hour long session, and there are just times when I don't want to get off the phone with them, I kind of want to crawl through the screen and then be with them for the next week, two days, month and be like, alright, and let's stick with it, and let's get this momentum going, and let's keep this moving. Because it is a process to integrate in sight and breakthroughs and change.

And so that's why we're starting off with the intensive small group and private coaching before so we're really clear on what we're doing and what the issues are. And then, when we hit the ground in Miraval, you are just going to be blown away by what you discover about yourself and you also have to come ready to play.

So, it's going to be so fun and amazing on many levels and I'm going to ask you to do some hard work and to come through for yourself and show up in a big way because I'm asking a lot of myself here too. I have really high expectations for this retreat and I know that I can take you where you want to go, but you have to meet me at a certain place.

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Like, I've deliberately designed and chosen every aspect of this. I'll talk about it in upcoming episodes, but if you've heard about the concept of quantum entanglement, part of what I want this retreat to be is that you become not only entangled with the high vibe energy of this beautifully designed space, designed to restore and nourish you in mind, body, and spirit, and surrounded by amazing other women, but I want you to get energetically, like, so entangled, familiar with the greatest version of you, the highest aspect of your own consciousness, your truth, with your dream, with the next greatest version of yourself and who you really see it's possible for you to be in 10 years from now if you buckle down.

And this, again, is not about nose to the grindstone and being miserable for the next 10 years. This is about how can you create a life beyond your wildest dreams from a place that is deeply centered and relaxed, strong, even through adversity, and also joyful, immensely powerfully creative, in the flow, abundant. You know, what relationships await you in the next 10 years? What experiences do you want to have? What have you not experienced in the last 10 years or done? Who have you not become yet in the last 10 years?

We're going to go deep into that. We're going to obliterate all of those obstacles so that you have a clear sense of who you are going forward and that we build this vortex of momentum for you and you're also going to have this highly refined set of coaching skills that you can use on yourself.

And then also, after the retreat, there's going to be a follow up. So the retreat doesn't end when you go home, but that container of transformation continues with support from me and support from this small amazing community with a follow up group call and a private call. Even then, we can talk about what additional support you might need.

So even if you are not interested – and I don't know – in this retreat at this time, don't miss out on this question that is, who am I going to be in this

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next decade? What am I going to create? I know I can look back on retreat experiences of mine and see them as clear forks in the road that really did change the trajectory of my life and continue to influence me until this day.

And one of those, I actually just received a newsletter from a woman whose retreat I attended a few years ago, Laura Munson does Haven Writing Retreats in White Fish, Montana. And it was wonderful. And she recently sent out a newsletter about her latest book that's coming out March, Willa's Grove. And I thought it was such serendipitous timing as I've been preparing this retreat, the retreat of the decade, for the decade.

And within this newsletter from a woman whose retreat I attended, she shared a line from her upcoming book, Willa's Grove. It's about this group of women who get together and ask themselves the questions, like, so now what? And the line in the book that she shared was, "you are invited to the rest of your life."

And that is available for all of you listening. And that is one of the central motifs and themes for this retreat that I'm holding at the end of January. We all are invited to the rest of our life, so who do you want to be and what do you want to create?

And now, to close the podcast, I want to share with you the last two stanzas of David White's poem.

"Start right now. Take a small step you can call your own. Don't follow someone else's heroics. Be humble and focused. Start close in. Don't mistake that other for your own. Start close in. Don't take the second step or the third. Start with the first thing close in; the step you don't want to take."

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And so, my beautiful Art School listeners, friends, you are invited to the rest of your life. What is that first thing close in? What is that step you don't want to take? I'm holding the intention with all of my heart that you identify it right now and that you take it and that you continue that until you find yourself squarely in the middle of your dream. Have a wonderful week, everyone, and I will talk to you next time.