

Ep #64: (Part 1) How to Let Yourself Shine with Andrea Owen



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Leah Badertscher

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Andrea Owen: These are fundamental insecurities that we have that if we don't know that they are actually driving the bus of our life, they're going to continue to drive. And it's not just about kicking them out. It's about really getting to the bottom of it and also, like I want to say, that this growth and personal development in general, is never linear, it's a mess.

Leah Badertscher: Thank you for that mess.

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's your host, master certified life coach, artist, and former lawyer, Leah Badertscher.

Leah Badertscher: Hello, everyone, and welcome back. I am coming to you, we're back in Michigan, so it's snowing this morning and I feel like I'm in this liminal space between two dreams because last week I was just in Nashville with my husband. We went there first for the Brandi Carlile concert, which was sublime.

I went the full nine yards and got tickets to the VIP sound check, which also goes to a great cause. It goes to their Looking Out Foundation, which is about making music mean more. Really worth looking into and I love, of course, the concept of art for goodness sake and tapping into a higher purpose and tapping into a reason for making art that also moves the world forward.

That sound check was so amazing. There were less than 20 of us and we were sitting in the front pews there of the Ryman as they do the rehearsal,

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and just to watch Brandi, Phil, Tim, and the band, and the musicians work through things and try things out and see them interact with each other, and they would tell us what was going on too, it was surreal.

And then, as if that wasn't enough, I was like, "Oh my gosh. And now we get to come back in an hour and a half, after an amazing dinner, and be there for the concert, which was just out of this world. Courtney Barnett opened and that was phenomenal, to be able to see her live. And then, yeah, Brandi and the twins by far just knocked it out of the park.

And, like I said, now we're back. In a few short days I leave for Miraval, so I am prepping for the retreat of the decade, getting myself in the space to greet everyone when we're there, and really focusing on what is going to make this an extraordinary experience for everyone there, and so life is good. Life is good.

I also wanted to tell you, in between all this, difficult things come up too. And because I for sure have this space of, like I said, I feel like I'm in a liminal threshold space between two dreams, and I've also felt a lot of difficult emotions come up, which I'm so grateful to have practices I do and the coaching method I do, and also friends and allies that I do, and still, these things come up.

So, just a little tangent here. The way that I have been meeting that or encountering that is to make myself big enough to allow it. Radical acceptance is one way people might describe this, just to make myself so expansive that I'm not resisting what feels like negativity. I'm not resisting even what feels like, here's what's interesting, what feels like self-pity.

So, not resisting, but also working very consciously to not indulge, because I can tell myself there is no reason I should feel sorry for myself and that I

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don't want to, and I still, fascinatingly, have been having this experience. And so, I'm watching it, trying to learn what it means without indulging it, without indulging in it, and without getting caught up in that spiral.

And at the same time, for me, self-pity is not a negative emotion that is as useful as other negative emotions. And it's not one that I want to perpetuate. So, I'm actively working on it, and for sure, can rationally, logically see there is no way in hell that I am justified in feeling sorry for myself when there is also so many amazing things happening. So, it's expanding my capacity to take in all of the good things and also my compassion for myself for whatever this difficulty is that's cycling through, and working to understand it. And also, interestingly enough, and maybe this is why it's coming up, is to give me a good, up-close look at it.

The podcast I had planned for this week is on self-pity and victimhood and how those two mindsets are very toxic to your creativity and to your thriving. They are a huge energetic drain on the capacity, the reserves of energy you have available to you, and I would go so far as to say that indulging in them is even self-violence. It is not self-love.

And so, here I am experiencing it, and again, working to dig deeper into my own experience to see how best I can then help those of you who have been mired in this or have patterns of this. The first thing I want to say is take back the judgment, take back the shame, neither of those things work.

Double down on loving on yourself, and because of this very recent and curious experience I've been having with this, I will have, I think, even sharper and more helpful insights for you when that episode does come out in a few weeks.

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In the meantime, however, I also had the opportunity to jump on a Zoom call with a dear friend of mine and an amazing, kick-ass, literally, creator. And so, I have a very special gift, treat, experience for you in the next two weeks. I have two episodes where I have a conversation with Andrea Owen. Andrea Owen is the owner and founder of Your Kick-Ass Life.

That's her coaching company, that's the name of her first book, that is the name of her podcast, and there's so many accolades that I could use to describe Andrea, but I go into those more in her official bio that kicks off this episode, so I'll save that for then.

But in short, I just want to tell you that as a coach, I have so much respect for Andrea. She and I were in the same Mastermind this last year and she can deliver laser sharp insights and tough love in a way that could make people feel ashamed and want to hide, and yet she has this special way about her.

She does it with humor and she also does it with this huge compassion where you feel it's this loving, kick-ass sage talking to you, and yet she also is like the girlfriend you wish lived down the block or that you had on speed dial. She's hilarious and super sharp, very creative.

So, in this conversation, we talked all things about why do we hold back from shining, how we can work through upper limit problems, how we can expand our capacity for our ability to create powerfully, be powerful creators. We talk about how the creative process and process of creating yourself and your life is not linear and is not clean.

And we also, there's so many gems in this podcast, I'll just cut to it here shortly and you'll want to for sure come back for next week's too because in that episode, Andrea delivers this download of information that it's like a

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10 minute master class on how to manifest your next great creative work and also the professional opportunities that go with it.

And in this podcast, she talks about too her struggle and how her process wasn't linear, but then also the things that aided her breakthrough and aid the breakthroughs of her clients. She's worked with thousands of women. She's dynamite, so I'm very excited to share Andrea Owen with you today. And without further ado, here is that conversation.

So, today I have a very special guest and a wonderful treat for everyone. With me today is Andrea Owen of *Your Kick-Ass Life*. Andrea is an author, global speaker, and a professional certified life coach who helps high-achieving women let go of perfectionism, control, and isolation, and helps them to choose courage and confidence instead. She has helped thousands of women manage their inner critic to create loving connections and live their most kick-ass life.

She is the proud author of *How to Stop Feeling Like Sh*t: 14 Habits That Are Holding You Back From Happiness*, which has been translated into 18 languages and is available in 22 countries, as well as her inaugural book, *52 Ways to Live a Kick-Ass Life: BS-Free Wisdom to Ignite Your Inner Badass and Live the Life You Deserve*.

When she's not juggling her full coaching practice or hosting retreats, Andrea is busy riding her Peloton bike, chasing her 11-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter, or making out with her husband Jason. She is also a retired roller derby player, having skated under the name of Veronica Vain. Welcome to the podcast, Andrea.

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Andrea Owen: Thank you. I love hearing my own bio. That's my hope for everyone, that they can sit through the discomfort and joy of hearing about their accomplishments.

Leah Badertscher: Well, that is one of the reasons I wanted to have you on, because you are an example of many amazing things, and for anyone who hasn't read your books yet or checked out your website, I would encourage them to. I read your books and I had visited your website long before we met because we were in a Mastermind together this last year. We got to know each other and spend a year together, and you are every bit as larger than life as you appear on the page and through your website.

And you are also incredibly grounded, and I think we've talked at our retreats and throughout this last year about one of your superpowers, being able to do hard things through humor. But, yeah, so just for anyone who's not familiar with your work yet, I would encourage them to go check it out and say you're for sure one of those people who are exactly as you appear.

Andrea Owen: Oh, thank you. That means a ton. Thank you so much.

Leah Badertscher: So, there is so many things I want to talk to you about today. It feels like a good segue, your comment about the bio, about you hope that everyone can sit through their bio, through the discomfort, but also embrace the joy of it, because we were just talking about the fear of shining.

And as I told you, one of my highest intentions for this podcast is to help people remove the obstacles and really unleash their own creativity and their own potential. And I think one of the blocks, one of the places that keep us back is that fear of shining.

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Andrea Owen: Yeah.

Leah Badertscher: You had a story, you said you had just had a client call today, so you were fired up with a story.

Andrea Owen: Yes, I had a client this morning. Something came up and there was this thing that she was not taking action on. As a coach, we see and hear when a lot of times it doesn't really have anything to do with the thing. It might be maybe like 20-ish percent of it, but there's something underneath that's more of the bigger reason why. You said the word obstacle and that's exactly what it was for her, so in a coaching session you dig into that.

What we dug into, what we figured out, was that for the most part, it was her fear of outshining. And more specifically for her, it was her husband has a high-profile career, she's a stay-at-home mom of three children, and she has unconsciously made it her job to be in the background, to be the helper, to be the person who takes care of everything.

Not to say that that's bad, that's her role, she chose that, she gets a lot of joy from that, but now when it comes time to her making herself a priority and setting some boundaries, she's self-sabotaging, she's shutting down, she's having feelings of shame. All of the feelings are coming up. It's not as easy as just saying, "You need to stop doing that." That's not helpful at all because it's just this cycle that happens.

I got off the phone with her and recorded a podcast episode because I had so much to say about it and one of the most famous books about this in particular, it's actually something he talks about, it's Gay Hendricks wrote the book *The Big Leap*, which is excellent. I have it on both Audible and the hard copy of it. It's about your upper limit, and he talks about these four

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main fundamental fears that so many of us have. One of them is the fear of outshining.

It's a great book, and the examples – I was flipping through it when I got off the phone with her and the examples that he gave are very general and they could be for men or women, and I thought to myself immediately, "This is gender-specific." My clients, the vast majority of my clients are women, and I know that men have their own stuff when it comes to presenting themselves in the world, but for women specifically, we are taught at a young age, we are conditioned to not shine too bright, don't make other people uncomfortable.

It's really our job to take care of peoples' feelings, right? To make people comfortable. Especially don't make other people feel threatened by you. Don't be intimidating, don't be too loud, don't shine too bright. And in my podcast episode I was talking about I remember, and not everybody is like me, I understand that, but as someone who has grown up, just naturally I have a gregarious, outspoken, loud personality, I remember, I can read a room quickly. I learned how to do that, to watch peoples' body language, their behavior, the way they glance at each other, the way that the energy feels in the room, to tell myself I need to tone it down to make them comfortable.

It really struck me, and I know that this happens a lot with artists. Art is the definition of it. To make art is to shine. To make people happy, to make ourselves happy. So, I know that this is something that people listening struggle with, because to be an artist is to shine.

Leah Badertscher: Yes, and to be seen.

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Andrea Owen: Totally. And it's so scary. And if you have that underlying fear, because I do think that's a little bit of a different conversation if we're just talking about shining in general versus shining too bright, outshining someone else. Of course, they're directly related, but I do think it's a little bit of two different animals.

The fear about shining, maybe it's somebody listening who, maybe you have a really good friend who's an artist and they don't have as much success as you do. Are you holding yourself back as to not make that person uncomfortable? Maybe there's people in your family who, maybe there's somebody who always wanted to be an artist, but they went the traditional route and became a banker and they've made passive-aggressive comments about you being an artist.

We do all these things to try to stay within the community, and this also goes back to – this is a biological thing, that we want to keep ourselves safe within the “tribe”, because our old brain, that pesky old brain that doesn't want us to die. But yeah, it's a very involved conversation. And I'll stop talking because I can go on and on about it.

Leah Badertscher: No, you're exactly right. One thing that I hear so often, and it can be musicians, it can be artists who are part of artist – they could be established artists, they could be people starting out, a common experience is, let's say for instance, we'll use a specific example of an artist who wants to make more money. Let's say they're a musician, a singer/songwriter. And this is not so hypothetical, I'm just removing. It's one that's come up again and again for singer/songwriter, musicians.

They'll be like, “Well, it seems greedy. I'll be so on fire to increase my income and to not have to play bar gigs over and over and not to have to keep my day job, but then I get with this community of people that I love,”

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and that creatively really fuels them. They're making music together, literally, and they are mentors and they're friends and they're allies and kindreds.

But then when it comes to going to the next level, whether that's success, better gigs, more stable income, income that is, dare they go beyond stable?

Andrea Owen: An extra zero on the end.

Leah Badertscher: Right. Then, that brings up such shame, like an identity crisis. It's one, I'm thinking of several different people who have had the same experience within different – and those are just musician clients. And then I can move over to artist communities where, again, there are many wonderful groups that are promoting people exploring their creative potential and developing skills and refining those skills.

But then when it comes to pieces like professional success or professional development or monetary success, even the most well-meaning mentors will shut that down. I've had clients say, "Well, I was in this art group and it was going so well, but then the mentor said, 'You need to decrease your prices. You don't deserve, you haven't been in the industry long enough to charge that,'".

Andrea Owen: Wow.

Leah Badertscher: Well, didn't you just sell a piece for that much? Yes. So, it's a fear of shining and then they'll come up against very real experiences.

Andrea Owen: Making more money than their mentors.

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Leah Badertscher: Right. Of being shunned or shut down. So, that's why I want to have these conversations as often as possible so people know, oh, that's what's going on, and then what can I do about it? So, when you experience clients self-sabotaging in that way, what do you do to help them move beyond that?

Andrea Owen: I think one of the first questions I would ask is what are you afraid – and usually by this time in the coach/client relationship they understand that the answers that they're going to give, when they come out of their mouth, they're not going to sound very rational. I'm very curious about the stories that you're making up in your head that kind of don't make any sense, but they're very real, core fears that we have. "What are you afraid might happen if you attain, let's go beyond, like massive success? First, tell me what that is."

And it might be somebody who's – in my case, I work with high-achieving women and their struggles are all over the board, so for instance, a client might be really wanting to just get in shape because she's maybe put on some weight because she has not made herself a priority. I hate to use weight as an example, but just because I think it's such a common one that anybody has, it's not a case of where they just have put on a few extra pounds and they're still feeling healthy, it's kind of beyond that, but they're sabotaging.

They're joining a gym and they're not going. They are buying healthy foods and the foods are rotting in their refrigerator. That's a common form of self-sabotage. So, what I would ask is, "What are you afraid might happen if you succeed? And define succeed." If you are actually working out four or five times a week. If you are eating really healthy. If you get to that place where you are saying yes to going to all these holiday parties. If you overhear someone complimenting, telling your husband, "Oh, your wife looks so fantastic. She looks like she's really been taking care -."

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If those types of things are happening, what are you afraid might happen? And someone will think about it and they might say something like, “I’m afraid I’m going to take some of the attention away from my partner. I’m afraid that my best friend might feel bad about herself because she’s overweight. I’m afraid that I won’t have enough time for my kids if I’m going to be working out four times a week.”

I mean, these are smart women and they know that it’s irrational to think that they’re taking attention away from their partner, but these are fundamental insecurities that we have that if we don’t know that they are actually driving the bus of our life, they’re going to continue to drive. And it’s not just about kicking them out. It’s about really getting to the bottom of it and also, like I want to say, that this growth and personal development in general, is never linear, it’s a mess.

Leah Badertscher: Thank you for that mess.

Andrea Owen: And I see so many of my clients and people in my community beat themselves up because they’ll start to make progress and then they’ll come backwards, like this is life. This happens to me all the time. I mean, you know, I’ve spent the last year with you in a Mastermind and you’ve seen me ebb and flow and come to these epiphanies and cry at our retreats and all these things.

I know I said a bunch of things at once, but I think that it’s important to identify, first and foremost, where is it that you’re doing this in your life? Of course, you can’t clean the kitchen until you turn the lights on, so where in your life are you doing this? Are you doing this – maybe somebody has a day job. Are you doing this when you’re trying to create art, when you’re planning on building your business? Are you doing this in your romantic relationships? Are you doing this in your friendships?

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I have done this in my friendships, worried about leaving them behind, but the reality of it is that they serve themselves best when they go at a different pace than I am. I don't know where I signed up to be this person's pacer. Apparently, I filled out a job application that they didn't even want me to have and making up all kinds of stories.

I have this one particular dear, close friend of mine and I was afraid even to write my second book because I was like, "Well, she still hasn't written her first one yet and I know she wants to." I didn't want to pass her up. I was making up that I was passing her up when that really wasn't the case at all. She just moves at a different pace than I do.

Leah Badertscher: Yes.

Andrea Owen: We're both successful.

Leah Badertscher: And I was just talking to a client yesterday about this very thing and, like you said, to turn the lights on, so to have the awareness of it, and then to break it down and be like, if this person in my life, like your friend for instance, I love her and I wouldn't hold the vision of me doing what I came to do and contribute, me living my potential, somehow I have to dumb my potential down. Just, when you turn the lights on, you realize, oh, that's thinking very little of this person I love.

Andrea Owen: A hundred percent.

Leah Badertscher: And the best thing you can do for your life, but for someone else's too, is to be like, "I'm going to live my potential and so can you."

Andrea Owen: Yeah.

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Leah Badertscher: And it may not be, like you said, I love how you said it's not a linear process and everybody's on their own timeline too. I just think, then also collectively, is we're very globally empathic. That's a generalization, but I think it's we're tapped into each other and we do have these considerations that crop up, like am I leaving people behind? I think we can be aware of that and flip it too and be like, "Well, if we're so connected, if me moving forward, why wouldn't that just move everybody forward?" A rising tide move all ships.

And I do think there's this, not to gloss over the discomfort part, but when you actually, you are different, you're a different person for a while because you're evolving, and so that jeopardizes the connection, but I just know I for sure would not want a friend to be holding herself back.

Andrea Owen: Yeah. And you would never want a friend that's holding you back. What kind of friendship is that?

Leah Badertscher: Right, that we can do better than connect at the least common denominator.

Andrea Owen: Yes. And she would never – I hope that no one is in a friendship out there where your friend would say, "Yeah, I actually do want you to not make a whole lot more money than me because it makes me uncomfortable. So, can you dial it back? That would make me feel – thanks."

No. That's not how friendship works, and I just highly doubt anyone would be in a friend – and if that is your friendship, then you need to have a big talk and set a boundary and get a different friend, but also that whole term of leaving people behind, what does that actually mean?

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Because that, in and of itself, that's what I would want people to define for themselves. Do you think that means that you're going to sabotage their success if you move past them? And for me, what it looked like is I was worried that they weren't going to like me anymore. That they would think negatively of me, like, "Ooh, look at her, thinking that she's a badass, doing all these things and having all this success and making all this money."

That's one of the reasons I held myself back and stayed small, for fear of that. And not just her, but everybody.

Leah Badertscher: Right.

Andrea Owen: One of the most uncomfortable things that I did was my 20-year high school reunion. First of all, I had just gotten sober a couple of years before, so it was my first big social event without a drink in my hand. And second, here I go back to this place where this was a lot of people I've known from childhood and a lot of times, the last time I really spent any time with them was 20 years prior. And it was so uncomfortable having people congratulate me.

So, my first book had just come out and it was, oh, I was clutching my purse, and my palms were sweating, and I felt like when someone congratulated me on the book, I felt like I had to return a compliment, and I hadn't talked to these people in 20 years, so I'm like, I have no idea what's going on in your life, so it's like, "I like your earrings."

I was so awkward and such a mess, but it was such a huge learning experience to look at that and say, wow, that was my discomfort of shining too bright in front of these people. It was a huge wake-up call for me to do my own work.

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Leah Badertscher: So, did you have any of that prior to writing your first book? Can we talk about that, about what it was like to go from – did you always know you wanted to write a book?

Andrea Owen: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Leah Badertscher: You did. Okay.

Andrea Owen: Yeah, but it was more of a pie in the sky dream. It's sort of like, "Yeah, I would love to go to the moon," but I didn't want to be an astronaut. It was so out there and farfetched. I was a voracious reader as a child. I grew up an only child. I had half siblings that were much older than me and out of the house by the time I was in kindergarten and I spent a lot of time reading. It was the one thing that my parents always said yes to was books.

I started writing probably when I was 10 or 11, just little kid short stories, I wrote angsty poetry when I was a teenager about love and breakups and heartache and all of those things. Then, I stopped writing in my 20s and that was really around the time that I lost myself as so many of us do, and didn't pick it back up until my life fell apart when I was about 31 and I do feel like I was making up for lost time. It just was pouring out of me.

And then it was really then that I realized that I had a voice, what people in the industry call a voice. I didn't even know what that meant. I also had made up a story that because I changed majors – I was originally going to major in English, quite honestly because it was the subject I got the best grades in and loved writing papers and things like that.

I changed my major to science and decided that I didn't have an English degree, I didn't have an MFA, I had no prior writing experience, no awards

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or anything like that, so I couldn't write a book. But then I got sober a few years later, just woke up and decided. This was all [inaudible 0:28:12] and I'd gone through life coach training. I had just barely started my life coaching practice, decided I was just going to do it. Didn't know what it was going to look like, didn't know really anything.

And then once that passed and the fear came in, I got coaching on it and my coach helped me really figure out what the book was going to be. I started blogging about it. It was a strategy that I did not know was actually a strategy. A small publisher reached out to me, an editor, and she asked me if I had a publisher yet, I said no. Well, first I thought it was a scam. Turns out it wasn't a scam, and they did end up being my first publisher for *52 Ways to Live a Kick-Ass Life*.

And a side note on that, I had written in a journal several months before that, I was really into manifesting at the time and I had written down "Wouldn't it be awesome if a publisher reached out to me to publish my book?"

Leah Badertscher: Wouldn't it be awesome?

Andrea Owen: Totally never thinking it would come true. I had a coach at the time and that was her assignment. Every day write down, "Wouldn't it be awesome if -," and you fill in the blank. These were not things like, "Wouldn't it be awesome if I got a workout in today?" No, no, no. These were things like, "Wouldn't it be awesome if a check for \$50,000 arrived in the mail? Wouldn't it be awesome if a publisher reached out to me?" Again, these pie in the sky things. And that was one of the things I wrote down, and I wrote the date and everything.

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I didn't even remember that until months later, I was flipping back through and was like, "Holy shit, I wrote this down." Yeah, but that was sort of the very short version of how that all happened.

Leah Badertscher: So, a number of things popped out for me through that, and before I forget, because I always do at the end of the podcast, this coach with me segment, so they have an assignment, like a coaching assignment. I've done one. I have one called "Six Impossible Things". There's this quote from Alice in Wonderland where it said, if you haven't believed six imposs- I believe six impossible things before breakfast every day. It's just what I do.

So, I gave them, it's like that wouldn't it be awesome if, so you get in that energy of yeah, it's not if I did all my to-do's today and drank kale juice and got to the gym and blah, blah, blah, but the sort of yeah, what would constitute a kick-ass life?

Andrea Owen: Yeah.

Leah Badertscher: So, I'm going to tell everyone now that their coach with me assignment today is to do "Wouldn't it be awesome if," for like 30 days.

Andrea Owen: Thirty days of "Wouldn't it be awesome if." Yup. I got six emails in my inbox, people wanted to buy my painting or, yeah.

Leah Badertscher: Yeah. I was telling you before we got on about how one of my intentions to this podcast is that so many art babies are made and born and walking around in the world, so we'll say, "Wouldn't it be awesome if," that there are some awesome, kick-ass life, art school art babies walking around.

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Andrea Owen: We're conceiving art babies left and right here during this conversation. I hope so.

Leah Badertscher: I might have to rate this podcast as –

Andrea Owen: Explicit.

Leah Badertscher: So, now I am at the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to lean in, really work with me, coach with me. So, you've already had the spoiler, you know what your work is here today. Thirty-one days of "Wouldn't it be amazing if". Hashtag that, tag Andrea and I on Instagram. She is @YourKickassLife and my handle is @LeahCB1. Tag us in what would be amazing for you. Tag us in manifestations.

We for sure want to know about all of these art babies, kick-ass life babies that were conceived from this podcast. Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you've enjoyed this episode, if this and other episodes have helped you move the needle in your life or just made your day a little bit more amazing, the best thing you can do to pay it forward and share the love is to go to iTunes, subscribe, and leave a review.

I read each and every review. I am so grateful for that and so grateful for the way that you all have been sharing this work organically and that the community is growing. Thank you so much for listening in. And, if you want to learn more about upcoming sessions of the Art School, other retreats or group programs I may offer, or what it's like to work with me privately, the best thing to do is to go to my website, www.leahcb.com, that's www.leahcb.com and hop on my mailing list.

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You know, for today's closing, I really want to circle back around to that question, "Wouldn't it be amazing if". Not only do I want you to dwell on that and come up with your own expressions of what would be an amazing, beautiful, kick-ass life, I want you to feel it.

Spend at least 10 seconds imagining "Wouldn't it be amazing if" and really holding it as if it happened yesterday, as if it were unfolding right before your eyes. Hold and cultivate that feeling. I hope you all have an amazing, massively magical week, and I look forward to talking with you next time.