

Ep #66: How to Grow from Self-Pity



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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“Self-pity is easily the most destructive of the non-pharmaceutical narcotics. It is addictive, gives momentary pleasure, and separates the victim from reality.” John Gardner. This podcast, it's been months in the planning, and then I actually thought to release it a few weeks ago. I actually had recorded an episode, but something was tugging on me. There was something a little bit more that I wanted to add, something more I wanted to contribute to this conversation.

As fortune and fate would have it, I have had some opportunities in the last couple of weeks to get back up close and personal with self-pity and victim thinking. I was deep in it. I have been deep in it at various times in my life, and it wasn't like that again because at those times, I felt like it just was who I was, and there was no way out. That's radically different now, but I do have deep understanding and compassion for those who are in it, buried beneath that rubble, and don't feel like anyone can help, least of all themselves.

What I want you to know is that you can. It was also not lost on me that I had planned for an episode on self-pity and victim mindset, and again, felt that there was something even more that I needed to think about and add to the conversation. Then voila, there I had the opportunity. I felt like I was thrown into this pit of despair. How awesome. My own personal laboratory for this.

So, as we enter into this discussion, a couple things. If you are thinking, “Well, then this episode is not for me. I'm tuning out,” hold your horses because if you're one of those people that's saying, “I don't like people that self-pity. I don't like people that engage in victimization mindset. That's not me at all,” that's your shadow raising its hand and saying, “Hold on here partner.”

There is something for you because this episode is for everyone who wants that thriving, empowered, prosperous, fulfilling life. For anyone who has a

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dream they feel they are not yet quite living. It's for you if you feel there's currently any gap, that there's any stretch for you to believe that you can do what you want to do and create exactly what you want to create. The number one question and challenge that my clients have, they'll say, "Yes, I get that believing is essential, but how do I believe? How do I believe in myself and my dreams?"

What I want to tell you is first, you have to turn the lights on and make sure you know that there are no obstacles or obstructions to your belief. Self-pity and victim mindset, as John Gardner said, it separates you from your reality, and your reality is that you are a powerful creator, and if you have a dream, you can make it come true. If you are in a place where you don't think that if you cultivate a certain way of being, your results are inevitable, this podcast, this episode, is going to be a powerful one for you.

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.

Hello, everyone and welcome back. I hope you're doing awesome. If not, I have plenty of extra. Open yourself up and take it in because I am beaming it your way today. I am radiating so much gratitude and being in love with life.

First of all, it is an amazing day. It is a miraculous day. Not only because it's Monday, which is always my miracle Monday, and not only because it's another day being alive, and also exceptionally miraculous because today is the birthday of my brother Andy. I just posted a happy birthday post on Instagram and Facebook for him and made myself cry because just thinking about how fortunate I am, I love all my siblings, and I love having these opportunities to celebrate them. So, thank you for indulging me.

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As I just say, it is really the arrival of one of not only my favorite human beings on the planet, but I know I'm biased, but just one of the best human beings on the planet. As I wrote on Instagram, he and my brother Will really make the word brother just one of the most beautiful words in the English language to me.

So, I wanted to send out, even though this was recorded on his birthday and it will be released past, I wanted to tell my brother, Andy, happy birthday. So many blessings on your year ahead. I know it's going to be incredible. Yeah, we'll celebrate the next time we get to cruise together.

The other reason I'm just overflowing with a love of life, even more so than usual, is I just got back from *Miraval*, everyone, and I know I named it, but it was aptly named *The Massive Magic Retreat* and *The Retreat of the Decade* because it did not disappoint. It did not disappoint at all, and I had to laugh because Saturday night we had the celebration dinner. We had this amazing, exquisite five course meal just lovingly, artfully, mindfully prepared by a private chef for us in the villa I had rented to host our group gatherings.

So, we're here in this beautiful space, and it's amazing. The architecture of this place was stunning, and overlooking the mountains, private chef, and then with wine pairings, and then the conversation was flowing. These women, you would have thought some of them have known each other like up to 18 months because they've been through a couple Art Schools together or gotten to know each other via my work, but not everyone.

They have not all been together in this space before, but you would not have known that they hadn't known each other all their lives. This beautiful conversation was flowing, and there was laughter, and tears, and just so much soulful heart-to-heart conversation. It was the perfect culmination celebration dinner. That wasn't our closing ceremony but our closing session, but it just felt like the peak point.

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Then there was an opera singer who just happened to come in. The chef overheard that it was one of the participant's birthdays, so he pulled me aside and said, "Hey, I have a buddy who works here," and a few minutes later, this bellman pulls up, and he was kind of dressed like a security guard.

So, everybody was like, "Are we in trouble already. Are we too loud?" He's like, "Oh, no, no, no, no." Then he proceeds to sing in his amazing operatic voice, Happy Birthday, and then he launches into then another song for us that he has been practicing. This is someone who tours around the country and also works at universities, and then works at Miraval in between his touring seasons.

So, it was vibrating, and that was one example of the massively magical things that happened. Another thing that's popped to mind. I was out on a hike with one of my clients. I did one-to-one sessions as well as group work and group sessions, but I really wanted a chance to do individual deep-dive coaching with people. It was such a dream to be able to do it out on the trails, and dig in, and be out in nature, and hiking, and I just wanted to make sure that I was digging in deep, and really connecting with everyone, and getting people to shifts that they came for.

So, this amazing client of mine and I were walking and talking, and then what should saunter out in the trail ahead of us but a very big she-cat. First, my brain was like, "Mountain lion," but it was not big enough to be a mountain lion and it also had spots. Then I thought, "Well, is it a bobcat? That's not what the Midwest variety of bobcats look like," but we just instantly grabbed hands and held hands as if that would help.

It didn't really seem to notice us or mind that we were just right there behind on the trail. It just continued to walk, cross the trail in front of us, and we slowly walked backwards. We found someone who worked on the property riding around on a Gator vehicle, and we told him about it, and

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he's like, "Oh, yeah, that's the property bobcat. She's got a couple cubs." He did not seem concerned about it.

Anyway, that was just an example of this other magical encounter, not to mention, again, the women. They brought the magic. Extraordinary, powerful women, and then in a place where they felt safe to expand, and then also be vulnerable, and knew they were in a space where everyone there wants to see them thriving and living their most fulfilled and prosperous selves. Living that out into the world.

So, then it creates this space where you're free to share things that seem like they contradict that, knowing that they don't, knowing that at our most vulnerable, at our most relaxed and okay with being all that we are, is when we are most powerful. Then also from this place where they could really let loose and let their hearts and imaginations become as big and expansive as is this truly authentic for them, and have those big, beautiful dreams, and those big, shining, soulful selves be fully seen, and witnessed, and held by others. It was magical.

So many other things. Our dinner party, we were in the last course, and it was incredible. Then before I knew it, I kind of felt like I was just levitating out of my chair because everybody was moving into the living room, and it was spontaneous dance party. Dancing on furniture may or may not have happened.

Then the night unfolded. One of the participants who's an amazing singer-songwriter had brought her guitar. We're sitting under the stars, under the moon, under this beautiful night sky, and mountains in the backdrop, next to an infinity pool. The fireplace is roaring at our backs, and just singing, and listening, and dancing. Then eventually there's an infinity pool. You have to get in.

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So many wonderful things I can tell you about, but I just wanted to share some and let some of that magic and beauty flow out into your life because even if you were not there, and like I said, I took all of you in spirit, here is a key to that magic that I want you to know. It's a great segue for today's episode. You can have the beauty that you desire. You can have the life you dream of creating. You can have exactly what you want. Know that. Work on accepting that into reality, into your mind. Work on believing that.

Then that brings us to the topic of today's episode because so many of my clients will say, "I get how key belief is to creating the life that I want. I get how key belief is to creating the results I want. I get how key belief is to doing it in a way where I become a better person." By better, I mean more fulfilled, more thriving, healthier, happier, more of who you really want to be, more of who you would love to be, somebody who is in love with life and creates powerfully from that place.

If you are feeling like, "Gosh, that's so distant," as people do when we start working. They're like, "I can't get myself to believe it. It feels so foreign. It feels so distant. It feels so unlike me," then there's work to do. There is a work. It's like a training program. I like to tell my clients, "You have to have the intensity, and the energy, and approach of an Olympic athlete. You can't just know what to do. You have to train yourself in mind, body, and spirit to become conditioned, and mind, body, and spirit to hold this greater vibration, to hold this greater energy and power that creates at a higher level, that creates at a higher vibration, that creates more beauty and more power with less effort, with less struggle."

In order to do that, again, you have to think of it like a physical training program and approach it accordingly. An absolutely essential part of training yourself to become somebody who is powerfully creative, who creates exactly what they want, becomes the person that they want to be, is having awareness.

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Having awareness, and then a space for your patterns, a space to witness your patterns, and then to see what you are doing to contribute to creating less than what you want right now, what you are doing to contribute to creating maybe not only less than what you're wanting, but something that is on the opposite side of the spectrum. Something that's very destructive to you, something that's a very negative result, that has very negative consequences and symptoms in your life. Something that is self-sabotaging you. So, a pattern I want you all to be aware of, and again, without judgment.

I know that of which I speak because I engaged in self-pity and victim mentality for years, and then I knew I was doing it, and then I engaged in self-pity, and being mad at myself, and shaming and judging myself for years on top of that. That's just heaping shame on top of shame and suffering on top of suffering.

I would describe it, this is how it felt to me and this is how I describe it to others, that it feels like you're buried beneath rubble and an earthquake, and then every time you try to dig yourself out, you shake the thing and just more falls down on top of you. It feels like you're that helpless. It feels that desperate and despairing, and I do not want that for you.

So, when you hear that this is a discussion about self-pity and victim mindset, I am talking to that part of you right now when I say, "Don't tune out because I have something different to say to you today in a way that you have ever heard it before." I am not going to be one more person that tells you that you are your own worst enemy, that you should just get out of your own way because I know what that does.

That just makes you drive the knife in deeper and twist it. That just makes you feel even more desperate, even more alone. Again, as John Gardner said, that sense of desperation that there's no hope or help for you, that sense of loneliness, that is that phenomenon that separates you from

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reality because it's not the truth. There is a way out, and there is another side.

There is also something oddly addictive and pleasurable about continuing to engage in self-pity and victim mindset. Again, I want you to be so clear that you're not going to use this against yourself when you hear me say this, but it is important that you hear it this way because I know some of you are thinking, "It's not that big of a deal. It's just kind of the truth. I call myself a loser. I think of myself as a loser, and I know it's not great, but come on, it's not really that big of a deal."

Hear me. It is self-violence, victim thinking. Thinking of yourself as a victim and self-pity are forms of self-violence, and enough is enough. It is like if you were sitting next to me, and you were doing this, thinking of yourself as a loser, beating up on yourself, thinking the world is stacked against you. Every time you do that, it's like you're stabbing yourself in the leg with a butcher knife. If I didn't say, "Hey, let's cut that out. No more of that," I wouldn't be doing my job and it wouldn't be loving.

You have to realize that you're doing that to begin with, and then I think it's also so important that you hear what I'm saying about don't heap more suffering on top of it. Don't make yourself another problem, therefore, making yourself the villain that turns you into the victim and just perpetuates the cycle.

I'm interrupting that now by saying enough is enough. and we're going to talk about another way, but I need to be clear. You have to listen up and put the butcher knife down right now. What it also does, it's basically like stabbing your wind horse and letting it bleed out. Your energetic reserves run out.

If you are slightly different, this isn't resonating with you because you're like, "Oh, that's so not me. This episode is so not me. I never feel sorry for

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myself or do that victim mentality thing. In fact, I can't stand it when people do that," then again, be on alert because that's your shadow talking. Self-pity and victimization don't only manifest as the obvious, "I'm such a loser. I'll never make it, etc."

It can also sound like this. It can sound like the CEO client who makes millions of dollars. When we talk about what's keeping her from going onto her next evolution, the next version of her greatest self becoming more fulfilled, and she's like, "No, I could never do that. You just don't understand what it's like to be a CEO." That is being a victim of your position, of your company, of what you think are circumstances in life.

So, you can be powerful in many areas, you could be a CEO, you can make millions of dollars and be successful, you can be happy, and this still can creep in and limit you, and I don't want limitations for any of you. I want you to see what you are fully capable of, but you can't do that if you're not aware of where these things are in place. So, it also requires being so very honest with yourself. I'm going to talk in a little bit about one of my big aha's and breakthroughs about what helps to facilitate that.

You could also be talking to another client who is a very well-established, successful, well known, well-regarded artist, and they're talking about their next evolution, their true dream, where they want to find more freedom in their creative work. Then they say, "Oh, but you don't understand what it's like when you have to be loyal to a fanbase, or whatever, a gallery, or a record label, or management."

Again, you've turned your success, you've turned your career, even a fabulous career, into a villain, thereby, making you the victim. What I want for all of you is to put you back where you belong, put you back where the truth is, and that is that you are seated as the creator. I want you to turn those lights on, and again, see where you have separated yourself from reality.

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Anytime we are giving our power away with whatever degree of self-pity and victim mindset, I am going to argue we are separating ourselves from our highest self. Therefore, we are separating ourselves from reality, and that does not serve you. It doesn't serve your work, it doesn't serve your art, it doesn't serve your dreams, and it for sure does not serve the world.

You cannot be committed both to becoming the most fully expressed, creatively powerful, empowered, thriving individual in your life. You cannot be committed to your dreams, and your highest purpose and also be committed to your patterns of self-inflicted suffering through victim mindset and self-pity. You can't be married to patterns of self-destruction and self-sabotage and also be committed to living the life that you really dream of living, that you really want to create.

So, before we go on, let's first just start with a general definition of self-pity. According to the internet, many general definitions on the internet, this was kind of the consensus. Excessive self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles.

On victim mindset, here is what I found most often. An acquired personality trait in which a person tends to recognize or consider themselves as the victim of the negative actions of others. So, I would also add to this then that they consider themselves to be the victim of circumstances as well, or in general, they can use life against themselves in a negative way.

Again, a thing that both self-pity and the victim mindset share in common is this commitment to one's own suffering and a commitment to a definition that they are disempowered. Once again, you can't be committed to both a belief and a knowing that you are your highest self and also be believing in this definition that you are a disempowered itself. There's too much dissonance there.

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Then what I find where people's struggle is they feel this dissonance inside of them, and instead of holding and just practicing longer and longer, again, it's this training program. It's building this muscle, the soul muscle, this mental muscle, this emotional muscle. It's a physical muscle, a neurological muscle to hold the belief that you are powerful, and you are in control, and you are amazing, even when you're not.

To practice this muscle of a high soft regard, if you don't practice holding that, even when it shakes, then that dissonance in our brain wants to resolve itself, and it will default into the easy, which is, of course, you look like you're the victim of circumstances, or you look like someone who doesn't believe that they're deserving of their own positive self-regard. That doesn't believe that they are deserving of belief, and instead, they give into this, again, momentary pleasure and relief.

It is very addictive, and I think it's very helpful to think of it almost like this drug. Then you need to put that down if you're going to move on and create something more powerful, give yourself access to a vein of energy that is so much more sustainable, long lasting, a pure energy that's going to fuel your dreams instead of giving you this instant hit of relief, but then also taking you off track and making you lose track and lose sight of your dream.

So, here now is the big breakthrough and the revelation I had regarding self-pity, and navigating that, and finding a more powerful healing and space for that. I mentioned that I had my own personal experiences and recent reencounters with this in recent weeks, and I'll tell you more the details of that soon.

First, let me just tell you what the revelation was because I was in a place where I know, and you know and have likely heard that, "Okay, if you're not supposed to self-pity yourself, what should you do?" Well, then we assume

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the opposite of self-compassion. True, right? We assume that the opposite is self-love. Also true.

I have used those tools. I have flexed my self-compassion muscle, my self-love muscle. I have healed tremendously in all of those areas through deep inner work, coaching, spiritual work, very grateful also for the presence of amazing teachers, and mentors, and friends. Somebody who I will say was excellent and pivotal for me in this, her work is amazing, is Christie Inge. She also comes back into my story recently here, and I wanted to mention her because I'm so grateful that she held this kind of space.

So, again, you know and I know intellectually how important self-compassion and self-love are. Yet, I can also feel clients' resistance when I say these things. Then you can hear the but how coming, and the sense of frustration. I think the thing that made me delay in releasing this podcast and producing this particular podcast was because I sensed there was something better that I had to offer you. Something I couldn't quite articulate in my own healing, that had happened in my own healing yet, and I didn't want to just again say, "Love yourself and be compassionate," even though those are true, and even though I do think you should do that.

To me there was still a little bit of an undertone in that where if you're on the receiving end of that, it could maybe feel like hearing another time that you are your own worst enemy, or you should just get out of your own way, you know one of those. Right, thanks. I'd love to do that. I'd love to love myself, but how come I can't?

Then you even subconsciously make yourself wrong, or bad, or feel like a failure because you just can't get there. In some sense, you feel like you're the reason you can't get there, and it can deepen the spiral and deepen the wound. So, here is the breakthrough I have, and I for sure hope and believe this will help so many of you.

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It was that the opposite of self-pity is not only compassion and love, but it is safety. The opposite of self-pity is safety, and that's because here's a paradox. It's not even really the opposite because sometimes I think when you try to do the opposite, it creates this tension. It creates a sense of wrongdoing or wrongness.

So, when you try to move to love and compassion too soon, it just feels like you're at a tug of war, but you're pulling on the end, you're already strong, really strong. A pull on the end that views you as the victim that views yourself so pitifully. You're already pulling at the end that you know you're harming yourself, you know you're hating on yourself, you know you're shaming and loathing yourself, and it's like you just can't stop.

So, to pull on the other end with self-love can just exacerbate that tug of war and make you feel exhausted and like you want to give up instead. Finding this deep, this vast, this overwhelming, this eternal, this infinite, this huge container of safety for yourself, so that you can experience the self-pity, you can feel it. You don't have to pull against it, you don't have to work on it, but just to see it.

So, it's a little bit hard for me to put into words, but one thing that does help me and has helped some clients is to use imagery. So, I started to suggest that with the words like vast, and infinite, and container, so I want to offer that to you as well. When you're experiencing a victimization kind of thought, when you're experiencing self-pity, when you're engaged in that, to then create this big space around you.

Imagine this great vast container of safety that says it's okay. It's all right. I see you doing that right now. We're going to put that down. Enough is enough. To find, search. Your soul wants to find this. It will help you search for a place. We start to feel the borders of your acceptance for yourself moving out farther and farther. This too though, safety, I think is a

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prerequisite for radical acceptance, and I think there's also a synergy between the two.

Too, I've noticed in my own life and working with others, if I offer radical acceptance as an alternative to self-pity, self-loathing, victim mindset, there's a lot of resistance, and it's really hard, and people can't quite figure it out. That's, again, because I think it's too much of a polar action. It's too much of a pointing out and suggesting that what you're already doing by being self-pitying and a victim is bad, which then just sends you further into that spiral.

If you can start by searching for ways where you can feel deeply safe, and I am not suggesting that this one podcast is going to get you there. Maybe for some of you that aha will be enough. For others though, I want you to start thinking about, "How can I feel safe? How can I drop deep within myself and let myself be safe? Hold myself safely. Imagine, connect to, plug into something holding me so safely while I feel this."

It's something I love to do in person with people because there are words, and then there are images, and then there's me moving around the room making shapes, but I think that there is some sort of energy that can be exchanged between people and also in places that you can start to energetically teach and transfer that sense of safety.

So, I hope too though that some of that might be possible through the airwaves, through the frequency of this podcast, but I want to offer that for you to think about. That if you've tried all of those things, and they're not quite working, if you've tried self-love, if you've tried compassion, radical acceptance, keep doing those. Keep doing those like your life depends on it because really, it is like that rubble on top of you after the earthquake.

You have to keep whatever you're doing to move away the rubble. Know that it's working because an insidious pattern and these self-destructive

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thought patterns of self-pity and victimization is the thought, “This isn't working. Nothing works. I can't be helped. This isn't working. Nothing works. Nothing has worked. I can't be helped. No one can help me.”

Be on to yourself. Each time you engage in those thoughts, it just puts another rock back on the pile. Again, don't make yourself wrong for that, but we're turning on the lights here with a lot of love and a lot of safety just so you can see that, and just so we can interrupt that pattern and say, “Enough. Enough is enough. No more. There is a better way.”

I'm going to help you pick off the rubble from this side, and you're going to do what you can from that side, but there is light. There is freedom on the other side, and to get there, you have to be, again, that Olympic, fierce, disciplined, almost ruthless mindset of thinking. Anything that is not aligned with, “This is working. I am doing this. I am getting free. I am taking my power back. I am becoming the person I know I can be. I am healing.”

Anything inconsistent with that must be cut off. You must put that knife down and continue on that energetic vein of deep love, deep safety for yourself, deep commitment that everything's working. The smallest rock that you move works. One line you've read in the last 10 books that you've read, no thinking, “Oh gosh, look at myself. Help, self-development, self-fixing addiction.” No, you say, “Look at me. Something in me going for it so much, she or he is willing to search the ends of the earth to find one nugget of truth that gets me closer to freedom.”

You do not discount that thing in you that's going for freedom. Do not discount it. Do not work against it. Don't keep piling rubble in its path. Align with that thing in you that's going for the light, that knows where it belongs. Align with that, and however tempting it may be, put down that needle that gives you the little junky hit of thinking, “Oh, it's not working. I should have known. I'm such an idiot. I'm going through this hope cycle again.” Then

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you just shoot up with that momentary pleasure of being addicted to the self-pity again.

Once again, it has separated you from reality. It has separated you from truth because the truth is you were meant to be free. The truth is that dream in you, that's the truth. That's what you're meant to be focused on. That's what you're meant to be giving the best of your energy and attention to, and you were not meant to create suffering for yourself and these endless frustrating loops. You were meant to be free.

So, I realize I have gotten on my impassioned rant, but I know that for some of you this can be so painful and this can feel like life and death, and I want you to have liberation from that. I know others of you are again thinking, "I thought she told me there was something in this episode for me. This doesn't sound like it's for me."

So, here, I'm going to tie it in for all of you. Wherever you find yourself on the spectrum, we have a human mind that is geared. Our primal brain has been wired for centuries, evolved, to focus on the negative. If you have a human brain, again, this episode is for you.

Engaging in any degree or any form of disempowering yourself, how does that affect your ability to create? It's because it depletes the energetic reserve that you have available to you to create, and it also limits your creative power in your capacity going forward. So, it drastically limits. No matter if you think you're getting amazing results now, but you're still kind of thinking, "I still have dreams, or maybe I'm still holding back."

Look to where you're engaging in any form, any degree of these self-limiting behaviors of self-pity and victim mindset because they do drastically limit your ability to come from prosperity conscious, your ability to be powerful, highly effective, and also highly efficient, a highly efficient

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creator in your life, which no matter what stage of the game you're at, that is always a fun game to play.

How can I be more powerful but smarter about it, wiser about it, more creative about it? How can I be more powerfully creative, more beautifully creative, given new ways, amplify my values in new ways, contribute to the world in new ways, but by using less resources? So, here is where something so fascinating comes up, and it's something that, again, I just realized. I think I thought about before I knew before, but I viscerally got at a whole new level and peeled back layers for myself and my understanding of it, and I think this is going to help make me even more powerful as a coach helping others get breakthroughs.

So, I'm super excited about this because so many things I've been thinking about have collided in the last few weeks. One of the reasons they were able to collide was because I have been working on what it means to create a safe space for myself. I have had some feelings in the last few weeks that in the past would have made me want to cut and run. I have had those old feelings of self-loathing, and self-pity, and shame come up out of nowhere, it seemed, and at the most seemingly inopportune, undesirable moments, but it was really perfect.

Because the meta me had created this space, it didn't mean it was not intense for me, it didn't mean, for instance, that I did not wake up at 3:00 a.m. the morning of the first day of my retreat shaking and severe stomach problems, TMI, and feeling dreadful, full of dread and like I had drank a bottle and a half of really bad red wine hours before, which I hadn't, by the way, but I had that kind of physical, like I was toxic. Something in my body had slightly poisoned me kind of feeling.

I knew it was me moving through an upper limit. I knew it had something to do with I had put into place exactly what I wanted to create. This massively magical retreat. The retreat of the decade. I had put into place not only that,

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but I had held open as invitation for other women to say yes to themselves, and their dreams, and their next year, and their next decade as well. I had told them, “Here, come. I am creating this space for you to make massive magic in your life. I am creating this space for you to come and get all tangled up with who you really are, that quantum entanglement.”

So, you're so immersed in the energy and the knowing of who you really are, what your essence is, letting all those other things drop away so that you never forget it, and that going forward, it creates a momentum for you that is like rocket fuel, and that this will be the retreat of the decade and beyond.

That's what I had created. I didn't have a doubt that that's what I was going to do. So, why did this feeling come up? It was a mystery to me in the moment, but I also have done a lot of this work about creating a place safe enough and big enough for myself to go through hard things and hold myself as I was going through hard things. Also, very essential thing to note here I had put into place. I had it in my mind I know what to do for myself, how to care for myself ahead of time. I know my pattern, and this is a pattern of many self-pitying, self-destructive patterns like victim thinking. I stood in the retreat and not ask for help and withdraw because it's that thought again, “No one can help me. I can't be helped. There's something so wrong with me. I'm so ashamed.”

So what I did too at 3:00 a.m. in the morning, like on the morning of this dream retreat, this dream day, I texted a dear friend and ally, an amazing coach, though I hoped she was sleeping, and she was thankfully, but just so that I made that connection out for myself and into the world. It also is taking the opposite action of what shame tells you to do. Shame would say, “You're a coach. You shouldn't be going through this. This makes you such a hypocrite. This makes you such a failure.”

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Instead, I reached out and said, “Oh my gosh, I am so deep in misery right now,” and I did it to a person, again, this is my friend, Christie Inge, who I know creates a very safe space. I knew she would not jump in my cesspool with me, but I knew she would stand from a space and offer something. She would see me, and she would understand what I'm going through and not make it wrong, and then also offer love.

In the morning, I had a text back from her. I did not sleep. I was sick to my stomach. I got up and I just decided I would just work. I can get some basic admin things done and feel terrible at the same time. My mind also was running around with butcher knives saying, “Oh my gosh, how are you going to function? These women are coming. You're going to let them down.”

I was watching it, feeling awful because of it, but also holding a space for myself. Even if I couldn't make it go away, that I was not going to go there, not going to make it worse. I was going to show up. I always show up. I know I have this thought that will come up that I will let someone down. Like, “Okay, I get it. I know what this is doing.”

In the morning, she sent me a line that said, essentially, “Oh, I see you, and I'm sending you that you are loved and you are wrapped, and I send you the intention that you're wrapped in the truth of your own magic.” Just to even know someone had received what I was going through and to receive that message back, it was almost like an instantaneous healing. The clouds parted, and I felt so much better. I went for a run, and then I felt this huge infusion of energy like I had busted through some barrier. Holy smokes, it was like I just took off in a gallop.

With that kind of energy, I just ran open arms toward the rest of the weekend. It almost seems a little strange how instantaneous that kind of healing was, given how miserable I had felt for those hours before. It felt like such a blessing to have had that experience. Also felt like some sort of

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energetic clearing or healing, so that I could hold a greater capacity, be a more powerful channel, a more pure channel for that weekend because after that, there was no space I could not hold for anyone else.

After having gone through that, I felt like there is no way I can't channel the kind of incredible transformation, and healing, and magic, and possibility, and energy that these women came for. That felt like a blessing, and that again, felt like, "Man, that was meant to happen." Not only so I could get clear on what was the message I wanted to send everyone. The teaching and the new insight contribution around healing patterns of self-destruction and self-violence via self-pity and victim mindset, and also being an example of you can go through how to create a container of safety for yourself.

Another gift I felt there was for me was some sort of difficult barrier for me to move through, whether it looks external or whether it's this internal rise of something, will come up again. I handled it. Not only did I handle it, but I felt even more powerful and deepened as a human for going through the experience.

Then there was also this too where it just came up organically during the retreat that I shared with everybody that one of my areas of deepest growth has been in the realization that my power is not in having it all together all the time, that my power is not being perfect for everyone. I really struggled with that for a while, but I came to realize that actually made me very fragile and very brittle, and it wasn't powerful at all.

I could do a lot from that place, and a lot that looks successful, and even a lot of good and a lot that looked useful for people, but I reached my upper limit at what I could actually do from a place that felt very brittle. It wasn't until I realized that creating this safe space, to be honest, that I am a human and I go through this full range of things. That's what allowed me to

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truly relax into myself, which is where I always feel the most powerful. When I am being my truest, most honest self.

That was one of our themes for the weekend, was helping everybody not only get in touch with the essence of their power and their true self, but have practices around how to access it more, connect with it more, have practices around cultivating it. So, I shared with everyone at the retreat just the experience I had had several hours before they came, and it was amazing too how I think my old self would have not wanted to share that experience at the retreat, thinking that they would've thought, "Oh gosh, this was supposed to be our coach, our leader, our mentor," and that they would somehow have felt let down.

Instead, they all felt empowered. I think that was also, too, because I didn't tell them about a difficult adverse experience from the place of identifying with the victim thinking. I was able to witness victim thinking and what it was doing for me, doing to me, but not merge myself with it, and lose myself in it, and let that continue for days. So, it actually ended up being a very empowering story to share.

Then there was this huge, amazing other gift and breakthrough that came from all of this. It was like a domino effect of breakthroughs. That's going to be my cliffhanger for you because I'm going to do that as part two. I'm going to do this episode, this particular conversation, in two parts, and I'll bring that to you next week.

So, not to be too much of a tease, but this is already a long episode. It's so good. You will want to come back and hear this. It's so exciting. I am energized about this breakthrough for myself in my own life. So excited. We talked about it at the retreat, and I'm so excited to share it with all of you. I promise you're going to love this.

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In the meantime, I do have a coach with me. So, 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 and not just consume it, not just be entertained by it, not just think about it, but take it, implement it in your life. Work it. Coaching works, but you have to work the coaching. So, lean in here and really work with me. Coach with me.

The tool I want to offer you this week. Again, this is within this bigger practice. First and foremost, I want you to explore for yourself how safe are you? What can you do to create a deepened and true vast container of safety for yourself? That's something that I'm not going to find the answer or solution for you just by talking to you on one podcast. That's where you're really going to have to take this and take it out into the world and explore what that means for you.

Explore it through coaching. Do that for yourself. Find for yourself how can you create a deep sense of safety, a vast container, so that you can hold all of these things. Self-pity, victim mindset. Big enough to hold that, and then also love, and compassion, and a radical acceptance.

Then something very feet on the ground, direct that you can do in a moment is something from cognitive behavioral therapy. A tool called opposite action. So, opposite action, I gave you an example of my dark night of the soul where normally, I would have just retreated into that sense, that lie that I was all alone in the world and that no one could help me. I could feel that thought, and it feels like truth when you're in it, and it feels terrible.

But because I had created a protocol, a decision for myself ahead of time of what I would do, I had created safety for myself by aligning myself with allies, with knowing that bringing shame to light, and sharing your story, and being vulnerable with people who deserve it, is a way to be safe. So, my opposite action was to text my friend and ally in the middle of the night.

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My opposite action later was to share the story in a meaningful and authentic to me way, and in a context in which I wanted to share it.

I wanted to give you some examples of what opposite action may look like when you are mired in self-pity or victim thinking. First of all, don't perpetuate it by making yourself bad or wrong. You can stop that right there. Say enough is enough, pause, and put the knife down. You can pause and breathe. You can physically move your body. If you're eating poorly, if it's been going on for weeks, you can eat something green, and fresh, and alive, and drink lots of water.

Go outside. Even when you don't want to, go outside. Move your body. Move in new ways. If you're always doing yoga, maybe it's time to do some calisthenics. Maybe it's time to train for a 5K, or a 7K, or a 10K. Get dressed in your best clothes, even if you're working from home. If you're working from home, get dressed in your best clothes and go work at a coffee shop. Get your hair done. I know it sounds silly, but it works.

Reach out for help and tell people, "Here's what I think might be helpful for me." Not because they have to make you feel better, but just so if you have an idea of what's helpful for you to hear, it is not silly. It actually works to say to someone, "When I hear this, I feel seen, heard and loved."

As a general answer to opposite action, when you don't know what to do, think about what you usually do. pause, breathe, and just pause a little longer before continuing in that usual spiral. Then offer yourself some firm, gentle but deeply fierce love, and I'll give you an example of that at the close the podcast.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you've enjoyed this podcast, the best thing you can do to pay it forward is to go to iTunes and leave a review.

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I think another reason I was meant to delay this podcast, not only so I could have this continued growth and understanding to share with you, was then I had the gift of seeing that my friend, Betsy Pearson, had shared and posted this poem, Heroine by Parker Palmer. It came to him during a time of deep depression, and to me, it speaks of that enough energy, that deep but strong love, that way in which you have to talk to yourself.

“The plow has savaged the sweet field. Misshapen clods of earth kicked up. Rocks and twisted roots exposed to view last year's growth demolished by the blade. I have ploughed my life this way, turned over a whole history looking for the roots of what went wrong until my face is ravaged, furrowed, scarred enough. The job is done. Whatever has been uprooted, let it be seedbed for the growing that's to come. I plowed to an earth last year's reasons. The farmer plows to plant a greening season.”

If you haven't been loving yourself, my friends, if you have been hard on yourself, enough. It doesn't have to be a big problem anymore. Okay? Enough. You can say enough is enough, and you can hold in your heart this truth. Your spring is coming. It's time for you to plant a greening season. I love you guys, and I can't wait to talk to you in the next episode. Have a beautiful week.