

Ep #77: (Part 1) Creating an Environment You Love with Amanda Gibby Peters



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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Amanda: Noticing that, if a seed landed somewhere, where the soil was nourished, where it got enough sun, just enough water, and not too much wind, that seed was not only going to grow, but it was going to thrive. If another seed landed somewhere, where any of those factors were not included, it was going to struggle.

Environment affects outcome and we are no different. And that is what feng shui is pulled from, is understanding all of these different patterns in nature because they exist and we are nature too, absolutely.

Leah: So, let's go back because I know I'm going to rewind this podcast and listen to the part where you talk about the seed. Say that again, because then I want to talk – I want to dive in right there.

Amanda: Yeah, so I mean, think of it this way. If you have a plant that you put outside or you bring home a plant and, all of a sudden, leaves go yellow or the leaves start to spot, what are you going to go into the nursery and do? Most of us are not going to go in and blame the plant. We're not going to be like, "This stupid thing." We're going to say, "What does it need? Is it getting too much water? Is it not getting enough water? Do I need to fertilize it more? Do I need to move it out of the sun? Is it too cold by the window?" We're going to ask about its environment. And it is the same thing for us.

Leah: I love that.

Amanda: I mean, we grow in the environment that we're in and it is absolutely affecting your outcomes.

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That clip was from a conversation I had several weeks ago with Amanda Gibby Peters. Amanda has been called the Martha Stewart of feng shui. She's been featured on Architectural Digest, Amazon's Alexa, My Domain, Food52, MindBodyGreen, Well+Good, and so many other amazing media outlets. And I'm thrilled to have her on this episode today.

We recorded this before shelter-in-place began because I wanted to have Amanda on for a long time. I talk a lot in *The Art School* and with my coaching clients about the importance of cultivating your ideal creative ecosystem. And I wanted to bring in Amanda's expertise, genius, and fresh unique take on this.

And now, I think it's even more relevant than ever, as I'm recording this during COVID and during the shelter-in-place in 2020. So many of us are in our home environments and looking for ways to exercise our agency and to support our creativity and to continue to cultivate our outcomes, our dreams while the world outside seems outside of our control.

You'll hear Amanda explain how, at the heart of it, feng shui is the practice of aligning yourself with fortune, of putting yourself in the way of good fortune. And that's what I hope for each and every one of you listening, that you cultivate the kind of ecosystem that lines you up with fortune.

You are listening to *The Art School Podcast*, a show for artists and creatives who want to become the next greatest version of themselves. Learn how to cultivate an extraordinary way of being and take the mystery out of making money, and the struggle out of making art. Here is your host, master certified life coach, artist, and former lawyer, Leah Badertscher.

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Hello, everyone. And welcome. It is a Thursday as I record this for you. And it has been an amazing two weeks. We've kicked off, we're in the second week of the immersive edition of Art School. And I feel like I am waking up in my dream. I'll talk more about this as the weeks go on, and I've talked about this on prior podcasts. But one of the things I want is that when people Google, "The best creativity coaching in the world," the work that I'm going with people is what pops up. Because I, not for the need of recognition of it, but as a reflection of the caliber of coaching and the caliber of teaching I'm doing.

And I had this experience this week of it's done. I've also been deep diving the last few weeks into laying out the processes and systems for The Art School fall 2020 and for the masterminds I'm going to be offering, likely opening enrolment for applications for those in May, the private coaching, where I am taking that. And so, seeing it all real-time, it's this experience of, there it is, this is what I'm doing. It's all happening.

And then, it's this practice, as I've told you and I tell my clients, of going to that place where you have done it and being the person who has created that, and then you walk yourself home. And right now, I feel like that's what I'm doing. I'm walking myself home. I mean, it's really surreal to experience clients as I'm coaching saying things and getting results that – I have visualized people having this experience. I have visualized people getting these kinds of results.

And I bring this all up right now because I also – before we dive into the interview with Amanda, which is so – I love this conversation. I just love and adore her work. Before we dive into that, a theme that has emerged is it is about the visualization, but I can't emphasize enough the importance of the all-in commitment, the importance of there are no other options.

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And something that came up with the group, because I have a lot of new people in this last round of Art School, and there's a lot of resistance, and you may have it too, to the no matter what when it comes to your own goals and your own dreams, to the being all in when it comes to that thing that you most want to create. You have no problem showing up fully, going to bat, following through for someone else, whether that's your children, a spouse, a partner, friends, a boss, a company, career, charity, what have you.

But when it comes to your own dreams, people have a lot of resistance initially to this being all in no matter what. And I understand that if, in the past, you've forced and grinded your way to the outcome, that you're having a little PTSD from that. But here's the way the reframe that I gave in The Art School this week. And that is, yes, I want for each and every one of you, results. I want you to create your desired results. I want for you the novels, the book deals, the screenplays, the screenplays sold, the plays produced.

I want for you the more money in the bank. I want for you the new tax bracket, the dream home, the beautiful family, the healed relationship. I want for you to find the love of your life, and even – I don't want to say even more than those results, because I want to honor that those are sacred and important, and yet also what I don't want anyone to miss out on, what I want for my clients, what I want for you listening is this full level of commitment to yourself, because I know what that gives you the experience of.

Being all in on yourself requires you to believe in yourself 100%, to believe that you have everything within you, that you are that magnificent, that capable, that powerful, that amazing that you can create that dream. I know, right now, you can imagine other people doing it or you see other people doing it. I know you admire them. I know you think the world of

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them. What would it be like to have that for yourself, to believe 100% in yourself?

I'll give you a hint. It's amazing. You have to find new levels of love for yourself. And to me, I've said this before, I'll say it again, belief, trace it down to its root, is love. And that is what you give yourself when you go all in. People are so scared of the no matter what that they're going to be so hard on themselves. I'm like, "No, no, no." That's not the paradigm I'm talking about. That's not the paradigm, the thriving creative, the thriving creative human paradigm I'm about.

I'm about the no matter what that is built on a foundation of you believe in yourself no matter what. You believe in yourself if you've tried 25 times before and haven't done it yet. You still believe in yourself that much, you find even deeper levels of love for yourself. That's what I don't want you to miss out on in this lifetime; how amazing you are. And I don't want you to miss out on the experience of loving and believing in yourself that much

Another thing that's amazing about that is really to astonish yourself with what you're capable of and to really realize how much agency you do have in your life. That is so much fun.

So, that is my segue into introducing Amanda because Amanda talks about realizing that we are living in our environment. And a lot of times, we feel like we are the victims of our environment or we don't have control or we're confused by it. So, I find the way she presents her expertise, the feng shui, the way she approaches it to be so dang empowering and also fun and fresh.

So, let me share with you her official bio. Amanda Gibby Peters is the voice and founder of Simple Shui. She's been teaching feng shui techniques and

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tips for over a decade, witnessing the life transformations of readers and clients around the world, myself included.

Feng shui, according to Amanda, is a practice that triggers opportunities and enhances our potential for success by reconnecting us with our own wisdom to influence positive change. This is why Amanda often explains the work as a sweet spot where home improvement and empowerment kiss and make out.

And her writing is so delightful too. You should for sure check out her Instagram. She has a book on Amazon which I have and love. I don't know if she's still offering her workbooks. I forgot to ask her that. But I have all of her workbooks and I love them.

So, I hope you enjoy this conversation as much as I do. And I think the other thing that's really fun about our conversation, which will be over two episodes, are all of the things you can begin to do immediately in your home. and how convenient, because right now that's where a lot of us are spending a lot of time. Enjoy.

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Leah: Welcome, Amanda Gibby Peters. I am so thrilled that you're here.

Amanda: Thank you for having me. I'm so excited about our conversation

Leah: Yes, so, how many years – I was just thinking about this before our call – how many years do you think we've known each other?

Amanda: Okay, so, it was the Martha Beck retreat in 2009, 2010?

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Leah: Yes.

Amanda: I mean, for more than a hot minute.

Leah: For more than a hot minute. And so, Amanda, her work is – I was so drawn to her when we first met all those years ago. And her writing style is something that is a breath of fresh air, and I think reflects that she's in energetic integrity with her muse. So, for sure, her Instagram is one of my favorite oases on social media, on Instagram.

And I'm really excited for her to share her expertise today because we talk a lot in The Art School about cultivating your creative eco system. And we talk about doing the inner work of that, your inner habitat, and then also your outer. And I really think it's that line of demarcation or boundary is really artificial, really it's all energy and the work you're doing within flows without and what you do without flows within. And Amanda speaks to that in such a beautiful and articulate eloquent way. So, I'm thrilled she can join us. And I'd love for you to start, Amanda, by telling us first your definition of feng shui, a little bit about how you came into this work.

Amanda: Okay, well, first of all, thank you for saying all of those lovely words. I'm sort of swimming in that for a second, soaking it up. Okay, so feng shui to me actually is really simple. I think that people tend to read different things, they get told different things, and everyone has latched onto different variations of what they think it is. But really, it is this simple. It is to be in alignment with the energy of fortune.

And the way that I came up with that is I actually looked up what feng shui meant. And when you translate feng shui, it is literally, "Wind water." Wind is energy, water is fortune. And so, the practice of feng shui is to put yourself in alignment with the energy of fortune, and it is that simple.

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Fortune is really, I think, the word that has a lot of stretch, has the wider spectrum there. Because people think feng shui is something you can do to make more money. And certainly, that is one of the ways that people work with it. But fortune is everything that makes us feel like we're having a really good experience here on Earth. So, it's your family. It's your friends. It's your social network. It's access to opportunities. It's your health, your wellbeing, it's all of that.

So, feng shui really encompasses being in alignment with all of those facets of your life. So, how I came to feng shui – this is a fun story – we had just moved to a new home, the one that I'm in right now. And it was a great home. It is a great home. But we just could never get settled here. And a lot of things started happening. And within six months of moving here, I was really on the edge of it.

I had had it. I felt depressed, sort of like that dark night of the soul, except it was like every afternoon. And so, one day, I was really, really there and thought, I'm going to grab a book and whatever it says, that is going to be the reprieve. Like, that is going to be the beacon and I'm going to take it to heart. And I opened the book up and it said feng shui.

And I think I had heard of feng shui before, but I certainly didn't know anything about it. So, I read a little more and basically, I remember walking away thinking, "So, if I move my furniture, I'm going to change my life? That is such a joke."

And it's important in this part of the story for me to tell you, I had just finished my Master's program, so I was feeling really intelligent, like extra. And so, because I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is so dumb, I'm going to move my furniture and my life's going to change, I'm going to make money and all these things are going to happen, whatever..." I thought, "Well, I am

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going to take everything that I just learned in school,” because I had graduated in communications, rhetoric, that kind of stuff. And I was like, “I’m going to dismantle feng shui.”

Leah: I’m going to prove it doesn’t work...

Amanda: That just shows you how full of myself I was. So, anyway, I bought a book and I read it all the way through. And then I went back and read it because I was going to try to, you know, have healthy skepticism. So, I read it again and I highlighted what I thought we could do realistically. And I started making changes. And this interesting thing happened. I started feeling better in our house.

And I didn’t necessarily acknowledge it like that, but I was intrigued to see what else I could do because the house was starting to feel better. And within just a few months, a couple of things had changed. My husband’s job that has relocated us to Texas, his boss had moved to another company, brought him over, doubled his salary. And at the same time, our girls were three at the time. And when we moved in, we couldn’t get them into any of the preschools. They were all full.

And all of a sudden, out of the blue, the school that we really wanted them to get into called. They had two openings and they were both in the same class, same days. And all of a sudden, like, okay, wait a second, what’s happening here?

And there was another round of tests that I put feng shui through, but essentially what ended up happening was it worked. And the proof was irrefutable because it would either be this long string of coincidences that I couldn’t sum up on my own, or feng shui worked. And so, I decided shortly after, I would say about six months into this, “Okay, here’s what I’m going

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to do. I'm going to keep doing what I'm normally doing, but any free time I have, I'm going to dedicate to studying and reading and reaching out to feng shui masters and experts and learning everything I can. And that's really what started me on this path.

Leah: Wow.

Amanda: Yeah, it's a fun story. So, when people come at me and they're like, "Feng shui doesn't work." I'm like, "Give me your best shot. I've been you."

Leah: And just the feeling of when things are in alignment and coming back to your definition of aligning with fortune, and alignment is a word I use all of the time, like, when you click in and you're on flow and you're painting or coaching or writing or whatever it is that someone, like, whenever you're in that creative space where you're not forcing, it's not pushing that boulder up the hill yet another day. We all have that feeling of when we click into alignment and things flow.

Amanda: Yeah, it's the pull. It feels like there's a pull, just a really gentle pull. And you're not trying to figure out where you're going, there's no resistance. It's just you're going along, versus that push.

Leah: And I love too that your definition of fortune, that it's so expansive and includes all of the things in life that really help us to live a rich life.

Amanda: Well, that's one of the things that I found the most fascinating when I started feng shui was the feng shui map. And it's actually where a lot of people start because it is the easiest part of feng shui, initially, to perceive and practice. But what I loved about the Bagua map is that it had

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all these different life areas. It had all these different things that it addressed.

And initially, when someone comes to feng shui, they're immediately drawn to wealth or to love or to career, sometimes health. But there's just this immense wisdom in all of the different life areas and how they interact and what they offer that when I started diving into that, it just became really clear that this is a very holistic approach to aligning yourself with whatever it is you're here to create, manifest, become.

Leah: And I know you are, having studied this all these years, like a wealth of knowledge on also the history of it. So, could you give just a brief description. I know it's thousands and thousands of years... Can you sum it up, actually how it came about?

Amanda: So, yeah, I mean, so here's the shortest version. And this is stripped to the studs, so I understand, if we were having lunch and drinks after, we could get into more detail. But essentially, feng shui started out – so, there are a lot of different schools. And the very first feng shui that ever existed was called form school. And it was this idea that you would have like a mountain behind you to protect the back of your house. You would have maybe a river flowing in front of you so that there was this gentle flowing life. And then almost, if you can imagine an armchair, you know, these two little hills beside you as support.

And that was the first idea of feng shui to exist. And it was actually used for Chinese royalty. And they used it mostly to locate the best burial spots so that they were in good favor with whoever they buried, like the ancestors favored them. And then what happened, because of revolutions, evolution, that kind of stuff, is that feng shui migrated south and all of a sudden you didn't have the topography that you had in the north.

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And so, all of a sudden, the mountain wasn't there behind you. And so, compass feng shui began. And that is where they started looking at things directionally. And this is where I really just tried to skip ahead because what happened is there was more migrations, more revolutions, and everywhere that feng shui spread, it was adapted to the needs of the geography in that area. And so, today, luckily for us, we have all of these interpretations that truthfully all began from form school.

So, when someone is really insistent with me that there is only one school of feng shui that is correct, I disagree with that, I full-body disagree with that because there are always many paths up the same mountain and they all work.

I heard another feng shui practitioner one say, "You can do five plus five plus five plus five plus five, get 25, you can do five times five, or you can do five squared. They're all going to get you the same answer. And it's the same thing with feng shui. You're going to get the results, as long as you're intentional with the practice and you show up and do the work.

So, that's why there are so many different schools. That's why there are so many different approaches. And I think what's important for people listening to know is that when feng shui seems to not work or you're reading something, you know, like in a magazine or whatever and someone's just kind of casually talking about feng shui, you have to run a lot of this wisdom through your own filter because sometimes people just grab a bunch of different ideas from different schools.

And when you start using different schools and you don't know what you're doing, then you can get really ambiguous results. And so, I think that's where feng shui gets a bad rap or where people start to question it, because they're very surface and they're just grabbing whatever they hear

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and trying it. And you really need to understand it a little and dedicate just a little bit of time to understanding what you're doing because you are working with energy. And if you believe in energy work, you have to honor that energy.

Leah: Well, and in the spirit of – in Art School and coaching, I'm often talking about let's look to what works. I could talk all day long about all the exciting – we could go down esoteric rabbit hole after esoteric rabbit hole, and at the end of the day, I think being creative to me means, like, finding and working with what works. And that's what I found so fascinating in following you and your work with feng shui is that it essentially came from, like, here's studying nature right.

Amanda: Yeah, I mean, yeah...

Leah: Forces of nature, and they're like, this is not – we didn't make this up, this is now nature – it came from people observing, which is a science, observing what nature does, what the forces of nature are. And in a time too when people also were more readily available to the notion that we as humans are also part of nature and we are creatures, and therefore subject to the same energetic forces. Therefore, if we learn what energetic forces are and how they work, we can better know how we work and how to line ourselves up.

Amanda: Yeah, I mean, so yes, before the form school even existed, essentially what you had were these philosophers who were sitting around and it wasn't just one generation. It wasn't like, you know, the brat pack of feng shui masters. I mean, it was several generations studying and noticing – the simplest way I tell this story is noticing that if a seed landed somewhere, where the soil was nourished, where it got enough sun, just enough water, and not too much wind, that seed was not only going to

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grow, but it was going to thrive. If another seed landed somewhere, where any of those factors were not included, it was going to struggle.

Environment affects outcome and we are no different. And that is what feng shui is pulled from, is understanding all of these different patterns in nature because they exist and we are nature too, absolutely.

Leah: So, let's go back because I know I'm going to rewind this podcast and listen to the part where you talk about the seed. Say that again, because then I want to talk – I want to dive in right there.

Amanda: Yeah, so I mean, think of it this way. If you have a plant that you put outside or you bring home a plant and, all of a sudden, leaves go yellow or the leaves start to spot, what are you going to go into the nursery and do? Most of us are not going to go in and blame the plant. We're not going to be like, "This stupid thing." We're going to say, "What does it need? Is it getting too much water? Is it not getting enough water? Do I need to fertilize it more? Do I need to move it out of the sun? Is it too cold by the window?" We're going to ask about its environment. And it is the same thing for us.

Leah: I love that.

Amanda: I mean, we grow in the environment that we're in and it is absolutely affecting your outcomes, absolutely.

Leah: And so, in two different ways, the metaphor of the seed and the plant and taking that to the humans listening, the beautiful creative humans listening, and then I also then want to talk about, with those beautiful creative humans, the seeds that are, like, their work, you know, their novel, their album, their dream, their family, whatever that seed is that they're

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trying to nourish. And so, I want to talk about both of those aspects. And maybe a good place to start with the humans is with what you said about, you know, with the plant, you don't go into the nursery and blame the plant. And yet, what do we do as humans? Why can't I bloom where I'm planted?

Amanda: Yes, and you can. You just might need to do a little cultivating. Like, I mean, think about it really, the garden is such a beautiful metaphor because there are requirements. There is work. It's not about just sitting around and looking at all of the beautiful flowers growing. You have to weed, you have to take care of pests, you have to make sure the sprinkler's working or that it's getting water. You have to pull the dead flowers because you don't want them leaching the water from the things that are growing.

It is this constant effort to make sure that what blooms reaches its fullest capacity. And that it's always changing, right? So, when people ask me, what are the really hardcore feng shui rules, I mean, there aren't, but there are three things that I say. I'm like, everything is alive, everything is connected, and everything is always changing. And if you can get those things down and apply them to whatever you're going through, it almost will make sense if you let yourself sink into that.

It's just like this garden. Everything's connected. So, if something is dying in the garden, it is affecting everything else that's around it, right? And that everything is changing, so nothing is meant to be forever. And that is great because that means the bad stuff isn't going to last forever. And then it also means that the good stuff isn't going to last forever. So, you really want to soak it up as it's happening, to be present in the moment of it. And that's really what I think feng shui comes back to is really teaching you to flow through the seasons, to flow with the weather.

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Leah: So, let's bring that to somebody's environment. So, let's say I have a musician client who is living in LA, doing well, making a living as a working professional. And for anyone listening, you can sub your musician and sub in screenplay writer, novelist, dancer, painter, what have you, right. And then let's say that've made it at a certain level. And now, it's burning them out, or that's what they present with when they come.

Like, it's so much work, I'm avoiding the work, I'm not living it it's so competitive, and feeling like the industry and the environment that they're in, which is where they want to be, is also leaching their creativity and their belief that they can actually get to place where they're not still worrying about having enough money or having enough for retirement or is this a sustainable career or should I move back to the Chicago suburbs and get a job as a banker?

Amanda: Yeah, so I'm going to answer this specifically, just because I think that this is a really cool way to show what feng shui is. So, let's say that you are the person that just told me all of that. In the whole time you were talking, all I kept thinking is, "You need to bring in water. You need to bring in more water. You need to bring in more water."

There are a lot of different ways to work with feng shui. It doesn't mean everybody needs water. That's not what this answer is implying. But in this very specific situation, when I'm working with a client, what I'm listening to is how they describe what they're going through. And there are different things that will come to me. And in this situation of, "I'm burned out, I don't feel the creativity that I did, I don't know about the money," all of these things actually really relate to water.

And so, for this very specific client, I would say, "Okay, let's look at ways that you can create space around you that brings in a little more water."

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Let's look at ways that you can put yourself in the way of water, like personally, as in your human self, not just your environment. And then let's talk about things that you can do that have watery qualities to help, kind of get you in the space..."

Because really, what needs to happen is there needs to be a genuine reflection, a replenishment. When we feel parched, that's not a great place to make decisions from. And so, it's like, let's replenish you so that you feel like you can make a decision and trust it.

So, that would be a very specific way that I would work with a client. And we would look at, for all those categories, what they could do. And I'd give you several ideas and you would run with whatever worked. But then generically speaking, when people start to get burned out – let's use that as an example. What I like to tell people is when things around you don't change, the way you see things doesn't change.

And I think Wayne Dyer or someone said that originally. But it is very true in your home. And so, what I would say, at the very least, move 27 things around. Really change up your environment for a second to see if it does – like, even just being in the momentum of moving things around, you start to get downloads of information.

Another thing I suggest people do when they're looking for answers is to create a pocket of open space so that there's actually room to receive information. Feng shui is very metaphorical. It's very literal. And so, you can walk into any space and describe it and then replace the way that you describe that room with "I am."

So, if the room was overwhelming, "I am overwhelmed." If the room looks sad, "I am sad." It can be really interesting when you start focusing on what

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your things are saying. You can pull information from your house about what's being reflected back to you because then that's what you're going out and creating. And the empowering part of that is you can change that. That is within your means to change.

And so, you can create a space that feels better. And it's usually just changing one or two things, and all of a sudden, what is happening to you will begin to change. It has a ripple effect. There we go with the water again. But you know, it ripples out. And so those are two very easy things you can do in your space to start signaling, okay, I'm ready for something different, I'm open to change, I'm putting this out there. Because the universe is vibrational. It will return what you've put out there

Leah: The other thing I love about what you're saying – so the environment matters.

Amanda: Oh, completely.

Leah: And then going back to the gardening metaphor, when you're cultivating your environment, not only are you acknowledging that the environment matters, but you have to do something, you have to be someone different as someone that's moving around their environment, because now you're acting like someone who believes in something, in change, and just also the act of beginning to move and shift something, even if it's on faith.

Amanda: Yeah, I mean, this is just it. You can I have talked about this before, just sort of that transactional expectation. Something that I run into is people think, "Okay, well I've paid for this feng shui information. Nothing has changed." What is really being said is, "Nothing changed according to

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the way I expected it to change. Like, it didn't change according to my timeline."

So, I'm reading this book, Signs, by Laura Lynn Jackson. And she is a communicator, medium. And something that I just read the other day that I find fascinating is she has said she's learned that of the energy that we live with on Earth, 15% of it is visible to us. The rest of it is stuff that's happening all around us and we're not even aware of.

I love that because it really speaks to the power of shifting your space and knowing, because with feng shui, you're working – think about it, the water you see, the wind you don't. You are working with seen and unseen energies. And so, when you start cultivating a different space, you are actually cocreating with the energy around you.

And if we're talking about 85% of that energy out there we don't see, that is hugely in your favor. And so, it is being mindful. It is looking at your space. For someone who feels stuck, okay, does my space still match where I want to be going? Going back to everything is always changing, if your space looks like the vision board from two years ago, you need to change things up. It is time to grow. It is time to reach further. It is time to get uncomfortable again.

Leah: So, you just peeked over Zoom at my notes. One of the specific points, I had this list of things that people often say, and I wanted to hear what your perspective was from a feng shui, energetic perspective, how you would come at it. So stuck, because that's such a common presentation of, "I feel stuck. I feel stuck in my life, my creativity feels stuck. My flow of money feels stuck. I feel like I'm putting in so much effort but I'm just stuck and it feels like this mystery."

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Amanda: Yeah, and I know that feeling. And that also, you know, can feel like a lot of – some people say stuck, I think of earth, you know, too much earth energy around them. And if you think about mud, just like this dirt and water's coming but it's just getting absorbed and everything is messy, nothing's moving, right?

And so, from my perspective, what we've got to do is we've got to get you back into a creative space in terms of the element that draws off that extra earth energy is metal. And then that flows into water. And we don't have to understand that, but I'm going to walk you through what I mean.

When you get into a creative space, you don't know, usually, how things are going to turn out. You're stepping into the unknown and you're trusting the process. But you're showing up. And so, even though you feel stuck, you can do very simple things in your house to cultivate that metal energy for you.

And one of the things I like to do – and metal is the element that's really associated with this – is to clean, to organize, to create order. And this is why. Because when you start moving things around, you're waking the energy up, first and foremost. If things have just been sitting there, untouched for a while, you definitely want to do this.

In the process of you engaging your energy with all of the things you own, all of those things get a spark too. It's like your space comes back to life. And then, instead of that really low-vibe energy talking to you while you're just sitting in your house or sitting there thinking how much is stuck, now all of a sudden there are these voices. There's this orchestra, you know, that's come to life, that's vibrating. And it's engaging with you at a very subconscious level.

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So, cleaning, creating order, again, leaving a little bit of open space. All of these things, as simple as they sound, the benefit for you is tenfold. It doesn't make sense, but you have to walk into it knowing that as you start moving things around, you are moving energy around. You're making room for new energy to get to you. You're making room for new inspiration to find you. You're signaling in a very simple but profound way to the universe, "Okay, I'm ready for some change. I'm changing things around."

Leah: So, here's an experience I have when I'm putting things in order, and is this just my mind feeling like I'm doing a good job, or is this something energetic? I'd love to hear your take on it. I feel like something in me gets ordered as I'm slowly putting things away. Like, if I was feeling chaotic or out of sorts actually. Like, if I'm feeling out of sorts, I kind of like to put things in order and it's quieting and I feel more ordered.

Amanda: Yeah, listen, I mean, think about how many people procrastinate doing something, like, think about students particularly. I've got to clean my room, or I've got to clean my desk before I can sit down and write.

Leah: Right, exactly.

Amanda: And that is such an instinctual thing that we don't even think about it. But what you're doing is preparing the space to receive refreshments. And those refreshments are the creative downloads, the inspiration, the new ideas, the muses. Whatever it is that you want flowing, you have to create the space for them to feel welcome. And that's what people just very instinctually do.

Leah: Yeah, I do often feel like, if I'm wanting something, feeling like something could come and I can't force my way, I can't think my way to get it, if I just like, "I'm just going to tidy up my studio," or one time – this is a

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few years ago because we lived in our old house. And I had a few paintings. And I had feeling of, like, they're sold. And usually, when I have that feeling, they sell. And these ones hadn't moved. It felt stuck to me. And I had read something of yours that talked about moving things in your house and cleaning your kitchen.

So I'm like, you know what, my kitchen does seem like it could use some cleaning. And I cleared it out, like top to bottom, even corners. It felt so good. I felt so refreshed. And I kid you know, I checked my email and somebody bought two of the three that I had for sale and the other one was gone in a month. You know, it's like, in your mind is, "Well that's a coincidence," but I felt the movement of something that had felt stuck. My mind had attached – well, you feel that way because these paintings haven't moved.

Amanda: Yeah, so I want you to think of everything, going back to everything is energy. So, you have low vibrations and you have high vibrations. And I want to be very clear, this isn't like a Voldemort versus Harry Potter. This isn't bad or evil versus good. This is just what is the energy quality.

And you want both. It's not like, again, one's bad and one's great. However, when you have only one energy around you – so you have all of these things but you never bother to touch them, you never bother to engage in them, they're just there, their energy kind of begins to diminish. And if that is what you're sitting in every day, then that is the energy that you walk out into the world with.

And that's not the kind of energy – when you want things to happen, you want that very yang, that very alive, bright, loud, see-me kind of energy. And so, if your space is sitting in really low vibrations, then that's going to

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affect the experiences you're having. So, when people go and do something as simple as clean space – and I just talked about you're waking that energy up – everything gets that spark. And so, the energy quality has improved, which means you feel better, which means that those thoughts that you're sending out to the world have a different energy. And they're finding people who want to show up in your life with that kind of energy.

Leah: And when you just said, you know, it gets that spark, and I know that feeling too. And I think we all know that. We know when we're going through the motions but we lack the spark.

Amanda: I think too, one of the things I love the most about feng shui is that it really requires action. So, you have this thought, you have this intention, but now you have to put it into action. And what I love even more is that that action really almost becomes a ritual. So, you have to show up. You are committed to making sure that that energy quality stays lit.

And in that, it's why I often say feng shui is a lifestyle. It's practice, it's a lifestyle, it's not a to-do list. But when you start showing up with that, it's just like that garden. It's how you're maintaining the health of the soil that you're growing in.

Leah: Phrasing as a lifestyle makes so much sense as opposed to a to-do list because that's, I know for people listening, it's like there's so much information, there's so many to-dos. And we can get wrapped up in that so that it becomes, we become more disconnected from our lives, where what I know we're craving is connection and meaning. And when you're talking about this lifestyle where your everyday environment is important, not only for where it can take you, but because this moment, the room in which you sit, the books on your shelf, the way you set your table for your family, like,

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that's your life right there. And I think we are craving meaningful rituals that draw us back to a meaningful everyday lifestyle.

So it's not, again, about doing something in order that you get a result. So, it's not that transactional nature. But it's how to live a deeply meaningful life in the everyday things, and yes too, looking towards the compelling future you want to create, which I want to talk to you about and ask you in a second about the home as vision board. But also not neglecting the home that's under our feet right before your eyes right now, the moment that you're living and how these rituals can tie us back to that. And I know you have many beautiful practices, and one of my favorites is where you prescribe, like, putting your house in order at the end of the night, maybe going around with a basket...

Amanda: Yeah, putting your house to bed at night. I love that because so many people live in homes with space that they don't fully utilize. And so, you have these rooms that sit without a lot of TLC or affection. It might be beautifully adorned but they're not used. Or maybe it's the space that hasn't been addressed and you just can't bring yourself to look at it because it just overwhelms you and that kind of stuff.

What I find is when I walk through my space at night, I'm making sure that my energy is in all of the spaces. It keeps me apprised of everything happening in my house. I have an appreciation for my space. And here's one of the things I encourage people to consider.

Your house is a family member. It is a family member and it wants to love and support and take care of you. And the minute that you open yourself up to that conversation and you start doing little things instead of being like, "Oh my gosh, I need to paint the wall," or, "Oh my gosh, I need to fix that window," or whatever. Instead of looking at it like that, think of it as, just like

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you would take your kid to the dentist or just like you would take yourself to maybe the chiropractor. You're doing the same thing for your health and it is going to be able to love you back even more.

So, by putting your house to bed at night, it's a way of tucking it in. And I think it was Oprah that used to say your house will rise up and greet you. And I think about that when I'm putting my house to bed at night, that then the next morning it is there to rise up and greet me. So, that is how I begin my day. That is the energy I begin my day in.

And it is not a hard ritual to cultivate. It is just a matter of doing it and not caving. Like, "Oh, I'm too tired tonight." It really is simple. You know, you're fluffing a pillow, you're folding a blanket, you're putting things away. The other great thing about this is, if it feels overwhelming at first, I promise, if you stay with it, eventually those things that feel overwhelming won't exist anymore because you will come up with a system for making sure that your house stays in order and the repetition will create order in your space.

Leah: And again, that the home is such a beautiful metaphor, and also literal for the rest of your life. Because if there is something in your home that's overwhelming and you finally come to the point where you're like, "I don't want to avoid this anymore," and then you can ask yourself, like, what else in my life am I overwhelmed by? And do I want to wait until it's unavoidable? Or do I want to live in this pattern of tolerating and kind of feigning that there's no problem, but meanwhile it's the elephant in the room? And I know for sure, if you address that physical space in your home, it will yield so much wisdom and guidance about how to navigate and sort of the inner resources you need to navigate and encounter that other seemingly overwhelming area in your life you've been avoiding.

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Amanda: So, here's the thing. You know, people talk about whisper before it becomes a scream. You know, you get little pings and maybe you're not listening. When your house starts talking to you, I mean, this is one of the last places before that scream happens, right?

I remember a client recently, she's like, "Oh my gosh, my water heater broke." You know, and water is very much related to emotion. And we had a conversation. I was like, has something happened? What are you holding onto? Because the water heater breaking and flowing into the yard was a sign that there was stuff that she needed to let go of and her house was trying to do it.

And I know this sounds crazy. Remember my story. I started in a very cerebral, strong friend to logic space. But what I found is it's your house trying to say, "Listen, like, we need to let this go." And it's giving you the opportunity. So, instead of looking at things that break or need repair as, "Oh my gosh, this has just cost me money," or, "This is just another obligation for me to take care of..." it is your house trying to help you figure out what you need to address in your life. And it's a very beautiful language and your house is so fluent and it knows you.

Leah: And what was the Oprah quote again?

Amanda: Yeah, so that your house – I can't remember the first of it, but basically she said, like, the end of the quote was like, "So your house can rise up and greet you."

Leah: Yeah, because it reminded me of those spaces and places that they immediately come to mind where I feel like the house as a person or like this entity. I'm thinking of my parents' house, the farmhouse that I grew up in, my dad grew up in, like going to bed in that house. I mean, I walk in the

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door and I feel like it hugs you. My kids even say it's the best place in the world to sleep because you go to sleep in those bedrooms and you just feel like the home is holding you.

And I feel like the generations of families that were there, it's like pre 1900, it has a good feel. There was good energy given to that home over family after family and then our family. And so, I think of places like that and then I think too of the conversation you and I had shortly after we moved into this old farmhouse that we live in now, where I was feeling very challenged by it.

And my husband and I were pouring so much work into it. And just something you said about the house got the right people, it changed my orientation rather than just appreciating receiving that energy from a place that other people have imbued with a good energy, that we can imbue this home with energy.

Amanda: Yeah, that's kind of what those rituals are about is, you know, back to that transactional conversation, you know, this idea that if I do this, this should happen. If you deposit a cheque into the bank once, is that enough for you? No, I mean, even if it is a big cheque, at some point, you're going to be like, "I want to put another cheque in the bank," right?

It's the same thing. The rituals and the way you live in your space, it can either be deposits or they can be withdrawals. And so, when you're talking about the farmhouse that you grew up in, that your dad grew up in, deposit after deposit, that's why those spaces feel that way. And so, when someone is like, "Well I hate the space I'm in and I need to find another space," you never end up where you are by accident.

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Every space that you end up in has lessons for you. And so, if you really don't like your house, love it, learn the lessons, and you will be on your way. Because there are times when homes will say, "Okay, you're done here." And people have those experiences. Like, all of a sudden, a lot of things start breaking or just random things happen and people are like, "It's time to move on," and that's your house's way of saying, "Okay, you've come here to learn what you need to learn." And that's the beautiful thing, that if you show up and you're present in the lesson, you're going to get exactly what you need.

Leah: And here is the other thing I love about you and your work, because you are, you take the wisdom that's there and also, it's about the implementation and action. So then, something you just said about love your house – okay, so first love it, sit and love it. But then does it also mean you ask yourself what would love do here? What does love look like here? Because I know there can be that spectrum of people who are like, "Well love just means that I accept it for what it is and I don't address that that turquoise paint color is driving me crazy."

Amanda: Yeah, but here's the thing; so how does it make you feel? And I'll tell you what makes people feel better. It is when there is something fresh and living in their space. What makes people feel good is that when a room is not overwhelming, that the nervous system isn't having to take in all this information, right? Like, there's comfort. There's somewhere to rest the eyes. It is pulling up to your space and loving it.

And even if you, again, don't like your house or the space that you're in, there is always some opportunity for improvement. I firmly believe in leaving a place better than you found it. And that is what your job is in any space that you're in. And it doesn't have to be a grand gesture. It can be little things repeated over time, or it can be the big thing of painting the walls a color that you love.

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It is amazing to me how much resistance we put energy into. Because all things require energy. So, the resistance of, “I don’t want to paint but that color I hate,” versus taking the time to figure out a color you love and then that being off the list. And all of a sudden, now you feel good, this thing isn’t hanging over your head, and now you have room for something else that maybe you really want to spend your time doing. That is what that resistance is creating. It’s blocking out other things from being able to show up in your life.

And so, your house will give you clues. I tell people, just trust our gut. Don’t worry if it doesn’t make sense to you. Don’t let the logic get in the way here. Because what I have found is when I go on consults and I start saying, “Okay, well have you thought about doing this? Tell me what’s happening here,” so many times, the client will say, “Oh I’ve been thinking about that. I just didn’t get around to doing it.”

That, “Oh I’ve been thinking about it,” that was the conversation you and your house were having. Your house is like, “Honey, I want to help you. I hear that you want that promotion. If you just will take care of this,” right? And so, you have to trust those little conversations that are happening. And instead of saying, “Well that’s a waste of money,” or, “Oh that can wait,” trust it. Trust it because that is an improvement. Home improvement will lead to self-empowerment. And so, you take care of whatever it is that your house is asking, and I promise you, it is going to show up in your life. You cannot change your house and your life not change. And you can reverse that. You are not going to change your life and somehow your house doesn’t change in the process too. They’re just so woven up in each other.

Leah: So, let’s talk then about house as vision board...

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I hope you enjoyed that conversation with Amanda. And I purposefully left you with the cliffhanger of talking about house as vision board, because of my gosh, that is beyond fun and beyond powerful. So, you will love when she goes into detail about that next week.

And in the meantime, 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 work with it implement it in your life, take it so it's not just information you consume. Use it to be transformational. So, lean in her with me, work with me, and coach with me.

Amanda briefly talked about the room as metaphor. And also, I think as literal messenger exercise. I don't think she'd disagree with that interpretation of it. It's one of my favorite creative prompts and favorite places to go about coaching in an unexpected way. So, here it is. I'll lay it out for you. This is what you do.

You pick a room in your house, a space in your house. Trust yourself to go with whatever is calling you, even if you don't think it's significant enough. Don't overthink it. don't overanalyze. Just go with the place that is currently taking up a lot of your mental emotional real estate.

So, you want to go into that space and then set your timer for five minutes and write about this space. Be sure to include adjectives. Be sure to take particular note of the physical attributes in the room that catch your eye. And also, then any of your observations, reactions to that.

So, for instance, I will recall when I did this exercise with my studio a few years ago before I cleaned it out, after talking to Amanda. And I'll bring you particularly to a closet in my studio. And I wrote, it's stuffed to the brim. I'm not sure what's in there. Oh wait, I do see that there is a paper roll of big

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dreams that I wrote about years ago when I was at a retreat. Those big dreams are on a crumpled-up piece of paper and there's a whole bunch of small shit blocking the way to get to it.

So maybe already not too much of a stretch for you to figure out where this is going. I could ask myself, where in my life is it just packed to the brim, I don't even like going in there because it's so overwhelming? And also, by the way, there are my big dreams that are crumpled up, not being honored, in the back of the closet with a whole bunch of small shit standing in the way, blocking my way towards it.

And so, then the other place you can go with this work, and I highly recommend that – let's use another example. Let's say you walk into a room and you notice, "Well, there is an old chair that I love. There's a crack in the ceiling. And then there is a pile of things in the corner that's left over from my trip two years ago that I haven't unpacked yet.

And so, you would insert the places where you describe the room, and you could write, "The room is spacious. The room is filled with light. The room is dank. The room needs to be cleaned up," using that kind of descriptive language too then allows you on the backend to go and insert the word, "I" for every place you would have described the room or the things in the room.

So, with my closet example, you know, where am I stuffed to the brim? Where am I so full of things that I feel overwhelmed? Where am I putting so many small insignificant things in front of my big dreams? Where am I crumpling up my big dreams and putting them in the back of the closet and where do I want them to be?

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Then you could ask yourself, what would I like to see here instead? And then begin the work of not only doing the work in your mind. Don't just stay with the cerebral part, but actually do the physical work of changing the room.

This work flows both ways. You do the inner work. It changes your outer environment. Doing the outer environment shifts the energy and changes your inner environment. One of the reasons I love this work so much is because it is about honoring your intuition about the kind of ecosystem that you need to thrive, that your dreams need to thrive.

And so, I hope for you that you listen to the way your home, your space is talking to you, you listen and trust your own insights about that. And then you commit to giving yourself the space that your heart wants, the space that your creativity wants, the space that your dreams want.

I intend for you that you will commit to creating an ecosystem in which your creative genius thrives and the seeds of your dreams, the seeds of the art that you want to make, the seeds of your goals grow and flourish.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you've enjoyed this podcast, if these episodes have been useful for you in helping you move the needle and create real results in your life, the best thing you can do to pay it forward and to become part of this creative revolution and movement is to share the work. And one of the easiest ways to do that is to subscribe, share this podcast, go to iTunes, and leave a review.

I so appreciate the organic way that this podcast community has been growing and spreading. And I'm really grateful for anyone who has taken the time to go to iTunes and leave a review. And when you're ready to take

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this work deeper and when you're ready to take your creativity, your life, your income, your artistry to the next level, you'll want to be in this extraordinary creative ecosystem of The Art School.

And I think now is a really special time. It's only going to get better and better. And right now too, it's one of those sweet times that I know and I have had clients say this to me too, who are currently in The Art School, that it feels like the beginning of something that other people have not heard about yet, but everybody is going to. And that we're going to look back on this time and think, "Wow, how special was it? How extraordinary was it to be in on the ground floor?"

I work not only on my vision for this work of a thriving, flourishing artist paradigm, this paradigm of all humans embracing their creative potential. I work not only in the vision of that every single day, but I work in the nitty-gritty of what is holding my clients back, what are the solutions that are the most powerful the most profound. I work on understanding the creative mind and the creative spirit like no one else.

I know what fuels me. And part is what I mentioned earlier, that I just have an innate desire to see people unleash what they are capable of. I have an innate desire for people to cultivate what they're desiring to cultivate and astonish themselves with what they can create. I have an innate desire to support people in rising.

And I know what is also driving me is this fact that doing that requires you to come into an experience of yourself and a relationship with yourself that has to be one of the meanings, one of the purposes for why we are here; to learn what it is to access our full humanity and to love that and to cherish that.

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And what I have to say, I have to admit I underestimated in my visualizing and in my dreaming was just what a gift it is and how extraordinary it is to see people doing this work collectively and in community.

We held our first ever virtual artist date last week and it was over the top. I want to say, I am one who often asks the question, “How good am I willing to let it get?” And it was so good. I could feel myself, like vibrating against coming up against the edges of my container. Like, I needed to do some capacity-expanding work after that Friday because I was ready to burst with how awesome it is.

And those of you who have done next-level breakthroughs, you know what I’m talking about. It sounds silly, but it’s for sure the real deal. And it’s an awesome problem to have. I am so grateful to be here, to be right where I am in this journey. And so, if you want to join us this year, there is The Art School fall 2020 and we will open enrolment for that in a few weeks. So, at the end of April 2020, depending on when you’re listening to this.

And also, I will be announcing the start of the first ever Art School Mastermind. The best way to stay connected and learn the latest about these is to sign up for my newsletter www.leahcb.com.

So, before we close this podcast today, I wanted to make sure I share with you Amanda’s website. It’s simpleshui.com. And for sure, if you are on Instagram, you will love her IG account. It’s @amandagibbypeters. Trust me, you’ll be there for a while.

And in keeping with Amanda’s work and the spirit of the episode today, I wanted to close with this quote from William Morris. It’s from his book The Aims of Art, “The true secret of happiness lies in the taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life.”

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I hope you all have a beautiful week. Take a deep interest in the details of your daily lives and I look forward to talking to you next time.