

## Ep #102: (Part 2) Taking Yourself Seriously and Striking Gold with Hope Dunbar



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Leah Badertscher**

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

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Hope: You want to be a badass, this is what you do. You ask yourself what your life would look like if you just decided you were going to be the architect, that you weren't going to consume some message that was given to you or handed down to you. You weren't going to read a headline that decided for you how you wanted to build and create a life. You are going to just ask your own beautiful heart. And that sounds bananas and crazy. But it's also the most counter-cultural move that you can do and it's also the most generative thing that you can do.

So, by honoring your own heart, you're actually starting to build a fire around which other people can gather and be generative together. This isn't just about you. This is about expanding the circle and widening this invitation to be creators. And creator meaning whatever it is you want to create as your story from birth to death, do it. It's awesome.

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That was a clip from my recent conversation with singer-songwriter Hope Dunbar. Today's episode continues the conversation we started last week in episode 101. So, be sure to go back, listen to that episode first, get Hope's full bio and then join us again as we continue the conversation this week about all things creative process, what it means to not be a consumer, but to be a Creative with a capital C, the architect of your entire life, and a badass architect at that, as Hope mentions in the intro.

Also, we talk about how money work is sacred work, and is capital C Creative work. We also talk about another capital C work, you'll hear us talk about this a lot, that really is a master key to unleashing your creative potential in building a strong foundation for that thriving creative paradigm;

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a paradigm of thriving, of normalizing extraordinary living, not only in our individual singular lives, but for everyone as a collective.

And I think you will love this conversation with Hope. As I mentioned, she's also a member of our mastermind and it is such a joy and she's such a strong asset to our community. And there was this description of one of her albums, *Three Black Crows*, that talks about her as an artist, but I think it speaks volumes to her as a person and the consummate creator she is in all aspects of her life.

It says, "This album, *Three Black Crows*, heralds a strong new voice in the singer-songwriter genre. An unexpected voice of simplicity and authority, honesty, and hope." And that is what I believe you will experience from this conversation with Hope Dunbar today; a strong voice, simplicity and authority, honesty, and hope. And I will add, endlessly inspiring.

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.

Welcome, everyone, to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I am so glad you're here with me today. You're joining me in the midst of a very powerful week. And so, power can be intense. And so, wherever you are, I hope you are healthy, I hope you are well, and I hope you are staying with yourself and with this transit that we are in and with this expansion that we are invited to.

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I know it can be difficult, so if you need to hear this today, you've totally got this. And I think too, there will likely be gems in today's episode, this conversation with Hope, that will help support you in your own transformation, your own expansion, that will support you wherever you find yourself in life right now.

And wherever you find yourself, again, thank you for tuning in and joining us and being part of this community and this creative revolution and this movement. This is good work we are doing here.

And I want you to know how grateful I am to have you be a part of that, even if we've never met yet, talked yet, or you haven't been officially in the Art School, I look forward to the day that we do connect. And in the meantime, so grateful to think about you, imagine you all out there. And it's so exciting to think about – what's really fun now are that the more and more people I meet that come to the Art School, that write in, that send emails, it's just this wave of things I expected, but it's always better than what you expected when you connect with the real people. So, thank you to all of you out there.

And again, like I said, this has been a powerful week, a powerful few weeks for so many people in the Art School Mastermind, in the Art School. I am trying to slow down to take it in. And as I tell my Art Schoolers, you know, period, pause, and let that note of celebration and receiving that and integrating the growth run through you and become part of you, rearrange you at a cellular level so that you can hold all of this.

I mean, at one point this week, I did a little IG story on this. There was this moment when I was preparing for my Art School calls and a free group

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coaching call that I offered. And it was just a beautiful morning. The sun shining in through the windows during this great fall weather we are having.

And it was quiet in my house and I was seated at the dining room table with all my work spread out. I love to sit there. I love the views there. It's peaceful and a good workspace in the middle of the day.

And I was reading through the Art School forum; the questions, the celebrations, the comments. I was reading through the mastermind forum and the celebrations, the insights, the interactions, the conversations going on. And I just had to pause and take it in.

And in that moment too, I happened to click on a song that our very own Hope Dunbar, who is our guest again on today's episode, had just recently wrote and uploaded on our mastermind forum and she was sharing the first draft with us.

And it was such a dreamy moment, but better than a dream, because I'm sitting in there with the sunlight streaming in, feeling the realness of the chair beneath me, the floor beneath my feet, and listening to her music, seeing other people's reactions to it, also seeing the celebrations of others in the community. I mean, in this last week alone, not only did Hope write and share that gorgeous song. It's called Tempest. I hope she releases it more widely soon. Just devastatingly gorgeous and brilliant.

I was listening to that and then reading about the TV script that another had just finished and was sending off, a first novel, being finished by one of our brilliant genius members. And, like, right before she was celebrating finishing her first novel, right before her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. And this is a woman –

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you're going to hear and know these names someday and be able to say, "I remember when Leah talked about them in the podcast episode."

And it is such a gift to be able to witness these milestones and what these women have worked through to reach these completion points in their creative process. That, to me, is the behind the scenes that is a profound, like, sublime witnessing.

And then you have another woman creating a musical and in this beautiful collaborative – like she's orchestrating an orchestra. I mean, she's doing costumes and she's working with another on choreography and another artist with composing and writing the music. And then we have other coaches leading visionary coaching programs and also coming into their own as coaches.

And I think this was a theme throughout these last few weeks are these creatives, whether they are working as entrepreneurs, as coaches, as writers, as visual artists, as singer-songwriters, multi-talented artists. Whatever their medium, coming into their own way, creating the creative process that works for them that they have felt was possible, and now they're in this space where it is safe and it is safe to experiment and step into their power. And then seeing them create that art and create success in a way that is their own. That, it does not get better than that.

That feels, to me, like living in truth. And then, another full circle celebration moment was during the classic, the full Art School, the 12-week program, we had a call Tuesday morning and a woman was sharing an immense breakthrough, so incredibly moving. And I hope to never forget. I mean, I've stamped it, period paused with it, to imprint it on my own soul and wire it into my brain.

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She said, “I have never felt like this before in my life. It feels like truth. This feeling feels like truth.” And she went on to say then, the creativity that comes from that is incredible. It feels amazing. And that it’s this sense of yeah, you offer it to the world, but at the same time, you know that biggest piece is done because you were in such a place of truth that everything else is gravy.

And, by the way, then other people did receive it as the powerful creation and contribution that it was and were able to see her and witness her, but to have her say and witness her saying that she has never experienced that in her life and she will never forget it and that it’s life-changing, that it feels like truth. That, to me, was the grand theme, the master key coming through the whole week in these various forms and through the various sharing that people had, where they were in their process, where they are with their projects, where they are on their inner journey, as well as the outer journey of creating the art, creating the business, creating the income, creating the programs, creating their results.

It’s this place where it feels like truth and there’s nothing else like that feeling. And everybody witnessing it in that moment then had an opportunity to acknowledge that that is real and that is what it is all about.

So, again, such a powerful week. I am overflowing with gratitude for this community. It feels like truth to me. And it feels like it’s just gathering momentum, getting better and better, getting stronger and stronger. Which for me personally, my own personal creative journey as it pertains to the Art School, it’s so validating. And I don’t want this to be about me, but I want to share this story with you in the knowing that someone listening needs to hear this.

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Because if you are at a stage where you're like, "I just have a feeling about what I want to do. I don't have a clear picture. I don't think I know enough. I don't think it's complete enough. I don't think I'm ready." What I'm experiencing now, I had a feeling. I had this feeling before and then I had to start taking action.

I had to go to that feeling as the end result, this, "God, it feels like truth. God, it feels like this as exactly where I'm supposed to be, what I'm supposed to be doing." And I am also ever growing and participating actively in the unfolding of it, cocreating.

I had the feeling, I had a vision that wasn't – again, I couldn't see everything. But the vision was like a felt energy, that there was this other way, this third way that I've been talking about possible that is represented by really – it's the third way, but it's these infinite ways. Within you, there is the way that is uniquely yours, to creating what is uniquely yours to create. And I want to acknowledge that here and tell you, you are not imagining it. That is real.

Even if you have created so much success in the past in a different way, by following someone else's rules, even if it takes a large amount of intelligence and skill and heart and courage and blood, sweat, and tears to do that. Don't take anything away from that. This is not about erasing that.

But I have a feeling, if you're listening, you're wondering if there's something else for you to create, this utterly next level of creativity and evolution for you and life expansion and experiencing even more of yourself and of the world. That is real.



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And that sense you have that maybe you can barely hear, that you can do it your way, that is absolutely real. Honor that. Follow those golden threads, and put yourself in proximity of others who have vast enough imaginations and generous enough spirits and intellects, flexible enough imaginations, hearts, spirits, and intellects to hold that space for you, witness you in that, have a reverence for wherever you are on your creative journey and who allow you to be nurtured and seen and grow.

That is that fourth C that is a master key, that Hope and I talk about today, the creative community, like curating, cultivating, insisting that that is what you must have, creating that for yourself, this ideal creative ecosystem that involves other humans. There are parts of the creative process where you do, on your own, and then there are absolutely these other parts where you can tell, you can feel it, when you're in the Art School, people say it, "This was a missing piece."

We are not meant to do this all alone. So, find what that is for you. It may be the Art School. It may be something else entirely, for you to discover, seek out and find, or create. Only you can answer that question. So, this is a good place to bring you into the conversation, the continuation of this conversation with Hope.

So, for sure, if you have not yet already, go back and listen to that first episode. And once you do, then return and settle in for the remainder of this conversation with the real Hope Dunbar.

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Leah: This is about rising, collectively rising. And I think too, the other thing that I love – you pointed out, there is a fierce love to the group, where they

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are not going to meet you where you think you are. They are going to have – like, if it's not aligned and consistent with who you really are, they're not going to meet you where you think you are that day. They're going to be like, "No, we're not having that."

Hope: No, and think it points back to how painful it is to see a woman, like a fellow traveler get foggy or get lost and confused. We've all lived it. So, when we can clearly see what she's meant for and who she's meant to be and she gets foggy. It affects us. Or, it immediately points me back to the time where I was foggy and I didn't believe a word anybody said, but it was important to stay there, like to keep showing up and to keep remembering that they're holding something that I can't see right now.

And it hurts when we see a woman struggle. And the best thing we can do for her is to say, "Step into that truest identity." We're going to help you step into that truest identity because to abandon it is a tragedy. And we see it too much all over the place. Like, the last thing we're going to do is let one of ours step away in tragedy.

Leah: Right, what do you think that – because to me, it seems like, I just can't help it, this desire to do the evoking work, wanting to see somebody, who they really are and what they're really capable of. It is something I cannot help. Like, to see that come to fruition and to support that and nurture that just seems like, how can you want anything else? And what's your experience of it? Because I see you being, like, holding that's pace for others in the group.

Hope: It's such a pleasure to watch people take steps towards their truest calling. You know, we talk a lot about self-care and wholeness and, like doing things in support of your growth and not to speak against yourself.

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And so many of us woman have just been trained and programmed to speak against ourselves, to put ourselves at the bottom of the list.

And so, one of the workarounds, one of the tricks we talk about is how would you talk to a beloved friend? How would you talk to and encourage a child who had a dream? We would never, ever speak to a person we loved a cherished the way we would speak to ourselves when we're trying to reach some goal. Because it's a joy and a delight to watch your child step into the crazy abandon of something that they love. There's nothing more satisfying.

The same thing with a friend or someone you work with, to watch the, become who they were meant to be doesn't take anything away from me and it feels like, if I'm helping in any way to stoke this fire or to keep things going or to hand her some water when she runs by, well heck yes, put me in supporting actor category because that makes me so happy.

Leah: You can't reduce it down more to – like, it's pleasurable to be...

Hope: It's joyful. It's just joyful.

Leah: And right. It feels like there's a rightness to it. And I was thinking the other day, when I was watching my oldest son at a soccer scrimmage and he's kind of now finally getting to the age where there's more – there's some athleticism going on here and real competition. And as sort of silver lining of the COVID situation is that they're not doing inter-school matches. They're doing just within school scrimmages. And so, it's all the best things of sport. They're being competitive. They're learning a lot. And they're having such a good time. They're giving each other a hard time...

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Hope: That's the best.

Leah: It is the best. And I loved – I didn't realize, when I was in team sports growing up, that I wouldn't always be able to be on a team like that. And I think that is something that I see with the Art School and the Mastermind. It's like being on the varsity team. And I wonder if that's for you, like with the Monday night songwriters too, where it's that sense of, like, being on the varsity team, where you all have this general shared love in mind, whether it's with the songwriters, it's the song, the music. Or in the Art School, seeing people crush it and come into their own and shine. Just this sense of when you belong to something like that, there's an enlivening that happens.

Hope: Yeah, like last night was Monday night songwriters and the idea is that we all meet up – we're all from all over the United States. We all meet up on the line. And we're supposed to bring a new song every Monday night. And I have so much respect for all those songwriters. I think they're amazing, fascinating people. I love their writing and I love their dedication to the craft.

The last thing I would want to do, if I could avoid it, is show up on Monday without a song. Like, I want to show up – they're showing up as their highest self in my imagination. I don't know if they are. But in my imagination, I imagine them all showing up, honoring this sacred space. Like, we all carve out two hours of our night on Monday nights. Our spouses, our significant others watch the kids and we talk about songwriting.

Like, that's important. That's not if you can make it. That's, I will be there because I know you're there and I know you're taking this seriously and the

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least I can do to show my appreciation and admiration for you is take it seriously and show up fully engaged.

Leah: Yes, that level of – so, when this conversation with you comes out, I will have released an episode that I also recorded earlier today. And one of the main lines in that episode – it's for my 100<sup>th</sup> episode, there's got to be some magic or power in this one. So much of what you're talking about keeps reminding me of one of these lines. And it comes from the *Women Who Run with Wolves* book. So, "I love my creative more than I love cooperating with my own oppression." Isn't that so good?

Hope: That's so good, "Than cooperating with my own oppression." And there was a thing that we talked about in Art School about the ever-ongoing process of lowering our tolerance for, like, taking it, or eating shit, or however you want to describe it. We've maybe, as women or as individuals, have maybe taken a lot of pride in explaining how much we can tolerate or how much we can put up with or much shit we can eat, more than the other person. And now, the process is to actually intentionally reduce that tolerance to the point where I am not tolerating something so dishonest as going against my truest calling.

And I can't, for me, I can't help but articulate it because it really sticks to me, when I say, "That's not telling the truth." For me, that's untrue. That's lying. And I really don't like lying.

Leah: I absolutely agree. I think it goes against your own deepest truth, like, this is just who I am and I also have a life here. And I think, once you begin to get a taste of how much we tolerate and you're like, the lights go on and you're like, "Oh gosh." And once you start to have less of a tolerance for tolerating, then it becomes those places where, in the past, where you did

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tolerate untruth, it becomes acute. You realize, no, that is a violence to myself and there's no reason to sugarcoat it, other than to make it more tolerable, for women to tolerate it. But to just flat out say, no, it's a lie, it's dishonest, and it's a violence to yourself.

Hope: Yeah, and for me, as a musician, it's interesting how we learn these lessons in parts of our life, but then we don't try to spread it out, so we learn it across the whole thing. Like, we might have already trained ourselves to take our professional job extremely seriously. Like, during our work hours, we don't take personal calls. During meetings, we would never tolerate being interrupted by something trivial.

Our job is important. And then we clock out at 5pm and none of those boundaries exist any longer. We've decided that we can't take ourselves seriously from the drive home to bedtime. And it really is the question of how can I be in true integrity with myself from top to bottom?

And as a musician, I was able to be very true and in integrity with myself when I was by myself writing on a page. However, it took me a little while to realize that the gigs that made me sad were also not to be tolerated. That that was a violence to my work, by taking the gig that I knew I was only going to get one free beer and maybe \$20, and drive an hour and a half.

That's a violence to whatever investment I had put on the page and in my work, I had just gone through all my pockets and stolen all of that work and all of that money by driving to a sad gig in Omaha,

Leah: Yes, and this is, again, where we discount ourselves. And that drains us of the energy that the gift needs and that our psyche needs, the fire

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needs to keep burning, to support the gift. And it reminds me, so you know too, we've been talking about the story of the little match girl.

Hope: Oh my gosh, yeah.

Leah: And one of the many messages in that is she's trying to sell her light, which is the representation of this light that we bring out from the abyss, right? Our creative spark. But also for her, literally the thing that could keep her warm and she's trying to sell them for a penny. And I think that's what we're conditioned, "Take the gig that pays a beer and maybe \$20 in tips." That's like selling your light for too little a price. And then, that costs us. That is a real cost to us.

Hope: And what's interesting is there was a time that taking that gig was fun. It didn't start out sad. It started out as fun. And then, as time went on, I did not reevaluate whether it was fun or not. I just figured that that was just part of my story.

Or I have a friend – and the answer is different for everybody. That's why it's so important, that thing about the teacher and the student versus we all are masters of our own existence. There are questions I can't answer for you. The same goes for you, Leah.

You can have a student, you can have a client, and ultimately, you can help guide them and walk them around their existence and walk them around their brain and maybe shine a light on things that are hard for them to see. But you can't answer the question. They have to answer it.

Leah: Yes, so to your point, if someone's saying, "How do I know if I'm meant to do the gig still where I don't get paid?" Part of it is, like, what

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you're saying is that you walk through your experience and you learn. And I think something else you said that's really valuable though is reevaluate. Look and reevaluate. And you said there was a time in which it was fun. And then, there was a time when you noticed, "I'm sad." And then it also happened during this period where you're like, "Should I tolerate this kind of sadness?"

Hope: Right, and I think, especially in the music world, you meet a lot of people – and I'm sure it's the same with art. You know, art out in the world gets kind of a bad rap because it's, I don't know, not bridge-building or, I don't know, cardiothoracic surgery. So, it's somehow different than those two.

And we know that cardiothoracic surgery and bridge-building are super-important and we don't know how to – we always have a hard time evaluating, where does art go on this spectrum? And maybe it's sometimes maybe slightly devalued. I don't know about your world.

So, it does sometimes foster a conversation of, "I have no choice. This is just how it is. It must be nice for you to say no to the \$20 gig but I have no choice, I have to take it." And I was that person for a long time. Until I'm like, "You know what? Sorry, but I'm going to decide to opt out of what is assumed to be normal and I'm going to decide for myself what I consider worthy and important."

Leah: Because right there too, I think that is being creative in all aspects of your life. There's this phenomenon of how we can know something in one area of our life, but we don't allow it to be ubiquitous and universal. And I think that is, with creativity, allowing yourself to be, with the capital C, the Creative authority and have Creative agency to declare, "Okay, here's



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where I am. I know I'm a good songwriter and I know I'm always evolving and learning. And here I am as the entrepreneur aspect of my musicianship. And I'm going to set my price."

Because I think something you said too about, you know, out in the world, I think that's where we lose our place, like delegating what we're worth to the market. And that's where it feels like a scary stretch at times to be like, "I'm not going to do that. I'm going to opt out of that paradigm where I let the market determine my value."

And it doesn't mean that just because, all of a sudden, you say, "Okay, I'm doing no more of those gigs. I'm not doing any commissions like that anymore and now I'm only doing this." It doesn't mean that, all of a sudden, you have everybody beating down your doorstep. But for me, it's been like, I'm going to hold this as my value and I'm going to then live into it.

Hope: Yeah, and we've talked a lot. Like, we've talked a lot about this idea. And it has something to do with the teacher-student idea and then the creative peer community idea that when we model ourselves, when we model what our game plan is according to what somebody else's game plan is, we are practicing like a consumer mindset. Like, just tell me.

I'm just going to graft on whatever you did onto me and I'm going to consume like I'm at Target, what you thought. I just want your thoughts. Can you just download to me what you know?

And it is the process of, no, I just want it. I don't want to learn it. I just want it." But walking away from consumer, where you're kind of – there is a power differential, and you are the weak one and you just let masters tell you what to do. And walking into this idea of being a creator. A creator

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starts from, “I have everything that I need. I have all of my faculties and all the agency and I have no interest in passing my agency out to somebody else.”

And now, the hard work is asking myself the really tough question of, “What’s important to me? What do I want this life to look like?” And then, “Am I willing to do the work that it takes to make it ubiquitous, like make it so my whole life reflects who I am building something myself?” I’m not buying a program and painting it onto my world.

Leah: Yes, and this brings me to why the entrepreneurial aspect, the money aspect is sacred work. And we’ve talked a lot about how money is very sacred work and it very much relates to shifting from this consumer, disempowered consumer, subject of a kingdom, to being the empowered creator and declaring and deciding. But not only that, but then holding that space. And as you said, doing the work to make sure that that’s where that deep inner sacred work is. Okay, now I need to do some excavation of my stories, my stories about myself, my stories about the world, my stories about me in the world and all the places where I have written myself into a role as the subject or as the victim, rather than as the protagonist or the hero or the most powerful dominant energy in your own life.

Hope: Yeah, and it’s beautiful work and it’s gut-wrenching work and what I thought I had as far as tools in my toolbelt as a musician, who prided herself on wanting to get to the guts of the human experience and wanting to always tell the truth and if it was a sad song, it was a sad song, and if it was a murder ballad, it was a murder ballad and I had no desire to apologize for how the song came out. Like, the song was the song.

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And I was unafraid to walk, like, not step into anybody's shoes or tell any story. And then, thinking, "Oh, I'm so woke. I'm so taped into everything, my emotions and human life. I'm so clear." And then walking into this world, I'm like, "Girl, you think you know a thing or two about your own brain. You were so busy minding everybody else's brain to make pretend stories that you forget to pay attention to your own."

Leah: And it's interesting too, in the realm of money, for so many people. It touches those aspects of our brain where we're like, "Oh no, my inner work, my brain has nothing to do with this. Money is different."

Hope: It's not. And that's...

Leah: "Money is different," and then on top of that, it often has this kind of ick sort of aura around it. For women and for creatives, isn't that convenient for everyone else, that we wouldn't be able to declare our own worth and value and be agents and very powerful creative agents? But I think it's this realm of, "I can be that kind of creative in my work, but that doesn't apply to money." But then, if you're really wanting to be a ubiquitous creative and rule-breaker and challenge things and go there, there's a lot to go into there.

Hope: I have lived that lesson over and over again and I'm still in the process of excavating the idea of money to get closer to the idea of me. Because the reflection of my identity has all of these parallel interpretations of how I see money. And like we've talked about, money is currency. Money is life force. And are you hanging onto it or passing it out? Do you want it near you? Do you want it as far away as possible? How interesting. Tell me more about how you don't want currency, how you don't want life touching you too much. It's extremely revealing, and we were talking about

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this in mastermind, but for me, the idea of money brings up the idea of being exposed and feeling vulnerable and the audacity of wanting what I want.

Leah: I think that is like that major – that's lie the unspeakable. How dare you want what you want? And we've talked too about want what you want and how dare you declare that you can be who you are. And being who you are takes resources. And wanting what you want takes resources. So, then I think that's where we feel like money is – we've got this sort of amorphous, like, vague feeling that money is somehow gross or dangerous because, oh my god, if we were to want what we want and declare that we are who we are and be like, "Those resources, I'm going to be the channel that I want to be, as big of a channel as I want to be to flow who I am, flow where I want it to flow." I'm speaking very specifically about money.

Hope: About money. And I mean, I haven't had direct commercial success with my writing. I've had a few brushes with commercial success. And I remember the first time that somebody showed interest in wanting to purchase a song of mine. And it was a guy down in Nashville who I'd met at a conference. And he was just asking me about the availability of this song that I had written and he knew of an artist who was looking for music for their next album and he thought it would be a good fit.

And here's where that disassociation kind of identity showed up. If you had asked me, as a songwriter, do you want to write the best songs humanly possible? I would be like, 100% that is my life's work. That is my job. My job is to write the best songs humanly possible.

Then I was posed with the idea of somebody actually agreeing that it was a very good song and making a commercial offer for the song. And I was like,

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“Whoa...” my mind went immediately to you don’t know anything about contracts, you know that they’re going to screw you. Be ready for them to screw you. You don’t know anything about contracts.

I immediately felt like the wicked witch of whichever that was going to get water poured on her because I was like, “I am going to melt and die. Never mind. Let me write the best songs humanly possible, but please don’t let anybody sing it who might actually put a light on it because that will make me dead.”

Leah: Yeah, we’ve talked about these. The doctor that wrote the Patriarchy Disorder about the line about how through time, any time a woman has reached for power, it’s been a punishable offense.

Hope: Totally.

Leah: And how often does this come up in conversations in a group with grown-ass women who are highly educated, raising families, highly functioning members of society with multiple degrees, very successful. And it feels like a primal fear comes out of, like, oh god, too much success, that kind of reach for power, you either describe it as someone’s going to slap my hand, to they’re coming for me.

Hope: Yeah.

Leah: And it sounds melodramatic, but it is like what the innermost experience is. And you can’t tell me that that isn’t having an effect on keeping the glass ceilings in place.

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Hope: It is keeping glass ceilings in place and I go back to being taught how to be a good girl. You get enough acclaim to make sure that everybody knows you're going for straight As, but you do not get so much acclaim that it redefines, again, where your barriers are. You stay within the fold. You stay among your own kind or your own level or your own class. And the minute that is threatened, you just made a huge mistake. Now, you need to worry about the angry mob coming for you.

And I feel it. I feel it intensely whenever I get brushed with some sort of success. I have a fear response. I'm excited, but I also immediately go to worst-case scenario. Like, how are you going to survive this?

Leah: And someday, in retrospect, we will be able to share the amazing successes and things we're celebrating for you recently because my head is about to come off and I can't share it. I so want to share it. Someday, we will be able to.

Hope: Someday we will.

Leah: Everybody will know then. But in the meantime, it's a very real thing. And I think too that that is also why communities like this are so important. We are not going to stay small and in the fold. Then offering though an alternative of belonging and where there's radical safety and not staying in your comfort zone. Because I don't think that's safe for the soul. That's not safe for your gift. It's not what is healthy or healing or what the world needs.

So, normalizing extraordinary success, normalizing, like coming to your full creative power and then continuing to keep going, not letting somebody else be like, "Isn't that good enough? Shouldn't you just be grateful for what you have?" Be like, I'm super-grateful and I love my creative life and I'm

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going to keep on going, like, normalizing extraordinary financial success, normalizing women who are creatives and artists and mother or not, and spouses or not who are crushing it in all the ways that are most important to them. And that are powerful.

Hope: They're powerful, and women are naturally caregivers. Women are naturally nurturing. We have those things written into us. And in order to find that way into a deeper love or a deeper commitment to who you really are, who you're called to be, I find a lot of power and inspiration saying, like, I owe it to my mom to be as big as I could possibly be because she was an amazing woman. But she felt like there were limitations to what she could do. She felt that intensely.

And her mom before her was even more limited than she was. And I owe it to these women who've loved me and have sacrificed and who have painted within the lines in order to behave and be called good by society. I owe it to them that in this new age of intense connection that we have globally thanks to this weird little thing called the internet, like, I don't have to be in New York City to work on a music career. That's amazing.

I can be in Utica, Nebraska and I can be a very serious songwriter and make very serious professional networking connections and pursue my career from here. We've got doors open to us as far as how big we want our lives that simply because of geography and technology were not available 50 years ago.

Leah: 100%. I think it honors our lineage to recognize that those doors have been opened for us and roads have been paved. And for some people, it took their whole life to do that. Or it took generation of our mothers' or grandmothers' lives to make that kind of progress. And so now

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I feel like our biggest invitations and challenges are to not sit inside because we feel there's some sort of invisible barrier within us keeping us tied.

Hope: Exactly. All of these other barriers have fallen down. The final barrier is the one that's staunchly built inside ourselves.

Leah: Yes, and it seems invisible. And I think this too is, like, why seeing other women go through it is so helpful. Because it makes that what you think is your own unique invisible forcefield of fear, you're like, "Oh, it's not just me. She's got it too." And it makes you realize that it's a real thing but it's not actually your truth.

Hope: Yeah, and the power in – I'm just going to go bac to again, because of the moment of history in which we find ourselves – the power of community, again, as human creatures, we were built for connection. We were built for relationship. We're in this weird artificial time where we have to be separate from people. All the more reason to be intentional about building community and building relationship.

Because it's not just for us to sit around and not drink coffee by ourselves, but have friends who we can drink coffee with. But it's about talking and it's about story. It's the power of story and that we're in each other's stories. And that intentional community, whether that be in person or online or however, helps you share your story, helps you tell the story back to the woman who needs to hear it when she's forgotten.

It is that rising tide. And I would hate for us, in this moment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to discount the power of connection and relationship as, like, rocket fuel to get you to the next place and to seek that out and to make a date



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and to honor that date and to carve out an hour and a half in your schedule because you're worth it. You're so worth it. Not just so you can be of service to whoever you're meeting online, but that they can be of service to you. And you feed each other as you grow. It's priceless.

Leah: The truth of it is in the experience of it, right? When you're there and it is that you're nourished, they're nourished, and you feel like that has been also a greater gift to life. Like, to acknowledge that there are many human interactions going on right now, and it's really easy to look at the negative ones and to assess them as, "Wow, that's depressing. That's ugly. What does that say about our world or our future?"

And so, I think then we need to double down on these intentional relationships and communities that you're talking about. And then also double down on acknowledging that what we're doing here together is good.

Hope: It's good, that it is – You want to be a badass, this is what you do. You ask yourself what your life would look like if you just decided you were going to be the architect, that you weren't going to consume some message that was given to you or handed down to you. You weren't going to read a headline that decided for you how you wanted to build and create a life. You are going to just ask your own beautiful heart. And that sounds bananas and crazy. But it's also the most counter-cultural move that you can do and it's also the most generative thing that you can do.

So, by honoring your own heart, you're actually starting to build a fire around which other people can gather and be generative together. This isn't just about you. This is about expanding the circle and widening this

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invitation to be creators. And creator meaning whatever it is you want to create as your story from birth to death, do it. It's awesome.

Leah: Amen. Like, creating a culture is creating the world. Like, what the world we – and that is a gift of creatives, of artists. And I think too, you don't have to be a working artist to honor the part of you that has that creative ability to be an intentional creator of culture.

Hope: And story. We're all writing out own story. It's not being written for us. We are writing it. and the question is, at the end of it all, what would you like the story to sound like?

Leah: Hope Dunbar, I could talk to you for hours.

Hope: I could talk to you for hours. This is so fun. And I know that there's probably a time limit and what not...

Leah: We are going to have to do a sequel and then a trilogy and just Star Wars it and just keep – but that is, there's no good way to end it. But to close with that, what story are you writing?

Hope: What story would you like to tell?

Leah: Beautiful.

Hope: It is beautiful.

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Leah: Well, I love the stories that you tell. And so, in case my listeners haven't already found your music through previous episodes, can you tell them where to find the stories that you tell?

Hope: Sure, well I have a website. It's called [hopedunbarmusic.com](http://hopedunbarmusic.com). There you'll find links to my previous record, Three Black Crows, which is also available pretty much on any platform you listen or buy music, iTunes, Spotify. Google Three Black Crows. And I have two new records coming out. They're called You Let the Light In and Sweetheart Land. And those are available coming soon. If you want to read my blog, it's a little bit of this, a little bit of that, you never know what it's going to be.

Leah: I highly recommend. I love your blog.

Hope: Thank you. And then I also host a podcast, a songwriting podcast with my sister-in-law, Emily Dunbar. It's called Prompt Queens. So, if you're interested in the craft of songwriting and you want to hear two girls in sweatpants joke about it, join us over on Prompt Queens. We'd love to have some new listeners.

Leah: I also highly recommend; it is like so fun to be a fly on the wall listening to the two of you. And my face hurts and my gut hurts afterwards because you guys are hilarious.

Hope: We have so much fun doing it. We took a little COVID pause but we're getting back into it.

Leah: Well, thank you, Hope.

Hope: Thank you for having me. This was such a delight.

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Leah: This brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to lean in and really work with me, coach with me. So, this coach with me, if you listened to last week's episode, you know comes in two parts.

The question I asked last week, two questions really, what are you holding at arm's distance? What dream? What version of reality that you'd love to create are you holding at arm's distance?

And the second part of that is, how much energy does it take to do this? How much energy does it take to keep that dream at arm's length? How much energy does it take to downplay what you really want and who you really think you are?

So, my assignment for you last week was to consider that core question, "What am I holding at arm's length?" And then the next question, the complement, how much energy is that requiring? So, to contemplate that, journal about it, take it for a walk, see what comes up to you.

Now, what I want to ask you is what is your relationship to this dream? Hope alluded to this and it's something we've talked about in the mastermind and in the Art School. We can get to this place where we are kind of like, yeah, entertaining the dream, holding at arm's length. But really, what we're doing is staying there and making peace with defeat and thinking that that defeat just happens to us. But instead, what it is, is a position that we've chosen. We've delegated, we've made peace with defeat. We've resigned ourselves to thinking about this as just the way it is.

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Which because I know, most people, defeat is not the end result they're desiring or the goal, what they've done then is abdicated, again, their creativity, their agency in their life, to something outside of them. Because why else would you make peace with defeat?

The alternative to this is to going all in and taking your dream and yourself seriously. You're able to do that when you're no longer expending so much energy keeping your dream at arm's length, entertaining it, but not really, not going all in. There is so much energy lost in sitting on the fence and not putting your heart and your soul on the line.

So, the question I want you to consider this week is, "Am I willing to take myself seriously, truly really seriously, so that I'm going to do the work I am meant to do and live the life I am meant to live and be the fullest expression of who I am meant to be?"

And now, if you answer that question to quickly and tell me, "I am, I am," but that tells me that right away you're not quite there yet. Because somebody who has gone all in and is willing to take themselves seriously to this level means you are taking yourself, your life, your gift, your truth more seriously than anyone else's opinions or permissions.

So, this is a tough love coach with me. But this is where the power is. If you are taking your gift, your life, who you are meant to be, your dream seriously in the way I am talking about it, there will be no but. There will be no excuses. They might occur to your mind, but never seriously entertained by you. You have to take your on-purpose opinion about yourself, commitment to what you're creating and who you are becoming in your life as the primary driving principle.

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Other people will offer you other opinions. Other people will reject you, say no to you. But if you are truly taking yourself seriously in the way that I'm talking about, committing to your Truth with a capital T, no one can take that from you. There won't be any comma but. There might be the appearance of doors shutting. But when you are in that place of truth, of feeling Truth with a capital T because you have moved into, "Here I am, taking myself seriously. This is what she means by that." Then you'll know, that's when you step into becoming the most powerful dominant creative energy in your life.

Other people can have their opinions and come and go. And that's fine. You're not dominating other people. You are being the most powerful, dominant, creative energy, determinant force in your life. And some people say, "But what about the universe or god." This is staying in your lane, if you are a believer, which I am.

Owning your truth and being the most dominant creative force in your life, I believe, is surrendering to what is yours, who you were built, what your soul is meant to do. And it is when you are no longer paying more attention to other people is when you are no longer trying to do god's business.

You're letting god control those things, the universe control those things, a higher force. But you owning your truth is the work of a believer. And you doing everything you can do to be a good steward of your gifts and of your life, to me, is being a faithful, trusting believer. That is you doing your part and surrendering the rest. And this is not weak passive work. This is fierce work that requires deep strength. This is highly Creative, capital C creative work.

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And here's the other defining feature of taking yourself seriously. Is that you no longer try to bargain with god or the universe to get guarantees or immediate validation. Like, "I'll go all in and I'll take myself seriously if this turns out this way with this person immediately by this timeline." That is not how this level of taking yourself seriously, committing to your truth works.

When you truly go all in, take yourself seriously, like this is what my life is about, this is who I am, this is why I am here, you don't need and you don't wait for the guarantees. Waiting for the guarantees, waiting for the validation is still you being on the fence, still you trying to negotiate or bargain.

And you can feel the disempowerment in that. Actually, you think it would make you feel more secure, if you had a guarantee. But you can feel when you're in that bargaining mode, like, "I'm going to write this, but I really want it to be a blockbuster. You can feel yourself leave your creative truth, your center of power. And there's a nuance here I want to point out. Because I believe fully in committing to the result that you're going to create, no matter what.

And because as my client this week in the Art School demonstrated, what's available to you there though is the essence of what feels like truth. It is a profound feeling. It is a life-altering feeling, and that is what you're going for. And that is absolutely what is yours to claim and have. That is your part in the cosmic creative equation. That is you surrendering, fully committing to this is who I am, and this is the result I'm creating, no matter what. And once you are there, you don't need a guarantee.

You don't need validation. You don't need evidence right away. You don't need immediate gratification once you know this deeply. So, that's a

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nuance. I want to leave you there thinking about that for this next week. Am I willing to take myself seriously, to do the work I am meant to do to be who I am meant to be? And another way of saying this is am I willing to live squarely in my Truth, capital T, and to not tolerate anything other than that. Anything other than that is less than that.

And you deserve all of it. You deserve your truth and the life and the world that will unfold to you. I wish you could have seen the client this week in Art School describe it. But I know what it is. It is the truth. And that's what is available for each and every one of you listening.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you've enjoyed this podcast, if these episodes have been useful to you, the best thing you can do to pay it forward is to share, is to subscribe, is to go to iTunes and leave a review. Also, it's to take this work and use it, like I say in the coach with me. This work, yes, it is for you. And that is more than enough.

Here's what else I know. A healed, fully empowered, thriving, creative human being sends out a cascade, a torrent of goodness and beauty and meaning and healing and prosperity and laughter and joy and strength and resilience that our communities, our families, our world, our country, our countries are so in need of right now.

So, that is another way. I don't want to be remiss in mentioning that. That is another way to be a creative force of nature, a force for good. And if you want to plug into a creative genius powerhouse community, if you want to normalize extraordinary success and coming into your full creative power, and also just have so much dang fun and feel your heart overflow and explode in the best kind of way and have your mind blown week after week

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after week, if you are ready for that, if you are ready for expansion in your life, if you are ready to have that feeling yourself of, god, this feels like truth for me, this just feels so deeply right and amazing, then you're ready for the Art School and possibly the Art School Mastermind.

I will be opening enrolment again for both programs in the next few weeks. We'll be launching the winter Art School in 2021 and also the next six-month version of the Art School Mastermind will take place in 2021. But I will be accepting applications for the Art School Mastermind in the next couple of weeks, this fall 2020, and opening enrollment for the first tier.

There will be a special tier pricing for those that enroll in November and you will also have access to additional bonus programs that are offered just to enrollees by enrolling in the fall. So, stay tuned here. And then also, make sure you're on my mailing list. You'll be the first to know about those early bird first tier pricing and you will also be the first to hear about free programs and trainings that I offer. Just like the free group coaching call that I offered this week.

There will be more of those upcoming, so stay tuned and stay connected. I love having you as a part of this community. And I know now's the time when people are thinking about planning out their next year, their next 18 months. So, I wanted to give you a heads up that those enrollments are upcoming. It gives you a time to think about it, to think about your investment strategy for your life, for your creativity, for your business. And please also, send any questions our way. We are happy to answer them. So, you can email us, at [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) and we would love to hear from you, and we'll take excellent care of you as well.

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So, I mentioned that Hope is a consummate creative, in addition to being an amazing singer-songwriter, she also writes beautiful prose on her blog, on her website. I have to say, one of the coolest things for me about the Art School and the Art School Mastermind are all of these creative artistic souls, these brilliant women who take the work and then they have their own way of creating art and poetry with it. You know, whatever their given medium is. But just the way that the creatives in this group synthesize the work that we are doing and translate it in their own – again, it's a very lyrical, poetic, deeply meaningful way.

It is so much fun to be in the company of very intelligent, very soulful, artistic people like this. and including those who, in the beginning, swore to me that they were not that creative. But I knew they were here for a reason and it comes out.

So, to close with today, I wanted to share a little bit of one Hope's recent blogs. This was titled Campfires, Company, And Getting Caught Up in Overwhelm (Not This Time), because she has this way of, again, taking the work and processing it, metabolizing it, and then sharing it through story in a way that just hits you just right. It's great storytelling and it's also transformative storytelling.

So, this is towards the end of her blog, "You are welcome to disagree. But I'm coming around to the idea that my strongest, most productive self is not stressed out and overwhelmed. My most productive self is the version of me in wonder and delight, in pleasure and playfulness. The person in the room having the most fun has the most power.

I'm starting to see how that's true. The person with the highest frequency isn't blocking inspiration, isn't worried about the reaction from others, isn't

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handing over energy to the opposition. For me, that's campfire, café culture energy with candles and flowers and flamenco playing in the background. Oh, it doesn't look like work? That's a good thing. It means I can do this for days and never run out of steam. My coach has been calling this a third way for years, and it finally landed.

How long has it been since you exhaled, since you lit a fire on a weeknight, since you set out the good dishes for a friend and gave yourself the gift of connection? Since when did you look at your list of things to do and ask yourself how you would get this stuff done from your strongest identity, instead of fumes. I have matches to lend you if you need them."

She does have matches to lend, in spades. And as do all of you. So, go forth, everyone. Tend to that inner light. Share it. Have a beautiful week, and I look forward to talking with you next time.