

Ep #107: The Mindset of a Thriving Artist with Frances Cadora



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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Oh, my friends, do I have a feast for you today. I recently had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Frances Cadora. Frances is a metalsmith, jewelry designer, craftswoman, alchemist, and podcast host. So, just listen to what she had to say when I was asking her about how she developed the mindset that's required to create success, to thrive as an artist.

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Frances: I'm going to tell you how I learned it; soldering. I was innately good at it, but I think with ADHD, you hyper-focus very easily on things. And so, you can only think – so, soldering for people who don't know, what I'm doing with a torch is I have fire, which is settling, and I have metal, and I have a little bit of solder, which melts at a lower temperature. And I'm starting to get into all this technical stuff, but I think people need to understand where this is coming from to hear this story.

So, I'm heating up this object that I have literally spent hours on, or maybe I'm just starting. And if I am not completely hyper-focused on exactly what I'm doing, I cannot think about what if it doesn't work because if I think that, then I melt it. I can't think about what happened two seconds before. I can only think of the exact millisecond I am at right in that moment and pay complete attention. And that I do over and over and over and over and over and over, literally all day for 20-something years.

I mean, obviously I don't do it every day of my life. But I've done it so much that I can do it – I say this jokingly – drunk and asleep. But really, because you have to be so focused, you can't do it drunk and asleep. But I mean, it's muscle memory. And when you have to focus on something, you cannot

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think of the before and after. And that is where you learn it, whatever your skill is, putting that energy into it.

And that is the same thing Michael Jordan says. I just watched his thing a couple of weeks ago. It was really good. You know, “I don’t think about the shots I have missed. I don’t think about the shots I’m going to take. I think about that moment.” It is exactly that very thing. In fact, it wasn’t something I was born with. That was something I learned to do.

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Now, that I just a snippet of our conversation. So, you can imagine the gems that she drops throughout this entire conversation. I loved talking with Fran. I already know I have to have her back on. So, we talk about the power of presence and focus, not only for creating your art, but for creating success as an artist. We also talk about what it means in the greater context to be an artist.

So, sit back, enjoy, and feast on this conversation about creativity, the creative process, and creating a paradigm of thriving artists.

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 *The Art School Podcast*. I hope this finds you doing well, staying safe, and doing well. And I’m recording this the week before

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Thanksgiving here in the United States, the year 2020. So, this is going to be a Thanksgiving unlike any other Thanksgiving.

And even if you aren't celebrating Thanksgiving, it's probably likely going to be a week unlike any other week because that's just par for the course for this year, it seems. This year has also given so any gifts and profound invitations to change, to reflect, to deepen.

It's been a year so difficult for many of us, with tremendous loss and adversity and I just once again want to take the moment to pause and send you my best if that's where you find yourself right now, in the midst of adversity. Just stay strong, rest as often as you can. And I hope you take episodes like this and just drink them in and feel nourished and supported and held by this community, eve if we have never met.

So, I want you to feast on the gratitude I have to offer for you this week and feast on this conversation with Frances, which I'm so excited to share that with you.

First, a few things we're looking forward to and grateful for around here this week. Although we will not be able to gather with our family this year, which is obviously not ideal – and I know that's the same for many of you. That's hard. I cherish the time with my family and especially during these seasons.

So, what we are doing here with our little nuclear family, Blaise, Sammy, Elijah, my husband Brad, and I, all of our chickens, and Luna and Izzy too. I can't leave out the animals because if my children ever hear this later, they'll let me hear that.

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So, we're going to just snuggle down in this beautiful home that we have built. We are going to celebrate our first Thanksgiving here together. And that is very special. We're going to Zoom with family. I'm looking forward to long walks, runs, we're going to explore some new parks in Michigan and along Lake Michigan for hiking, lots of amazing cooking smells. The kids are excited to do gingerbread houses and then decorate the house for Christmas advent and the winter season. So, all things that we're looking forward to here.

And I'm grateful as well because this was a bittersweet week in that it was the 12th week of this most recent Art School session. And I am once again blown away by this community, so proud of these women, so moved by them. It's been an honor. Thank you to all of you listening. You know who you are. It's been an amazing 12 weeks.

And as I said on the call today, you know, once you're in the Art School, no way out but up. And also, once you've been in the Art School, you're an alum. So, it's not goodbye forever. It just changes. And I know too, many people choose to reenroll or join us in the mastermind. So, I'm looking forward to those of you, seeing you again in the next session. But thank you again for a really tremendous, powerful 12 weeks. Every session raises the bar. Every session just knocks it out of the park. And I could not ask for more or be more grateful.

So, for those of you out there listening, whether you are taking this on a long walk after your Thanksgiving feast, or again, not celebrating Thanksgiving but just going to treasure some time to yourself, please just feast on this episode and getting to drink in the dynamic dynamite energy that is Frances Cadora.

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So, I am not even going to try to pretend to rewrite her bio, to read a different one to you here because the bio on her website is just so dang good. So, let me introduce you to Frances more formally this way and then I'll let you dive in, dig your teeth into this episode.

Frances Cadora, or Fran as she's known, is a metalsmith, jewelry designer, craftswoman, alchemist, and podcast host. Over the last 25 years, she's honed her process, welding blood, sweat, and tears with classical forms and modern muses to create one of a kind pieces using the highest quality metal and stones.

It feels like hard work, but it looks like magic. She earned her degree at the prestigious SCAD, Savannah College of Art and Design. Metalsmithing has provided her with a strong foundation to build upon, understanding the chemistry and fundamentals of constructing quality pieces have been an invaluable part of the process of honing her craft.

She has put in the necessary 10,000 hours to become an expert, but that's only the start of the process. She also has what she calls Jewelry ESP. She works intuitively, connecting with her customers and figuring out what they want.

For custom pieces, she spends some time getting to know who she's designing it for, creating a piece that reflects the personality of the wearer while leaving no doubt about the artist. And of course, she designs for herself too.

The art and architecture of Ancient Rome and Greece, the Byzantine Empire, the Baroque period can all be glimpsed in her work, stripped down

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to their essence and recreated in a new form, satisfying the modern woman's dual desire for sleek design and opulent luxury.

Every piece is created by hand in her workshop from start to finish. There are no parts stamped out by machine. As painstaking as this process is, she finds it meditative. The mark of the artist, the work of her hands, touching each piece of metal and stone as she feels her way through seems almost spiritual.

It sounds woo, but that's what she does. She loves making custom pieces for people who love what she does. And if that's not you then #sorrynotsorry. This is studio Fran.

Just that bio, that has to be one of my favorite bios ever, is a work of art. So, without further ado, please enjoy this conversation with Frances Cadora.

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Leah: We're going to come around to get the full picture of who Frances Cadora is. But I feel like we are off to a great start talking about when you are an artistic being, a creative being and you have all of these interests and yet too, it's one of the things I'm so excited to have you on to talk about is you have a thriving business.

And I think at some point, my dream is we're like, "Of course she does. She's an artist. She's a creative. Why wouldn't she be thriving and successful in the business arena too." And part of the exciting place we are now though is we get to create that paradigm of thriving artists. And so,

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have you always known that you would be successful on the business side as well as the artistic side?

Frances: Hell no. No. This is where art school failed me. So, I have a very expensive degree, like I payed a lot of money to go to the Savannah College of Art and Design and obviously things have probably changed. I think the culture of higher education now is really about vocation more than liberal arts. And part of vocation is making sure you have a job.

But I'm not sure they really teach business classes and I think that learning that as an artist is really hard and is very difficult – is it okay if I cuss?

Leah: Yeah.

Frances: Just making sure.

Leah: You be you.

Frances: I'll edit them out if I need to. But I did not always know that at all. I really struggled for a long time. I'm not going to say I don't still struggle. I mean, yes, I am successful. But it is always a learning process, always learning. And so, I think I made my point. They did not have business classes in art school and I did not take business classes. So, I've had to educate myself after school and now. Because thriving and success are the things that all artists should be able to feel and that art should be just – there's so many things that people do that are creative and you should be able to support yourself in that way. But you definitely have to learn what it means to manage money.

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Leah: Yeah, and my undergrad was in finance. I did go to business school and I still felt like it was just the chops of, like, the on the job, the entrepreneurial part. It would be different if I went to work for a hedge fund. I think that's what those classes were geared for.

Frances: Yes, it's so different. I think you need entrepreneurial business classes. One thing that I have to say that I have done that has been very smart on my part, and we started talking about this when we got on is, I avoided other artists. You need to surround yourself with people who are successful and that help you be successful, not just that they're successful, not in a shallow way, but supports you in a way that you both thrive from the relationship.

So, I don't feel like artists are taught that and they just tend to not really – from my experience in the past, I just got the feeling that artists were – they didn't understand business and there was a disconnect there. And so, I did not want to talk to other artists, be influenced by other artists. I still don't want to be influenced by their art. But I felt like being around people who knew business was smarter. Does that make sense?

Leah: Yes, and then I want to ask you too, is that – because I talk to my clients and in the Art School about we are creating this ideal creative ecosystem for you here, to support the creativity, but also to support your mindset and skill development for creating money and creating a business that thrives and just a holistic thriving. But especially including money.

And I find a lot of my artist clients say it was not okay to have those discussions – even with artist friends, they did not feel safe having, like, it was actually just not okay to want to be financially successful.

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Frances: 100% because you were a sellout, which is stupid. Like, somehow this – what is the word? I don't know. It's like you had to be Van Gogh and suffer. Like suffering was somehow, that's how you were a real artist. And when you were dead, your work sold for millions. But what good is that?

I mean yes, Van Gogh is an incredible painter. His work is amazing. But why do you want to suffer in the way that he suffered his whole life, broke, among other things? It doesn't benefit anybody.

Leah: No, and when you don't have to. It's not a requirement. It doesn't make you a better artist.

Frances: It does not make you a better artist. I actually had this discussion with my oldest child because he's like, "Everything's about money." Well, I was arguing with him about I don't even know what. The discussion was that my thoughts are centered around money and how he wants something better in life than that.

And I think he was on point with life is more than money. And I don't think that's how I think and talk all the time. But that's how he was saying I was interacting with him was the point. But it wasn't okay for me when I was younger to discuss money. It wasn't something my parents discussed with me. It wasn't something that you were okay to talk with in general.

And so especially with artists, it wasn't okay to talk about it. And I think just the whole idea that money is taboo has been very detrimental to many people, especially people who want to succeed and make money as artists.

Leah: Agree. And I think too, sometimes it can seem like we're forging into a new territory, like let's make it okay. Let's normalize artists being

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financially successful and also financially fluent and savvy business people. It's going to require a lot more talk than ever had been in the past because you're breaking new ground. But I just find it's like the legs of the table for thriving as a creative person, being able to not worry about making ends meet helps support your soul mission.

It's hard to think from a higher level or it's hard to think long term, which I think a lot of great creativity and visionary work requires. It's hard to think long term if your time horizon is, like month to month paying the bills, if you're going to be able to.

Frances: It really is difficult. I'm considering what you're saying. So, I just think that – I mean, I'm an artist, not a coach. So, I'm not the best person to tell people how to change their mindset. But it's all about mindset, you know.

Leah: You had said something really important that I want to go back to about who you surround yourself with. Because just because they aren't artists in the traditional way, you can still be creative. So, can you talk about some of the people that are in your own creative ecosystem who may or may not be artists who – you don't even have to name them. But what is the influence? What have been the influences that have been very positive and constructive and supportive for you.

Frances: I have to think about this because I am very limited. My circle is very, very limited in people that I talk to outside of online. So, my best friend is a very successful life coach. I think that has been very important.

Now, we didn't become friends because – we just became friends because we liked each other. But we just connected on a deeper level. We

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understand each other. We both listen and talk to one another and I knew her before she was who she is now too. I mean, she was a life coach when I met her. But I think we've evolved over 12 years, clearly.

So, without her guidance as a friend and pushing me and just support – and then I would say my friend Mary. She's not an artist. She's a nurse. She's somebody who just listens and is just like, you know, "You can do this." It is a hard question because – and I'm not sure why it's hard. But I feel like so much of my life was being a mom. And then I became an artist, even though I was an artist first. Does that make sense?

There's this breakup – and I'm still a mom, that I can be both now. But at the time, when I was younger and first starting, I graduated from college and I unexpectedly was pregnant. I was married. I got married the day I graduated from college and I moved to New York City. And then while I was there, I found out I was pregnant and I was in the internship that paid jack shit and I really hated living in New York City with a passion.

And my friend there is an artist and still an artist. I would say those friends from college that I stayed in touch with definitely have influenced me. They are gay men who, I would say, it was a lot easier for them in my opinion because they did not have to worry about supporting a family and they could focus solely on their career. But I would say also, they influenced me into seeing how to take myself seriously. Does that make sense?

Leah: Absolutely. And it's so fascinating you say that. I just interviewed one of my clients who is a singer-songwriter, musician. And she talks about this, you know, moving through – she started her career when her children were young and she talks about that progression through what a difference it makes when you take yourself seriously.

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And so, can you remember a time before you took yourself seriously and then you did? Or was there a turning point, or do you think it was a gradual progression?

Frances: It was a gradual progression. When I was in college, I took myself very seriously. I was a very hard worker. I had a great time in college as well. I'm not going to deny that. I wasn't like, you know, a perfect person. But I was very good at taking myself as seriously as possible. But I had to work for everything I had for myself because I didn't have financial support from parents.

And so, I worked a job or two, went to college, and I had to take myself seriously. But then the change was I really felt lost when I had kids. I felt like I lost my sense of self because I had to focus – and I was very broke when I had Greaves, because I hadn't even started a career. And so, there was that time post-college when I was like a mom, and then I was trying to figure out how. But I had to give so much of myself to other human beings that I don't think I thought to put myself first. It's like I had to mature into put yourself before your family, take care of you. And when I started doing that is when I started taking myself more seriously.

It still was a gradual process. There was no black and white cut and dried event that made me take myself seriously. It was just, honestly, I wanted to make money. And I wanted to feel better. And I wanted to feel like I was me. I did not enjoy being depressed, feeling like the life was being sucked out of me. And I'm not saying that my kids were not great joy and I did not love being a mom because I do. But I needed to find the balance between the two and it's obviously an ongoing struggle. I have teenagers now. They're not even young. So, I think them getting older and being able to do more for themselves definitely changed also.

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Leah: So, throughout that time when your family was young, your children were young – so before you had children, you had met the gay artist friends that you said were an influence for you. Did you stay connected to them...

Frances: For several years no. Well, that is not true. My cousin and I, he's like my brother honestly. We lived together in college. He graduated before me and we stayed connected. I have a picture in my living room. He's known my kids. They consider him like an uncle.

And he was always working really hard so I would definitely say he continued to influence me and I definitely wanted to work towards that. I loved watching him find success and being able to be a professional artist. And he literally has not done anything else but that. And so, that is a great example to look at.

And I'm like, you know what, if he can do it, why can't I do it? And he takes himself very seriously and he has boundaries like if he can't do something, he says no. And I think that is what's key also is knowing when to say no. Like, if you can't – and when I say he can't do something, like if he doesn't have time for me to visit or whatever, he's going to say, "I've got this work to do. This is really important. I don't have time for whatever you want to do." Or he'll make time for me. And I think his ability to set boundaries was a really good example for how to be successful in taking yourself seriously also.

Leah: Yeah, because I remember in our conversation that we had for your podcast a few weeks ago, something I've been thinking about was – I mean, correct me if I'm wrong. You said you have boundaries around your work hours. And so, you might have people in your life who are like, "Oh,

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Frances, you're an artist, you work for yourself. Do you want to go for a walk or can I come over for coffee?"

Frances: Nope. No, you cannot.

Leah: So, that's an example of how you use boundaries now and take yourself seriously.

Frances: Yeah, we can do that another time. I absolutely think it's important to spend time with my friends and to have those coffee dates. But if we're going to have a coffee date, let's do it at 7-7:30 in the morning or after kid drop-off. And then I start work at – if I make time for a coffee date, which is only with one friend and it's on her days off and it's actually not often enough. But it's like, okay, 7:30, we have until 8:30 and then she's got stuff to do too. So, we give ourselves that hour. And then I've got to start work at nine o'clock.

So, then from 8:30-9, I'm doing whatever tasks need to be completed at home. And then at nine o'clock I start work. And then at two o'clock I pick my kids up. And then at three o'clock I start work again. So, I have it cut up like that.

And I do – in the past I have paid for somebody to pick my kids up so I can continue to work. But now, I pay an assistant to be at my house and so I actually enjoy going and get on my kids and I leave her working on the task that – we have a list we start at one o'clock to two o'clock hour when I'm not here so she knows exactly what to do. And sometimes, it's clean the studio. And that's okay. and she does website work for me too. She's very good at making copy or adding products or making invoices or whatever.

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So, two o'clock to three o'clock, I get to go either listen to a podcast, talk to a parent, sibling. And then, when my kids get in the car it's 30 minutes of time with my kids where they tell me about their day. And I actually really enjoy that car time.

Leah: That's brilliant. I love this, like, getting into the nitty-gritty of the behind the scenes of how you're working. And I think this is an important meta topic too, paying for help. That's one of the ways taking yourself seriously looks. And I feel like it's the case of – it's been the case for me personally, paying for it before I feel ready even.

Frances: Oh yeah. I've paid for help for many years with, well, babysitting, clearly, paid for help with kids. My kids are old enough to drive and they should be driving and that is a whole other story. Here's where I have failed. I mean, it's not an undue fail. Like, they can still learn to drive and there's a lot more to that story. But my kids are old enough to be driving. They should be driving themselves to school and home from school.

But I did not pay for fulltime regular help until this past year. And god, what a difference that makes. I just was like, I would have helpers here and there and nobody consistent. And having somebody that's here for 20 to 30 hours consistently – it took me knowing specifically what I needed help with also, like, what do I not like doing? What can I give somebody else to do so that I can do these other things? And that's still a learning process.

But also, I have to train that person. And what I do is so niche. And I live in a small town. It is actually very difficult for me to find someone that I trust and that I want in my house to help me. And it has not been easy to find somebody that I could. But the universe provides. You put it out there that you want that.

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And I said this last January, “I’m going to have a fulltime assistant by July.” I had no idea who it was going to be or what was going to work out. It was somebody that I knew previously that had helped me a little bit as a student, because I used to teach at the University of Evansville. And so, that’s where I would get helpers for my class. And so, I’ve had a lot of great helpers over the years, a lot of students.

But a lot of them move onto successful careers in costume design. Or my one helper, Christian Atkinson, he sews costumes of TV shows and Broadway. So, I wish I could have him back but he’s got a much bigger career than being my assistant.

But you have to want to do it and want to learn the process and it’s just so hard to find that right person. I think though, there are other things you can find to pay for help that are easier. One thing that I just started doing is paying a bookkeeper because I hate it. Speaking of money, I hate QuickBooks. And the best money I ever spent was hiring somebody to do it for me. To show me even how to do it, you know.

Leah: Yeah, so is that someone you have a weekly meeting with or quarterly?

Frances: Well, I just started with them and they are spending many hours fixing my fuck ups. And so, we have a 90-minute Zoom call coming up. There’s a lot of work before the Zoom call. And then I think it’s a once a month thing, but we email a lot. So, we’ll meet on Zoom once a month. And it’s not somebody local.

Leah: I so appreciate this though because like you said, you are successful, and like you said too, and it’s a learning process. And I think a

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lot of people are intimidated. Like, “I’m just not good at that.” I think good enough and get rolling, and then there’s a lot that you can trust yourself to be resilient, to learn on the fly, and find people to help.

And I love what you said, like, acknowledging that it is a process. I think if you know, okay, it might be a process to find the right person. But I feel like you staked your claim in the universe when there was that point where you’re like, “I will have a fulltime assistant.” That is, like, all in taking yourself seriously.

Frances: All in taking myself seriously. I honestly should have said I’ll have it before July. And then I would have had it before July. Like, January to July, why didn’t I think I could have it before then? I really don’t know.

But lesson learned, you know. And I said I want a bookkeeper and what else did I say? When I started my podcast – here’s a clear example. I’m like, “I want to start a podcast.” Literally the next day, my friend from high school is a podcast editor. She started a new business doing it and she’s been in radio and editing for 20 years. And I’m like, “You’re hired.”

And she’s learning too. She’s starting a new business and she actually said she really likes listening to our podcast, by the way. She’s like, I learned a lot from that. But you know, that happened. I’m like, I want to do it. The next day, I did it.

I think understanding that when you stake that and you really claim it and you really want it, you don’t have to give it this time limit. And when you give it a time limit, that’s what happens.

Leah: Yeah, I love that. It’s that not fucking around energy.

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Frances: I'm not fucking around. I am not here to fuck around. I will say, resiliency and determination and just blind stupid belief that it's going to work out are the building blocks for all of this.

Leah: Yeah, so let me ask you about that blind stupid belief that it's going to work out. Because the way I hear a lot of people hedge their bets – and it sounds so reasonable – is like what keeps them from going all in and taking themselves seriously is, “Oh, but what if I'm wrong?”

Frances: I never even think of it. I'm like, “Well, if I'm wrong, fuck it.” I don't know why I'm that way. I mean, some ways it's like, “That was stupid.” But I'm very impetuous and I just don't even consider – if I really want it, I don't consider that I'm going to fail at it. If I really want it, it's just not a consideration.

Leah: That's powerful. And also, I want to say for anyone listening who's like, “I'm just not wired like that,” you can train yourself to think that way. Because I did not believe I was wired that way. And I absolutely – this is where mindset work is gold because that's who I'm meant to be is somebody who believes in herself that much.

Frances: Well, I mean, I wasn't always that way either. I mean, I was blindly stupid and just tried things and just assumed I'd be okay. And that was just youth. But I mean, it's a work in progress. This is not something I'm just – I mean, I am wired this way to some degree. But I think it's a learned behavior. I've been this way so long it feels like I'm wired. I still think it's a learned behavior.

Leah: And I think it's one you have to stick with to see the positive results from. Because I feel like you stay in that, you stay on the fence and in this

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wishy-washy energy when you're afraid to take yourself seriously. Then you don't get traction and momentum. You don't have the experiences of like, "I'm going to do this." And then the next day your podcast producer shows up.

And I'm thinking too, there's so many athletes, the number of basketball players, including Michael Jordan, who've said something to the extent of, "I don't think about the shots I've missed. I never think about the shots I won't make. I only think I'm making my shot." Like, whenever I shoot, nothing else is on the table because it doesn't serve you.

Frances: It doesn't serve you. I'm going to tell you how I learned it, soldering. I was innately good at it. But I think with ADHD, you hyper-focus very easily on things. And so, you can only think – so, soldering for people who don't know, what I'm doing with a torch is I have fire, which is settling, and I have metal, and I have a little bit of solder, which melts at a lower temperature. And I'm starting to get into all this technical stuff, but I think people need to understand where this is coming from to hear this story.

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it's muscle memory. And when you have to focus on something, you cannot think of the before and after. And that is where you learn it, whatever your skill is, putting that energy into it.

And that is the same thing Michael Jordan says. I just watched his thing a couple of weeks ago. It was really good. You know, "I don't think about the shots I have missed. I don't think about the shots I'm going to take. I think about that moment." It is exactly that very thing. In fact, it wasn't something I was born with. That was something I learned to do.

Leah: I just got the goosebumps when you were learning from soldering. Because it's something about – it's a mental thing, but it's also like a body physical thing too, mind, body, spirit, holistic creative activity but that does train you, there are real consequences to not being present and to not focusing. But it also trains the power of focus and that kind of truly – presence means no thought about what's behind or ahead. Like, you're right there.

Frances: And it is also the most irritating as fuck thing to be interrupted.

Leah: Oh yes, we talked about this.

Frances: It still irritates me. Because every day, if I'm interrupted – I can talk and do things. But if I've put so many hours into a project and it's like the last time I'm going to solder something or if I have to heat up the whole thing. And I really don't want to fuck up all the – I mean, it's metal so I can redo it, like recycle it. But it's wasted energy. Why do I want to waste that time and energy that I've put into it?

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So, in those moment, I'm like, "Don't talk to me. Don't breathe near me. Do not look at me. Even to the cat, I'm like, "Cat, why are you banging at the door? Don't you hear the torch on? You know better." But of course, he's a cat. He doesn't know better.

Leah: It is, I mean, it's true in that moment for the work. And I think there's the metaphor you can apply to business too. Because I know, for me, learning to take myself seriously, it takes me a certain amount of time to get into a – not to try to jam things into 30-minute naps, which I just had to do when my kids were really little. But even to stay in the stream of, like, a business idea or working on my website. And then someone comes in and your thought process – it feels painful. And I think I talk to a lot of people too who are like, especially now during COVID...

Frances: Yeah, when everybody's home...

Leah: They're feeling guilty about boundaries. But we've got to find a workaround because you can't – it's not good for anybody when you're interrupted when you're in that state. And again, it goes back to not having guilt about taking yourself seriously.

Frances: I was just going to say that. It's like if you don't take yourself seriously then it's very difficult to have boundaries. And I completely understand. I mean, relationships with our family are the key most important thing in your life. But kindly helping them understand this is what I'm doing right now, please don't come in here and interrupt me.

And it took a long time for my family to understand that and learn that. And I would get really aggravated, not with my kids. Well, I've gotten aggravated with everybody. I can't pretend I haven't. But it really took not me yelling at

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them, but me sitting down and saying, “Look, I have to do this. Please allow me this space. And then, when I’m with you, I’m completely focused on you.”

Leah: Yeah. And so, for people who are like, they’re not on the other side yet, if you think back to when you were in that transition of your children being little, you had taken yourself seriously as a college student, and now you have a young family, what are some of the initial things that you did? Do you remember? Because this can apply too I think for somebody who is currently trying to do their creative work while also in a corporate job.

Frances: Yeah, I’m sorry, I’m so distracted. This is one of those things that I get aggravated. The lawnmower people, like, okay, how long does it take you to mow their yard. You’re usually there and gone in 10 minutes. And I’m so distracted by it. So the first – so, you asked me again, the first steps before, what was it like taking myself seriously from the beginning, what did it take? Is that what...

Leah: Yeah, when you described the journey from when it was just you and you were young and a college student, you took yourself seriously. And then you felt like you lost some of yourself and your children were young. And then you started to take yourself seriously again. So, for the people who are in that transition – because I have clients...

Frances: I’m going to tell you it’s one thing; being broke sucks. Being broke sucks. 2008, the economy was really not doing well. And my husband did not lose his job. His company has been very good to him. But they were going down in hours.

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And I'm like, "Okay, we've got to have some income somehow. And he can't do any more and I've got to find something else." And it's like, "I'm hungry and my kids are not going hungry." That's what it took. It's that simple.

Leah: And so now, when it's like that choice isn't my kids are going to go hungry or I work. Like, what stokes your fire now?

Frances: I still love money. I'm sorry if that makes me a bad person.

Leah: It does not.

Frances: I love getting paid. I do love making people happy also. I love finishing something and somebody being excited about getting it and being excited about wearing it. And I mean, that definitely motivates me. I do love my craft. I love the actual doing of the work. That, to me, is just so fun.

I love getting better. I love looking back at I wasn't very good and I just kept working to get better. And because I've had that progress, I've been able to see. It's very tangible because I photograph everything. So, it's very easy to see. It's not easy to see in the moment, to know how much better you are. But it's very easy to see, when you photograph your work and you document everything and you look back at your old photos, I really think everybody should do this. You should document your process. You should document every part of it because it's a really good tangible way of looking back and seeing how much you've progressed and how much better you are.

And I cringe when I look at my old photos, but I won't delete them. Well, I do delete them off Facebook, let me just say. I delete them off – in fact,

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now that I've said this, I'm like, "What am I going to go back and delete?" I do that regularly because that's two-part.

I don't want somebody asking for something that I don't want to make. And if I did not enjoy making it, then I don't want to enjoy it again. So, there are some things I make that I don't even put up on social media because I make it – I like the making and the process. So, it's not that I mind doing it. But I don't want to do it again, so I don't put it up.

Leah: So, this is where I want to ask you about your art and where it is currently, what you love working on. Because on your website, one of your taglines is you are no ordinary person, this is no ordinary jewelry. And I know your work so I know that to be true. And so, is most of your work commission-based?

Frances: I would say 99% of it is. So, more recently, I have reproduced the same things more over and over, but each one is different even the same because the moment's different that you're working on it. As simple – my life is about details. That is my obsession. I am completely obsessed with the details of how things work. The things I love to make, the details are what makes the difference. And what makes my work not ordinary is that I'm paying attention to those little details.

Are there people who have more attention to detail than me? Probably. But it's all a learning process. And so, most of my work is custom work. And that's actually what I love doing. I'm really good at figuring out what people want and like. And I prefer to talk on Zoom or talk on the phone because it's easier to get down to the nitty-gritty.

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But people can kind of tell me ideas and I'm like, "Okay, I see this." And I just can figure it out. My superpower is, like, figuring out what people, when it comes to jewelry. And I have a good understanding of people and body language and I can just sense it to some degree.

So, I love custom work because I get to make – my energy can be like this ball of – this is really weird for some people, I'm sorry if it is but I'm not sorry – my energy, like that love I create, I get to pass it onto this person. And I love that exchange. That to me is like holy work right there. Because when somebody gets it, you feel fulfilled. Like, I've done something good in the world and somebody appreciates the energy I've put into this and the love that I created it with. And somebody really gets me too.

I like it when people like my work because I feel like people understand me. And I feel like so many artists are artists because they want their voices to be heard and they want people to understand them because somehow, we've felt misunderstood. And maybe that's not true for all artists, but I think this is true for a lot of creatives is you're expressing yourself because you want to express something that you just need to get out. And so, being able to exchange something positive in this world when there's constant negative is what fires me up and makes me feel happy.

Leah: Yes, amen, 100%. And I feel like that relationship – because transaction is not the right world...

Frances: Right, exchange, sharing...

Leah: Yes, and what I'm hearing too describes, like, you're seeing them. Like, if you're making a commissioned piece, you're seeing, intuiting something about them coming from this place. I love language arts too, but

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I think it's really powerful when something that is not verbal is exchanged and we understand the meaning of it.

Like, in the essence of someone through a Zoom interview that wants, let's say a ring or a necklace or earrings, you can take in your understanding of them and it's at a nonverbal level, mixing that with your essence and returning it. And we all understand – like, to me that's just a whole different world that is so beautiful and magical. And like you said, I think even more important right now, to honor that kind of beauty and that kind of exchange.

Frances: It feels good to be seen and it feels good to see other people. And I think that the whole idea of, you know, I can look through somebody's photos and kind of tell the things they like and the things they don't like. I obviously ask questions too.

And when somebody comes to me that they like something I've made, I don't have to remake that exact thing and it's like, they like the idea of – like I just made this pink ring for somebody and what she originally wanted was similar, but what she liked was that pink stone. But what she wanted was something bolder.

And so, it's like being able to communicate that with each other, figuring out that communication where she can say, "Well, I like this but I really want this," I can say, "Well how about this? How about this?" And make suggestions. And to me, that is part of – it feels good for that person to be understood also. I don't know. I just love communicating with people.

Leah: Yeah, it is a powerful thing to be understood, to be seen and to be understood. And so, I also wanted to ask you about your other recent creative project, your podcast.

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Frances: Yes, that is a learning process too. It's fun to do it because it's kind of nerve-wracking, like, "Oh my god, people are going to think I'm an idiot." And I cringe, I did, when I hear my voice. I don't anymore. I think because people always make fun of my Southern accent. I'm from Georgia but I've moved around quite a bit. And when I was little, my dad lived in California. And when I would go out there, people I'd meet would think it was cute. But I thought they were making fun of me.

So, sometimes I just worry people don't take me seriously when they hear my accent, so I was kind of worried about that from the beginning. But the whole thing is it doesn't matter. I want to talk to other artists about what it's like being an artist because, like we were talking on our episode, we want to normalize thriving. And I want to talk to other people who are thriving. But specifically, I want to talk to people who are LGBTQI, people of color, women, I want to really emphasize – the word that comes to mind is underdogs. But that is not the right word.

I just want to talk to other people who are not as privileged as white men and other people who are not as privileged as me, to understand their lives better, to talk to artists who are – I love their stories and the details and what makes them them. And I want to hear more about that. And I want to promote them as well.

If I can help them expose more people to their art, to me, I think more artists should thrive and the whole point is let's talk to other artists and let's gather and help one another.

Leah: Yeah, that moves me on a deep level too because I think this creating a thriving artist paradigm has to include expanding the paradigm and who's allowed, that category of who gets to be an artist and who gets

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to thrive. We need to throw all the doors and windows open, or take all the walls down.

Frances: Yeah, and I feel like when you look through history, what I was taught in school was western art and its white men and the painters. And I think obviously times are changing and the 20th century, 21st century, there's a lot of things that are changing. But clearly, we're still fighting the patriarchy and clearly, we're still fighting white supremacy.

And clearly, we're still fighting for trans rights, for LGBTQI, for women's rights. And so, I really want to emphasize that those artists voices are heard more because it is an effort to fight those things.

Leah: Yes, again, 100% because for them, for those artists' rights, and I think too because artists are social visionaries, artists can see what is and they reflect to us the story of what our times are, and then also where we can go yet. And so, leaders maybe not in the townhall sense of leadership, but in cultural leaders and societal leaders. And so, I just had something else that I wanted to ask you. It will come to me. But before I forget, where can people find your podcast?

Frances: So, my podcast is Look At Us Now and wherever you listen to podcasts, Stitcher, Apple Podcasts, Spotify. Just if you search Look At Us Now podcast in the URL, you will find it. And there's my website studiofran.com, there's also a link there. I have a podcast page for that. And so, that's pretty much it.

Leah: And so, if people want to find more about your art too...

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Frances: Studiofran.com. I'm very active on Instagram and Facebook. More Facebook lately just because – I don't have a reason, honestly. I love Instagram just as much. But those two places, and Frances Cadora, my personal page is where I interact the most and where I post all of my work. I do post everything on both, but I just – Facebook business pages are a crock of shit unless you're paying for stuff. And so, people are not interacting with you. If you're on Instagram, they are. So, Facebook and Instagram.

Leah: So, what's your Instagram handle?

Frances: It is – you know what, honestly, I think it's @francescadora but it might be @studiofranjewelry. You'd think I would know that.

Leah: Well, if you're the one using it, you're probably not looking for it.

Frances: I'm not. But if you Google Studio Fran Jewelry, my page will come up. And also, if you search my name Frances, with an E, not an I. E is a girls' name, her name is E, his name is I. My little pet peeve, spelling my name wrong.

Leah: We will get it right, Frances with an E. And your work is gorgeous and I love your work you're doing with the podcast and thank you for taking your studio time this morning. Because I know it's about nine o'clock your hour so I know you need to...

Frances: It is. And I've got a phone call from my accountant so I actually have to go call him back.

Leah: Thank you. I had fun talking with you, Frances.

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Frances: Same. Thank you so much. I can't wait to listen to this. And thank you for being on mine. I always enjoy my conversation with you, so it was great. Thank you.

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So, 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, I thought about this for a while for what I wanted to offer for Frances's coach with me assignment. And I really wanted to channel her no-nonsense, just decide and go get it energy for you.

So, listen to her podcast. Feel that vibe from her. Where can you take that kind of energy, that kind of, "You know what, I'm just going to decide that this is what I'm going to do," even if what your motivation is, especially if your motivation is, "You know what, it sucks to be broke. I'm going to make this work. I'm going to make this happen. And then how do you need to focus on that and not allow in the distraction of entertaining failure?"

Where can you develop that kind of relentless focus, where would developing that sort of relentless focus that she has to have when she solders. You heard her describe that. Where do you need to develop that kind of concentrated thought, intention, and focus into your own life? And what would change if you did?

Thank you once again for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you love this podcast – and thank you for those of you who have written in and let me know that you do. I love you right back – please share, please subscribe. Please go to iTunes and leave a review. I would

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love to hear from you and I'd love your help in spreading the word and sharing this movement.

And when you are ready to take this work deeper, the best way to do that is to go to my website www.leahcb.com and sign up for my newsletter so that you can be the first to know about new offerings for the Art School. We have some very exciting things to look forward to, even in 2020 yet. And then a brand-new session of the mastermind and the Art School coming up in 2021.

And spots in both of those are limited. So, to be the first to know and the first to receive any information on early bird offers, again, the best way to do that is to be on my website. You can also send any kind of questions to our team at support@leahcb.com. And we will take excellent care of you.

So, to close the episode today, I first wanted to say we will share all of the links to Fran's work, both her jewelry work, which is stunning. Her work is truly – there's nothing else like it. You do know the mark of her as an artist when you see it. and I've seen her custom work too and it absolutely does channel the essence of the wearer.

So, if you are looking for a special piece for yourself or a special someone for the holidays, I highly recommend that you check out studiofran.com. And also, her podcast. So, to close today though, I wanted to again offer you the invitation to channel some Fran wisdom in your own life. She talked about proximity to success is how I would sum it up, surrounding yourself with people with a success mindset.

That, in my own life, has paid off tremendously, exponentially. I used to think I needed to be a lone wolf. Now I know that truly, one of the, quote

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unquote secrets, not secrets is getting in the room with people who you want some of what they're having, right? They are further ahead than you. They are going or have been where you want to be, putting yourself in proximity, surrounding yourself with the kind of people who have mindsets, values, goals, and dreams achieved that you admire and that you align with your own is one of the best gifts you can give yourself.

So, I want to challenge you this week. What are you going to do in the remaining time we have in 2020 to stake your claim in the universe and give yourself a seat at the table, choose yourself, put yourself in the room with those people? And how are you going to set yourself up for success in 2021 by doing more of the same?

I truly hope you all have a deeply nourishing restorative weekend, that you feast on what is good and glorious in your life, that you take the time to reflect and harvest any wisdom and strength from adversity and from having come through that adversity and really celebrate the strength that it has taken for you to be here and do what you have done throughout this year.

Again, my deepest heartfelt gratitude to all of you out there listening and if you are celebrating Thanksgiving, much peace and love to you. And also Thanksgiving gratitude to our listeners worldwide. Have a beautiful week, everyone, and I look forward to talking with you next time.