

# Ep #114: Developing Your Voice and Telling Your Story



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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“We first make our habits then our habits make us”, John Dryden, English poet from the 1600s. “We shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us”, Winston Churchill. I’ve also heard it attributed to various architects or designers who said something of similar effect about how we as humans shape our physical environments and then they in turn shape us. I think it’s also true that you could say the same for our stories, first we make our stories and then our stories make us.

But then I think it begs the question that we go further because who is the we to begin with? And what has shaped the we? What has shaped the stories that shape you and I? That’s the topic of today’s episode, a fundamental building block of creativity. The fundamental building block of creating a life and that is our voice. I want to talk to you today about intentionally developing the voice that tells the story of your life and not a story you just tell in retrospect, but developing the voice that builds your life, that builds you from the inside out.

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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 hope this finds you all well. We are doing well here, so far everybody is staying healthy and we are grateful for that.

And this evening we are actually packing up for sort of an impromptu last minute ski trip. So my youngest two, their school had a boiler issue so they

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were set to go back tomorrow but that's been delayed a week and they don't have online learning. And my oldest is still on winter break and my husband and I are fortunate enough that we can work remotely and have some flexibility in our schedules.

So we are going to take off and go about four hours north of here, up north in Michigan to a place called Crystal Mountain, it is the ski resorts as they come in the Midwest, it is supposed to be a beautiful, lovely one. My husband and I are not huge skiers or athletic enough and maybe just we'll say courageous, confident enough to wing it. But we love to be outdoors and thought we'd give our kids an early start on slopes too. So maybe they'll have an opportunity to become more avid adventurous skiers when they are adults.

And also it's just a Covid friendly way of getting out and having a change of scenery and getting to explore another place. We have been loving our time at home for sure, and are grateful for that, especially given the beautiful snowfalls we have had. The last two days it has been spectacular. You wake-up in the morning and literally gasp because the trees are frosted, they look like this intricate lattice work or lace and it's a winter wonderland.

The kids have been making snowmen and going sledding. And we have been cozying up indoors with more time off this break and not such a quick turnaround like at thanksgiving. I actually do love to sink in and cook so I've been cooking a ton, doing all the kind of things that simmer on a stove all day, that's my favorite. And make the house smell and feel amazing, like soups and all day sauces, or the kind that take a couple of days even, and baking, and for our dinner this weekend.

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For our New Year's Day family dinner I made Chicken Marbella which is everybody's favorite. It was kind of the dish I was waiting to make for when we can have company when that's safe to do so again but in the meantime it's a family favorite. We've been taking lots of walks in the snow.

And then tonight again packing up including a last minute renovation I guess of my daughter's ski helmet because she decided it was just not very appealing. It's actually an old bike helmet. So I told her we would jazz it up. And we painted it and drew on it and poured, like painted Mod Podge all over it and put glitter all over it. So now she will have a super cool helmet for the slopes and it turned out pretty cute. So if you don't follow me on Instagram you might want to check that out just for the pictures of her super cute helmet.

And anyway it's a fun place to connect, so if you're not yet connected, if we're not yet connected on Instagram I would love to. I share a variety of things, Art School things, inspiration, my coaching work my own artwork and then also just a glimpse into our world here. It's kind of a mix of things that I love to see on other people's Instagrams, a little window into their world, not only their work but also the way they move and move in the world and are in the world. So I'd love to see you there, it's at Leah L.e.a.h.cb1.

So you might notice a theme in this episode and last week's episode and in episodes to come. And that is story because as I mentioned in the intro our stories are powerful drivers for what we create in life but also for those places where we unconsciously limit our own possibilities, where we unconsciously limit our potential. And they also determine our experience of our process. They have so much to do with the quality of life that we allow ourselves to experience along the way.

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And the thing is, many times the stories that are driving and creating our lives are not entirely known or understood by us. And even for those of us who are really committed to doing this work and making conscious our unconscious stories there is still room to grow. And that's definitely what I am finding for myself this last year and moving into the next year too.

And I think that's also a benefit of doing things like allowing yourself to dream and then reevaluating and setting goals. Is because it does illuminate those places where you thought you understood your own narrative, your own creative narrative, meaning the story that's creating your life and creating your experience of life. And as fascinating as it is to get to be a human, we get to discover that there are new depths to us, new places to explore, new places to grow and expand.

I am pretty sure my interest in story as it affects our psychology, our mindset and then therefore our ability to achieve our goals and also therefore affects our quality of life. I believe this really started to become more clearer as an interest of mine when I was training to be a competitive athlete. Because it was at that time that I was devouring every bit of sports psychology I could get my hands on, in particular anything to do with Olympic athletes and their coaches.

I wanted to understand how certain people could have the gifts, have the talent, have similar training. And yet other people when push came to shove, under pressure they found a new gear within them, they found a new level and they grew and they broke through barriers. Not only their own internal barriers but especially, but also those that people just didn't think were possible for a person to break through milestones, like Roger Bannister's four minute mile. Not an Olympic example but still one that we're all familiar with.

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And to just sum up what I found, not only was it the training that built the athlete, not only was it the regimen of eating or having access to the best coaches. It was also the story that that athlete told themselves in their mind. Not only that though because suddenly I wondered well, then why don't we all just adopt a compelling story? And that's the part where it's easier said than done and I'm sure you've been there too. Of course I could just tell myself something but there is a way where I'm not digesting it, I'm not believing it and I'm not processing it.

And then there can also be this other obstacle where there can be the thing we want. Let's stay with the Olympic gold medal dream example. We can want that and then on some level we don't want that because something in us is just shriveling or cringing at the idea of the overwork that we're going to have to put ourselves through, or the over-function. How hard we're going to be on ourselves, especially if it involves multiple attempts and failures after we've poured our heart and soul into it and gone to the edge.

I've been there so I get this, I know this intimately and it is something that I have worked through at every new level. And I even recently had a client email me who is a rock star, brilliant powerhouse of a client and she realized something in listening to a prior episode where I was talking about my coaching approach and training creatives being akin to training Olympic athletes. I mean that caliber of conditioning of mind, body and spirit, of cultivating that extraordinary way of being in mind, body and spirit that makes those extraordinary results inevitable.

And she was saying something in her wanted to pull back because she had been such an over-achiever and been very high performing but at a great cost to herself. And at times felt traumatized by that and felt there was healing to do. And so that might be you listening too. So what I want to offer to you, the switch that is available first is that allowing yourself that dream, whatever your Olympic gold medal dream is.

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And shifting the paradigm so that you can say, “Hey, what if this is actually the best thing I could ever do for my life? Not to achieve that goal, not only to achieve that goal but to enhance the quality of my life on every level including who I am on the inside, at the deepest levels of my being who I am in difficult situations when no one’s watching or when everyone’s watching and all eyes are on me and they don’t know the inner workings of me. What would it be like to feel strong and love myself in those situations?”

Socrates said, “Give me beauty in the inward soul; may the outward and the inward man be at one.” As I’ve mentioned before I think those big dreams we have are really helping us get clear on who we want to be and who we want to come, they give us a sort of North Star so that our, what has always been our deepest longings, our desires and our values are more clearly illuminated.

I’ve talked about this in prior episodes and I speak of it a lot in The Art School, this concept called the sacred twin intention where you have the external dream, the beauty and the outward. But it is only ever done in tandem with the development of the building of the soul inwardly. And so this brings me back to where we started. How do you though build that story that builds the soul? And that brings us to the answer, the voice. The voice is so critical. And no pun intended, so many of our inner voices are so critical so how do we begin to reshape that?

How to we begin to find, I do believe there’s so much of it, the potential within it is already within us, that voice. But then we have to give it shape and practice with words, with content, with tones. We have to, many of us have to spend some time retraining that voice, first listening for the energy of it and then giving it the appropriate words, giving it the appropriate airtime and giving it the appropriate tone.

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So for instance for this amazing client of mine she has everything it takes to win in her genre, in her chosen creative field, the equivalent of a gold medal, of many gold medals and as many silvers or bronzes as she will likely stack up along the way too. And the even greater opportunity for her and for those of you listening who also just know within yourself that you can go for that Olympic gold no matter what that symbolizes for you.

But what's really available to you is the opportunity to have this be the best thing that you could do for yourself, for your quality of life, for building that soul, for building that beauty, and resilience, and strength and the inward soul, from the inside out, building that. So that in moments of pressure when all eyes are on you and nobody can see what's going on in the inside or when you're all alone and no one sees what you're going through. Even in those times you can still find a source of strength and create from a sense of deep peace and resilience.

So over this winter break and ongoing really, I've been working on a series of ideas and concepts for what are the critical things, the master case to focus on. And developing that inner voice, that voice of the soul, that builds the story, that carries the day for you through thick and thin, that builds a life with which you are deeply in love with. So stay tuned for future episodes for those practices or for Art School offerings where we always dive into those more deeply and apply them to your personal life. And have you work on your own personal voice and your own personal story.

But for today's episode I wanted to start with this fundamental place, really this is everything. You heard me say in episode 100 that if I just distil down all of the workings of anything that I do or coach, and its focus. And here is where I would apply your focus, to the development of your voice.



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And here are four essential elements to developing that voice, that beautiful inward voice of the soul, that voice that then tells your stories, that walks you through experiences that shape your next stories. Those stories that then build your life, it comes back to your conscious and intentional engagement with and development of this voice.

So first you have to listen, that's awareness, listening to the voice that's loud and it's already there. And then being very still and quiet for listening to the voice of what wants to happen. And to me that speaks most loudly through our dreams, the dreams, the desires that just don't go away no matter how loud our fear or self-doubt is. So here are four essential areas to focus on when developing this intentional voice of the soul, this constructive voice of the soul.

Number one, content, number two, the tone, number three, persistent practice, persistent practice especially through the boring parts and the unbelievable parts, the parts when it seems like nothing you are doing is working. It's no longer exciting to you. You're not interested anymore. And through the parts where you just are not yet feeling, doing that feeling deep level of believing yet a word you are saying. So that fourth element is a little bit redundant but not really because getting through that boredom and getting through the parts where it still feels unbelievable are essential.

So let's go back just a little bit more in depth through each of those four elements. The first one, content, this is both self-explanatory and then also could be a rabbit hole that is a year's worth of coaching. Because diving into what your thoughts are and what you want them to be could be a very idiosyncratic process. And then also I want to caution you that it doesn't have to be complicated.

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So for instance one of the thoughts that really works for me is that I just do it. I remind myself when it comes to something and it seems very complicated and my brain wants to go under overwhelm, the content of the story I tell myself is I am somebody who yes, I could pay attention to all of those stories or I could just do it. I could just find a way to do it and cut through the smoke and cut through the BS and I just do it.

So the content again, no, it does not have to be complicated but I think some of the most powerful content to one of those powerful stories that we can intentionally tell ourselves as we're developing this voice that develops the stories, that builds our life. Having it be very simple just so that it moves you, which brings me to two. Using the tone so that it moves you, it's one thing if I tell myself, I'll just do it versus I do it, I just do it.

To me there is something in that tone in the energy of it that is fierce and then also very loving, that is I've got my back and I believe in myself. There is a determination in it. So tone can embody all of the energy that you need to have your story, to have those words, that language that you use, that content be something that actually moves you, meaning it causes some emotion, it stirs your soul, it shifts something in you. It works for you.

The same as if you were speaking to a loved one, you could flatly say, "I love you." Or you know the difference. Or when you're delivering, let's say you're working with a child, we all know it's so much in how we say something, it matters just as much and sometimes even more than what we are saying, so, being very intentional with the energy that you use and this voice that speaks to you.

Third, persistent practice because the voice that is currently driving your life, that's building the stories it's going all the time. And so people nine times out of ten are underestimating the amount of persistence and the

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amount of practice that it takes to retrain this inner voice. And so this is again where that Olympic training mentality comes in. Training on purpose, knowing that this is not only because you're going for the gold but this is something that you're doing for your life. And doing this for your life, this will affect everyone in your life.

So in other words, it's worth it, it's worth the persistent practice, not only for the dream, whatever that gold medal dream is for you, but especially for having the opportunity to feel the own beauty, to feel the own strength, your essence of that inward soul and to be able to express that from the inside out. Your life is worth it and that's what that precious dream of yours is calling you towards, that contribution you can make to your own life and then also once you do that for yourself, the contribution that you'll be able to make just inevitably because it flows from who you are.

Number four, persistent practice especially through the boring and unbelievable parts. For this for you it could be the tedious parts. It could be wherever it usually is where you notice your pattern of giving up, giving up right before the miracle. And maybe it's just a projection that I choose to focus on the boring and unbelievable parts. But rather than give up here on your persistent practice and give up on the development of your own kind, beautiful, strong, life changing, revolutionary, creative voice, keep going.

Don't give up right before the miracle. In fact I think it's those times that do feel boring or when it does feel unbelievable to us, or whatever the experience is for you that usually causes you to give up or take a U-turn. It's precisely then that you should double down.

So ask yourself, what are ways I can set myself up in advance to double down on the development of this voice, this intentional voice, this voice that I'm crafting because it builds the story that builds my life. It builds the

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stories that determine what the possibilities are for me, for my loved ones, for those whose lives I may have a chance to touch and I might not ever meet them.

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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. Don't just listen to the information and take it in passively. Do enjoy it, do engage that way. And then promise me that you will take this information, think about how it applies to your life and then go beyond thinking but actually implement it, integrate it into your life, move, change, do something new and you will shift the needle.

So here is what I want you to think about today. Think about whatever that golden medal dream is for you. And right away notice what your reaction is when I ask you that. Does something come to mind immediately? Or do automatically you hear another voice that says, "I don't have gold medal dreams. Or I have a dream but I don't think it counts as gold medal. I don't think it's big enough, shiny enough." That's what I'm talking about. What is that inner voice that is talking to you about what your life is about, about who you are and what you're about, listen in and pay attention to that.

And then if you want to come with me along this journey, if you would just contemplate this question. What if this, deciding that your gold medal, is your gold medal, is your gold medal no matter what it is, what if going for that is the best thing you could ever do for your life especially if you embrace this commitment to developing your intentional voice? How would you life change? Maybe it would be the voice of the best coach in the world. Maybe it would be the voice of a beloved grandmother mixed with the best athletic coach that you've ever heard of.

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Maybe it would be a mentor that you would love to have, let's say a bestselling author or a famous Broadway performer. Maybe it's the voice of a guardian angel, not a cute little cherub, but one like Saint Michael that is wielding a sword and cares deeply that your soul fulfills its purpose in this life. What would it be like to have that voice in your ear? What voice do you dream of having in your ear?

What coach, energy, spirit, teacher, guide would you just love to have in your corner? You knew if you had their voice at your fingertips you could dial your phone and pick it up and listen to whatever they had to say and how they had to say it. If you knew they could be this presence in your life who would that be?

Begin to use them as a proxy, and as a guide, and as inspiration for developing your own voice. And pay particular attention to what they have to say to you about things like content, tone, persistent practice and then persistent practice through the parts when you want to give up. But who is a dream voice that you would love to have in your corner that you knew with their support, with their wisdom, with their love, with their energy, there's no way you would fail? There's no way that you wouldn't be a better, happier, more fulfilled vibrant thriving human being, start there.

If you have access to that through your imagination you are golden my friend.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of the *The Art School Podcast*. If you've enjoyed these episodes, if you've loved this podcast, and I love hearing from those of you that do, the best thing you can do pay it forward is to share, share far and wide please. If you have not yet shared this podcast or left a review, please make this the week that you do so. I would be ever so grateful.

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And when you're ready to take this work deeper and apply it to your own life, come check out The Art School. So we have the March session beginning March 2<sup>nd</sup> and also a special 14 week edition of The Art School Mastermind. There are only a handful of spots remaining for the mastermind so if that's something that interests you, you can check that out on my website. You can set up a discovery call with the head of my team, the rock star, Nicky Burkell, she will take amazing care of you.

And if you are interested in the mastermind she will also direct you to fill out a mastermind application. Also if you would like to set up a discovery consult because you're interested in The Art School you can do so through the same method. Just email [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) with discovery consult in the subject line.

If you are listening to this in real time in January when it's released January 2021, there is still some time to take advantage of early enrolment bonuses. And if you're listening to this later than January 2021 also please email us [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) and you can be added to a wait list for upcoming offerings. There will also be some different things coming down the pike in 2021 and later also in 2022 that we have never done before. So we'd love to keep in touch with you.

To close the podcast I just want to invite you to contemplate the theme of today's episode. So just as John Dryden said, "First we build our habits and then our habits build us", think about that. First we build our voice and maybe it's not up to us how it's built at first. But now as adults with agency listening to that out there in the world, embracing your Creativity with a capital C you can determine your own voice now. You can determine the content and the tone of the voice that builds the narrative that builds your life. That is such profoundly exciting and good news.

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So I would invite you to sit with that, what is the voice that you not only want to help you build your life, but what's the voice that you want to keep you company for the rest of your life? Give that to yourself, give contemplation of that to yourself and give the development of that in word, friend, to yourself, you deserve it.

Have a beautiful week everyone. I love having you in this community. Thank you so much for being out there listening. The full circle irony of this moment of the work that I have done and continue to do and cultivating intentionally my own inner voice of building my soul in this way that so often feels very scary and vulnerable to me. It has been something immensely powerful that I have done for my life and I am profoundly grateful that you all are there receiving it.

And I would be so grateful to someday hear your voice, hear your story of what this journey has been like for you. Until then be well, take amazing care of yourself and each other, have a beautiful week and say a prayer for us that no one has broken bones as we go skiing. I will talk to you next time.