

Ep #121: (Part 2) Dialing Into New Channels with Jennifer Sly



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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Jennifer: And what was amazing about it is tuning into this other channel that has, like, soft playful music, that this practice of creation is actually nourishing, which I never knew could happen because every time I've created, it's required some sort of sacrifice. And so, to think of having a creative practice that gives back to me, that I feel better and more healed after I do the work is something I could have never imagined at the beginning of Art School because my creation process always – I felt like to gain something, it's like a net-sum. You have to sacrifice something and feel some sort of pain to deserve the reward and just to say, like, "Hey, this is flowing and it's nourishing," is profound for me.

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That was a clip from part two of my conversation with one of our massively creative and brilliant Art Schoolers Jennifer Sly. If you missed part one, which is episode 120 entitled Dialing Into New Channels, listen to that first to get Jennifer's full remarkable bio. And once you're caught up on that part of the conversation, meet us back here as this episode continues where we left off in this fascinating conversation. And it continues what is truly a mini-masterclass, not only on the transformational potential of creativity, but the very specific coaching practices, ideas, and structures that actually worked for Jennifer in helping to create a year so profound that she now says, as you'll hear in this episode, that she now sees it's possible to create something even bigger than what she originally imagined.

In the previous episode, Jennifer shared about this practice of dialing into new channels and how it's opened new doors of possibility and new worlds to her. And this week continues that theme of learning how to recognize where we are limiting our own creative life force, how to let go of those limitations, and tune into greater more expansive potentials for our life.

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There are so many takeaways in this episode; big ideas as well as specific, pragmatic tangibles that you can experiment with in your own life and implement right away. This is really an episode to lean in and work with me, coach with me, apply and implement these ideas and practices in your own life and declare that this is the year you choose you. This is the year you leave behind those limitations and create those lifechanging breakthroughs.

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.

Hello everyone, and welcome to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. It is sunny and warmer here in Michigan, which is amazing. And also, the weather cooperated enough, it stayed cold enough up north so that this week I could take my oldest, Elijah, for our mother-son one on one adventure. For a few days, we went skiing again in Northern Michigan. And it was such a special and extraordinary time.

For those of you that can create those kinds of experiences and structures in your life right now, do that. And for those of you who don't see the time, the space, the resources to make that happen, I also want to share that this week was so big for me. Because it was my birthday week and to take my children on these little mini one on one adventures is such a gift. And also, it is something that I deliberately, consciously declared and decided that I was going to do years ago.

And it took me some time to put everything into place. I won't go too much into that in this episode because I've got a lot to share with you today. But just know, the power of intention is real, not only for creating these creative

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dreams and goals in other areas of your life, but for creating a life that really reflects your values; your family values, the values that you cherish and hold most dear.

We had just a wonderful time together. And also, I'll share something that was so important to me, was to create something where I have a relationship within my family, with my husband, and with my business where I am not feeling apologetic or asking for permission, but communicating that this is my dream, this is my desire, this is what we are going to do.

And I can remember the time when I would have spent money on something like this and felt the heartache and felt the worry. And I am grateful to the me that took that pain and turned it into freedom.

And that was one of the reasons why this, even though it was just a few days away, one of the reasons why that trip was so important to me and the other things I do with my children is because I really am grateful to my past self for taking painful experiences, for taking feeling not free, for taking the pain of feeling limited and powerless and not empowered in many different ways, for taking experiences of feeling like a victim in my life or not as successful and taking feeling that, feeling all the feelings of that and then turning it into something meaningful, not staying there, staying with myself, working through the hard emotions, that relationship with myself, and then creating power from that experience; power in the meaning, the definition of to be able, to be able to do these things that are so important to me and to be able to do them in a way where I have peace of mind and I can be present and I can be grateful. And I have the freedom to do it and the privilege to do it.

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So, as you'll see from today's episode, it's not just a warm story that I wanted to share with all of you and an update from life here, but very relevant.

So, I have heard from many of you that as you listen to these episodes, you often relisten and then you take notes. And oh my goodness, thank you for telling me that, and even for sharing those notes. This lights me up on so many levels. And oftentimes, when I read your processing and your reflection on the episodes, I see it in new and meaningful ways. Not to mention the fact that it really gives me life and invigorates my spirit. So, I want to thank you for that.

And then also, for all of my beloved note-takers out there, I wanted to today give you a little head start because this is a very, again, meaty episode. So, if you're making an outline, here are what I feel are some big themes in this conversation. And for those of you who again generously email me with what was most meaningful and important for you, please keep that coming. I love those.

And we have such a wise, compassionate, creative, brilliant community that these aren't just notes or regurgitations. It, again, thrills me to be a part of a community like this and to be in dialogue and really in collaboration with all of you. So, thank you.

And as I said, there are some big themes throughout this conversation. And one of those is that the magic of creativity is real. And now, in terms of subthemes, here are three things that I think we can do to make sure creativity can manifest its magic and work its miracles in our lives in powerful ways.

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One, declare our powerful intentions. Two, commit to giving ourselves the necessary space and container, creating the capacity structures that our creativity and our dream needs. And three, cultivating a strong, extraordinarily loving, caring relationship with yourself as you go through this process of creating your dream, which is really the hero's journey, this process of transformation of consciousness.

You'll hear all of these themes throughout the second part of the conversation with Jennifer, and again in the first part. So, I have some very exciting projects of my own around these themes that have been really greatly informed by my own moonshot goal process, which as a reminder for those of you who are new to me. My moonshot goal is to be an example of what is possible by creating \$2 million a year as a coach, a mentor, a teacher, an artist, and a writer. This is part of my commitment to building a paradigm of thriving and flourishing artists and creatives. And for those of you who are unfamiliar with moonshot goals, I have an episode all about that. I believe it's seven.

So, declaring this moonshot goal has yielded so many gifts in my life, including some of you may be familiar with the term AFGO. So many of those. So many AF opportunities for growth. Yeah, so some very, very difficult opportunities for growth.

And it has asked me time and time again to deepen and strengthen my relationship with myself. And this is where the paradox of ease comes in. That even within yourself, you can be experiencing all the emotions and yet stay with yourself in a way that is compassionate and loving and where you are not suffering about your pain and suffering.

And these have been some of the hardest, obviously. And then maybe not surprisingly, some of the most rewarding pieces of my journey. And all of

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these experiences, I want to give it my absolute best. Which looks and feels very different day to day, week to week, year to year, particularly this last year, pandemic to pandemic, or seasonally too.

So, again, even though those times where my absolute best feels like it falls way short, that too gives me an opportunity to work on the relationship piece and to show up for myself compassionately and to take care of myself, and to along the way learn the nuances of who this person and this creature that I am really is and really is about and what they really need to be cared for.

I've talked before about how I'm fascinated with energy management, way more so than time management. It's been clear to me, including the clarity that this moonshot goal process has yielded, that energy management is a master key. It's not just about managing time. It's about learning about my energy, what feeds my energy, where I can give energy and feel that I create more, generate more, what takes energy, what actually works for me to refuel it and how to expand my capacity, tune into a wider channel, to riff off the conversation with Jennifer, and expand my capacity to create even more, but not necessarily by using more time or more resources.

So, again, I want to be awake and do my best even when it's not my best to learn from all of these experiences, to really reap what I sow, even if sometimes it's not what I intended, but to harvest them for wisdom so that I become wiser through the process and more compassionate and deepened, and also more sensitive rather than building a thick skin. Which is for years what I told I needed to do to know that I can become so strong that I don't need to buffer myself and I don't need to buffer the world from how much I love or how much I feel. To become more loving through the process. More creative and more effective in the areas that I want to create change and have an impact.

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And this past year has been so wild and so unfamiliar and unknown, as I'm sure all of you have recognized in your life. And for those of you listening, maybe in posterity, or even just a year from now, you know, I'm recording this in 2021, these past several months, this year has been a very potent teacher. And I am honestly still putting together all the pieces and still reflecting on the lessons of the last year.

Apparently, my psyche and inner rhythm is not attuned to how we're taught that we should wrap things up before the end of the prior year, before New Year's Day, and have everything set and ready to go January one. So, I'm honoring my own inner timeline, but not in a passive way, staying very attuned to it.

So, when it's time, I will for sure be sharing with you what these projects are that I'm so, so excited about, this jump in vitality, again riffing off today's life force, just thinking about these things I feel like I've found places where I was still limiting myself and went through the work of dropping those limitations and sluffing that off and shedding that.

And so, these projects that I'm so excited about that are around my own creative and life process, which includes the Art School and the podcast and my work and co-collaboration with all of you, I will for sure be sharing those.

And in the meantime, as for this episode, oh my gosh, there are so many takeaways in this episode. I just love these conversations with the Art Schoolers. The gems emerge organically. There are big ideas here as well as very specific, pragmatic tangibles that you can take right away and experiment with, play with, turn this way and that, find the nuances, make adjustments. But see what you can implement right away and let it be an iterative process.

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This is really going to be an episode to lean in and coach with me. Apply and implement these things. Declare that this is the year you leave behind those limitations and create those life-changing breakthroughs.

So, this episode's coach with me is very meaty. It really could be an episode in itself, but I thought it paired so well with this conversation with Jennifer, so I just went for it and I'm including it all here.

I am also getting prepared for the next sessions of the Art School and the mastermind that start next week. That will be March 2nd 2021. So, I think all of that buildup of excitement and Art School is here energy is carrying over to this podcast for sure. So, I hope that that meets you in a very good way.

So, now, for the second part of my conversation with Jennifer Sly, just a brief reintroduction. Jennifer is a technologist, educator, experienced designer, play advocate, and futurist. Over the past 20 years, she has experimented with emerging technologies to benefit individuals and communities. She is now interested in exploring the analogue counterpart to technology, ancient wisdom and our relationship to nature, in order to create a vibrant and resilient Earth as a gift to the occupants of the far future.

She recently founded the Institute for the Year 3000 to collaboratively envision and create this future. She also currently works for the Minnesota historical society. She's worked there since 2010 and brings 20 years of experience at the intersection of technology, learning, and community. She has an MPA from Columbia University and has worked on projects with the NEH, IMLS, NASA, The United Nations, and the MIT Media Lab.

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Jennifer is also a veteran of the Art School, a beloved member, and is going to be a part of our up-and-coming March 2021 class. I am so pleased to bring you the second half of this conversation with Jennifer Sly.

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Jennifer: And I'm actually trying to find the channel right now for my dreams at night. I live alone and one of the things I miss about life, being in quarantine is adventure and travel and the serendipity of running into people that I've met. So, my mind has taken over. And at night – I would not believe this if I did not write it down in my journal in the morning. But every night, I go to a different country and my mind creates an entire city, it creates a new form of travel, so sometimes it's a VW van, sometimes it's a spaceship, sometimes it's a train. And then I always end up at a beautiful hotel that I've imagined either on the beach, has a beautiful pool, and there's always, in this beautiful atrium, a hotel buffet. Because that's my favorite place to meet people at conferences.

It's so dear to my heart that I go to the buffet and I'm like, "Hi, where are you from? What do you do?" And I spend all night meeting people at the buffet. And I do this almost every night – it feels like almost every night. I was in Cyprus, which I've never been to before, at a hotel meeting people. I was at a bed and breakfast meeting people the night before. I can't even remember all the different countries.

And so, this happens in my subconscious at night and it scares me that it's like, I could not believe that that much creativity exists. So, I want to spend the year kind of dialing into these different channels on the radio to see, how do I access that? Because I don't know how to get to it yet right now.

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Leah: Well, it sounds like you do. Part of you clearly does because a part of you is traveling the world during the pandemic without a passport or plane. So, part of you does. I would say yeah, record those things. That sounds incredible. And it also reminds me of conversations or posts from you in the Art School where I was like, “What, this lady is so...” like, your imagination and creativity is off the hook.

And you said once in the beginning, “I haven’t had a creative job.” But then you were telling us about how you led, in your job, all of these huge creative projects. Like, oh wait, it’s that methinks she doth protest too much. Because it’s like you’ve got this – and I don’t think it’s going to be subterranean much longer, this very rich, detailed, complex imagination.

And even the way that I think one prompt that seemed to work well for you at a time – I can’t even remember exactly. But instead of thinking about how to write a marketing plan, I said, what if you approached it as like a novel writing, like if you were writing a story? And then what you came back with, it blew my mind.

Jennifer: Yeah, it was your idea to try to – I kept feeling like this marionette during our Art School time. And I have a full-time job so I can’t do it during the week, so I listen to the recording and I pretend that I have the energy of everybody with me. And so, I do that every Saturday morning and I just could not – like, I would start and be like, “You have to bust out a website for this new idea you’re having. You have a timeline. You have money to make. You have to, like...”

And all of that pressure, I just was like, trying to tune into that old channel and I was just feeling flat. And you say, what if you tried getting out of your body, either as a consultant or how would you do it if it were you but not you trying to do this?

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And so, I was like, what would be the most fun? And I was like, yeah, being picked up by a helicopter, by Google X. I think Google X is so cool. And they'd pick me up. So I'd just start in bed and I hear a helicopter and my dog and I jump in this helicopter and they take me to my favorite place in Northern Minnesota on the Rum River and we have a secret farm facility that's gorgeous and they gave me a barn and they have all these other places where they have all the experts and they have a billion people on speed dial. And I just write now every morning this fantasy novel. And it's actually giving me ideas for my business.

Leah: Yes, like the ideas that were flowing from that was you had these SpaceX, Google X minds on speed dial and you were just downloading them. And I think that's like, for anybody listening too who has had that experience, I know what that feels like, to feel like you want to create but then your body is not cooperating. Like, you described it as the marionet doll dropping. You just hit that wall.

So, retrain yourself to be like, "Okay, this is actually something in me working for me." Because that's telling me I'm trying to go into the wrong direction. I'm trying to tune into the wrong channel. But now you know other channels exist. And that's for you, for sure, I know, okay, this woman is a font of creative genius. It's just playing around with, what's your in? What lets that come out? What makes it come alive?

And I think a lot of us, it's getting back to more of a playful, imaginative kind of energy and allowing that to be so prolific and to flow powerfully. Because trying to sometimes flow that kind of creativity through a, I guess the word is responsible adult channel, it's too narrow and it's too dry and it's just not a compatible signal to flow. That's it. It's not the right kind of frequency to flow a really innovative, wild, new, creative kind of energy. And I love that

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you are so open to playing with those fun kinds of prompts. And it's so fun to see in the backside what you come up with.

Jennifer: Yeah, and what was amazing about it is tuning into this other channel that has, like, soft playful music, that this practice of creation is actually nourishing, which I never knew could happen because every time I've created, it's required some sort of sacrifice. And so, to think of having a creative practice that gives back to me, that I feel better and more healed after I do the work is something I could have never imagined at the beginning of Art School because my creation process always – I felt like to gain something, it's like a net-sum. You have to sacrifice something and feel some sort of pain to deserve the reward and just to say, like, "Hey, this is flowing and it's nourishing," is profound for me.

Leah: So, was that on your radar as, like, a desire you had going into Art School? Or was that something that a desire for that or that as a possibility unfolded as we went? Or what were your initial desires for Art School?

Jennifer: Great question. I think my idea for starting Art School was, one, to have the type of experience that you said you had, where you set a list and then you cried because of all the things you accomplished. So, I started Art School as – and now I can see looking back that the good old radio channel there, that I was going to accomplish things. Like, I was going to create. And my measure of success was the amount I got done. And I thought maybe the structure would provide better deadlines that would help force me get things done for my business. And that I could use the structure of the hour and a half each week worktime to just help me accomplish things.

So, it was just tuned right into that old channel where I was like, "Yep, she's going to give me some of that structure..." and in my mind, like, that militant

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voice to be like, “Jen, you’ve got to bust this out. You’ve got a business. You’ve got a timeline. You’ve got money goals. It is not time to waste.”

And for me now this year, I’ve just enjoyed – I didn’t expect, one, to find a whole new way of working that has changed my entire daily life. So, even my day job, my fulltime job, I’ve completely changed how I approached my work that it doesn’t need to involve sacrifice to prove that I’m worthy of creating whatever I want and that it’s just natural to tune into my strengths.

And that’s really helped me so much, especially since I’m never wanting to get sick like that again in the hospital. And then I just, for this year, my goal is to tune and find new radio channels. Like, the idea of playing around, finding whole new ways of working and tapping into those frequencies and finding that energy flow where everything’s aligned, that’s my goal now. And I took off all the deadlines and all the things that actually I think were limiting me that I think, by using this approach, I’ll be able to create something even bigger than I could even imagine right now.

Leah: That is really deeply gratifying to hear and also exciting because I know some of the projects you’ve been working on and I think too, like, with your energy liberated like that and with that deep reassurance to your body that you know how to care for yourself, you are going to care for yourself. Because I know, in the beginning, that was like a real fear. You had these big dreams and you would start to work towards them. But the it’d be like, “And I am so scared that I’m going to get sick.”

And it was always like big dream equaled high probability that I will be ill, seriously ill. And so, to begin to disrupt that link in the brain that had that link together, I think, is huge to start to heal that relationship so that the dream is not something that destroys you, basically, that threatens you, but instead to really know. And not just in an intellectual sense, but to have the

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knowing that you do, that's in your body. You know that this work and the dream nourishes you. That's internally generative. Like, that's like you have access to a font of energy within you that is better than sustainable.

It grows. And the more you feed the dream, the more that energy grows. And it is this beautiful symbiotic relationship. And I would love if you would share some about one of your creative projects in particular, the Institute for the Year 3000. This is amazing.

Jennifer: Yeah, and it's so fun to talk about it in a real space. I would say a year ago, a year and a half ago, it was just this tiny idea. And I described going to Susan Hyatt's events and I remember, I was like, "I'm going to stand up and say something." And I was like, "All you have to get out are the words Institute for the Year 3000."

I know it's crazy. I know people are going to be like, "What the hell? It's so weird." But I was like, "All you have to do is stand up and get those words out." And I think I stood up in front of 50 people and I was like, "I would like to work on the... Institute for the Year 3000, thank you." And then sat down.

And so, I was like, "Oh my god, I did it." And I had to go to the bathroom and splash water on my face. To even say this dream, this tender dream and this idea out loud. And surprisingly, people came up to me afterwards and were like, "That actually really moved me." I think I said – I don't remember because I blacked it out. I think I said maybe two sentences after that.

And so, I really, for the Art School, I was like, "Okay, I really want to find a space that can hold a space for me when I can't hold it for myself." Because I felt like this was so crazy. And I think the first person to speak was Betsy Pearson and I think she said something like – correct me if this

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is wrong. But she said something like, “I translated the Dao De Ching...” did she say that?

And I was like, “What?” And then she added a little playful thing at the end and it’s like, “And I think he was actually a woman.” And I was like, “What? That is so huge.” I was like, this is the right group because I can say the Institute for the Year 3000 and they won’t get stuck on the weirdness of it.

Leah: It’s phenomenal.

Jennifer: I was like, okay, so I started playing with this idea about a year ago. I bought this house and I love having land that I just find so connected. And I was like, I really want to leave a time capsule. Because I’ve been finding crazy things in my back yard and I’m like, “Whoa, who owned this and why did they leave this here?” You know, like a small button, an oldy-timey button and I was like, “I’m going to create a time capsule for people in the future. I’m going to bury it in my yard.”

And I don’t want it to be 100 years from now. I want it to be 1000 years. So, I started researching my city to see the depth of the current skyscrapers and my distance from town to see how deep would I have to drill to put a time capsule in so that it would be unearthed in 1000 years, not 50 or 100.

And I was like, “What do I want to put in this time capsule? What do I want to share with people in the future?” And I started thinking about what things they would have for me right now. So, I actually did write a proposal once and it’s in the Minnesota Historical Society, in the vaults. And I was like, “Okay, they might have that.”

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But I work for the Minnesota Historical Society and I know we've moved buildings already in the last 20 years. So, I was like, 1000 years from now... Okay, what else?

And then I heard something somewhere that said plastic bottles, your shampoo bottles last 1000 years. So, I was like, great, they're going to have this weird proposal from me. That's not the one thing I would share with people from that far out. And I also wouldn't want them to share my plastic bottles. So, I've actually gone plastic-free in my life because that just really scared me.

But now, I just really want to tap into, what do we want to share with people in the year 3000? And I really started thinking about a beautiful Earth and the gorgeous trees and the river that I live near. How do we identify the things that we think are really important?

And Jane McGonigal says to look as far forward as you want, like 1000 years, that means you need to look back 1000 years, to the year 1000, to see what type of, for me, what type of wisdom have we learned in the last 1000 years that can help us be resilient in the face of all the technology projects that I'm introducing. And I really want to explore the counterpoints to technology. You know, what is the analogue part of living that make us resilient, that we can bring with us as gifts to the year 3000?

Jennifer: That's incredible. And to go from – and also, I'm stunned at what a great storyteller you are. To go from the weaving of finding a button in your back yard and wondering who left it there, through the shampoo bottle, to really coming to this realization of what is this long-lasting legacy? Like, what is the meaningful legacy? And that it requires also looking back. And what that does too, placing us in relationship.

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We, all of a sudden, have a relationship with those 1000 years back and 1000 years forward. And I think too, what you're doing is not just introducing that as an idea, but it's like, no, really, what would a relationship be? Not thinking about these people are so far off they might as well be nonexistent, but really what is it to have a relationship to humans who live that many generations beyond us?

Jennifer: I guess, the way you describe that, it actually makes me so emotional because that is the essence of what I'd like to get at. And your prompt about using Google X is they actually told me that I had three collaborators that I had to work with on this project. And it was actually a woman that I describe in my writing from the year 1000, and I have a woman from the year 3000, and then I also have Mother Earth. And we have conversations about really having a relationship and trying to discover, particularly from a feminine side, because I feel like so much comes from the masculine, is what is our legacy?

Leah: You know, also what you're doing is at the essence, I think, of the prompts I'm offering often in the Art School. And that is what is one of my core intentions? And it is that I believe we come with the seed of genius in us and it doesn't have to be genius in that what we've been taught is genius, maybe in more of the masculine sense of, like, you are the smartest person in the room or you have this IQ.

It's like, the seed of an incredible idea, the seed of something that its time has come, and that's within us, but also up to us to nurture it. And so, things that are maybe so simple as a prompt really to me are like, what will allow you to know what you know? We have these gifts and truths and they definitely sometimes need cultivation and nurture, and I just think there's so much within us that comes, like an acorn. It's got the blueprint. It's got the

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DNA. It knows what to do. But what's going to help us know what we know and allow it to do what it's meant to do?

And it has just been so rewarding to see you dive into this work. And the other thing that I love about the story you're sharing in particular, looking backwards and looking forwards, it's like that's another prompt I offer too when we feel stuck or lost. Instead of thinking of, we've got our little project right ahead of us. And even if it's our big work right now, I find it really liberating to think about what if I didn't think of my lifetime as just this lifetime or just this project?

What if I thought about it of, like, why here? Why now? Why 2020? Why not 1000? Why not 3000? And to think about our life within a bigger arc, and to do exactly what you're doing, of thinking of a timeline that's 500 years long. It's 1000 years long.

And the effect it has changes, I think, on what you need most because sometimes, for me for instance, it just puts in the right perspective that whatever I'm working on is not so important, but what is important is how I'm engaging with it. And what are the greater questions that I want to be asking myself? And even as one small person, how something about plugging into that greater arc just writes something within me and helps the creativity flow. I don't know if you've found that at all to be your experience, or what draws you to thinking at this scale in terms of time.

Jennifer: Well, I think that's also been, again, one of the greatest gifts out of so many gifts. But I think the old me would have been like, "Okay, at the start of this we're going to write a novel and at the end you're going to have 1000 pages." One, I wouldn't have believed you if you'd told me that's what I would be doing. I even remember the day of the prompt of, "Oh, okay, I'm

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going to write a novel, or I'm going to just write," because I do not identify as a writer at all.

But every time I sit down for like an hour and a half, just the right things come to me. And I enjoy the process so much that even if I never share it, it is helping me tap into what feels like the truth within myself. and I think that's been a huge gift because when we first started, the way I start projects as an old-timey project manager is to think of milestones and structure.

But every time I try to put my ideas into a website template, or I pull out all my project management tools and you're like, "I think you need to let go of the structure," to not even think about what I'm creating and to be able to tap into those truths. And I think that's what I find so nourishing about this new radio channel that I'm working on, that it just comes so naturally and the right ideas come to me at the moment. it just flows out. Like there's no effort for me to flow out what's happening and it really does feel like it's connecting with the truth within me. And even a bigger, something even outside of myself, like I have a friend and colleague Bridget, and she has just discovered that she feels like she can channel different spirits and ideas.

And she does coaching for businesses, and so, as a friend she said she'd offer it to me for free. And just this idea of some of the things she said to me were so profound. She said she actually had Mother Earth who wanted to say a few messages to me and that it's really the time to really channel all the things that she's been needing to say, is what she told me. And I was like, how did you know that that's what I'm writing on the weekends?

Leah: She doesn't know about your Mother Earth character?

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Jennifer: No. She's just like – I mean, I kind of maybe talk to her about it vaguely. But I didn't tell her that I embodied this person. And it's just been really fun to think of this idea of being a channel and trying to figure out the channel on a radio, the channel within myself, trying to figure out, what am I connecting to and trying to express, and what am I creating? I just want it all to align.

Leah: And too, you know, when you were talking about the project management skills too, because I'm recalling these conversations too and my impression being that that was starting way too small. That you had ideas that were – and that that was working from the outside in, which seems to me backwards. And also trying to take these too tinier boxes and structures and trying to figure out, how can I fit what's in me into these tiny boxes and structures?

And it wasn't feeling right because the structure was way too small. And even so, like, a channel is a structure. But the way you're conceiving of that structure now is so much more expansive. And it's a question that comes up a lot with a lot of my clients. Like, "Okay, flowing this and then..." it's like allowing for that great structure first of the channel, being the open channel for what wants to happen through you.

And then those questions, like the project management questions can be handled down the road. But we don't want to start there because then it's starting with too small of a container. Like, if you start with a template for something as big as the idea you have, it's not going to fit because nobody's done it, so there can't be a template. And that's why it feels off.

Jennifer: That was huge for me when you suggested that because, you know, I always start from the outside in and this has been revolutionary for

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me to start from the inside and not care what's happening on the outside has been so amazing.

Leah: Well, I think it's too this paradigm shift that is like, how do we build a paradigm of thriving creatives? And I think thriving, it comes from the thriving first, like what makes us thrive? And it is opening that channel, allowing the creativity and allowing the full force of it and not trying to – not stifling that life force by trying to cramp ourselves into old models that are too small, but trusting – and I know that has been a big theme for you and for others, trusting that creativity that's coming through you.

And then knowing, that creativity, it can make a website later, for sure. We can flow that through a website. We can flow that through a marketing plan. That will be like small potatoes before first allowing yourself the fullness and the greatness of that Creativity with a capital C.

Jennifer: Yeah, that's what's been so exciting about the possibilities too, is to think like, I might be creating something I've never seen before. And it was just so amazing for you to suggest that because I was like, I'm trying to find this template and this template and you're like, "You might be creating a whole new template." Like, really? That would be fun.

Leah: Yeah, and I think that's a key for you to – there's a particular kind of fun and playful that gets lit up for you, I think, when you're on a hot track.

Jennifer: Totally. And that's like playing with energy, trying to get out of my head is really hard for me. And so, this year, I just want to really feel energy. I've actually been researching energy and how we measure energy on the planet, because I've been thinking about how, for the Institute for the Year 3000, how do we, if there was a vitality life force meter, I'm working on

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inventing that because I would love for us to make sure that that's on high as we go to the year 3000, is what is the life force on Earth right now?

And so, just even thinking about energy within myself, like, when do I feel most alive and what things make me not feel alive. And that's where working in the Art School has helped me do that, like trying to be in my body. And it is. Once I get connected and I get tuned into the right channel, it is an astonishing amount of energy. And I've been feeling really fatigued during quarantine. But it's like, I will tap into that channel. I kind of lose it. And so, I'm like, man, where was that channel? So, I'm listening through the different, trying to tune in. But you're right, it gives me so much energy.

Leah: It's so cool too to think about the instrument for measuring vitality that you're talking about, but then to hear you kind of answer your own question. So, you're tuning into your body as the instrument, and you're noticing when you're out of it and you come back in, which is the fine-tuning of the instrument which measures the vitality.

Jennifer: That's so interesting.

Leah: Yeah, it's fascinating. It would be interesting – what else just came to mind too, I was thinking about the trees that have been around for thousands of years. And I don't know, that's just kind of a wild tangent. But it came to mind when I was thinking about, they certainly have continued to channel vitality and examples of resilience.

Jennifer: Yeah, that's one of my first – I'm hoping one of my first projects will be creating activities for people to do that, to go out and figure out, is the planet, is their neighborhood, what's the life force measurement in your area? I have some ideas on how to get people out there to do that.

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Leah: That's so fascinating. And one thing, I wanted to make sure – well, two questions really. So, I would love it if you would offer, like, any words of advice that you are inspired to channel for our listeners. And I want to also make a request please if I could, that you channel some advice on allowing yourself your possibilities and writing them down.

Because I know that's one of the reasons we met initially, was you went to Susan's event and you staked your claim and spoke aloud and allowed to be witnessed, you know, the Institute for the Year 3000. And then you saw my video and I was talking about having written that letter where I really declared – I think that the magic of that letter for me was like, I declared unequivocally, this is what I would have done in a year.

And then I know, just from conversations with you, that led you to your work where just allowing yourself to peel back layers and write down something, various dreams for yourself. So, again, two questions. If you could offer any words of advice, wisdom, insights for listeners, and then also how important it's been for you to allow and declare and write down your possibilities and your dreams.

Jennifer: Those are good questions that I still – I feel like I'm still a beginner mind in this whole process. But I think for me, my advice would be to create space. I think what I've learned in the Art School is, you know, just knowing, dialing into that first meeting and having people who could hold these ideas when I think it's just too crazy.

Like, I thought my idea was too crazy and you're like, "I think you're thinking too small." And I was like, "Whoa..." a little embarrassed to do my small little idea and you're like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah you need to think way bigger."

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So, this idea of having a space, and I think even creating this hour and a half each week to be able to create the space to hear your ideas and to try to tune into these other channels and experiment. So, for me, in whatever way that people can find a space that will hold their dreams for you and allow you to even thin bigger, that's been really amazing for me, both a community that has space, however you can create space for ideas.

And I think for me, what I've been learning, I've been really trying to think about, how did I get stuck? Why did I suddenly feel like every day was the same and I was unable to even envision something different? And I think the space has helped, just even to say, like, okay let's just try to think of anything that you want to have as future me, and practice that muscle.

But I think just having trust in myself, I think the biggest thing that I've gained is just creating a relationship with myself, trust that I can think of these big things and that I can take care of myself and handle the bigness. I actually have a fear of getting sick, but I have more of a fear of actually tapping into that energy at night, where I'm creating these whole worlds. I don't know how I could even handle that during the day. So, building a relationship with yourself. Those would be my two big pieces, if that even made sense. I have big ideas I'm trying to put into words.

Leah: Absolutely, that was beautiful. That was perfect. Thank you. Thank you so much for that. And also, if people like me are so intrigued and fascinated by the Institute for the Year 3000, where can we find out more, follow you, stay in touch?

Jennifer: Yes, you can go to theinstitutefortheyear3000.com and we have an Instagram, and that's just getting ramped up. So, you can be the early bird as we do our early experiments in what we want to preserve for the

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future. So, those are going to be hot off the press by the time you release this.

And also, I would really like to offer the community my drawings. Because my canaries have meant so much to me and I've gotten to know them as personalities, so I'll be setting up a site that you can download them, and I'd love to give the Art School a discount, you know. I think I'll just do them at cost. I'd love to give them away for free, but I think there's some cost involved. So, I would love to be able to offer that to the community because they've meant so much for me. And really slowing down and listening to those voices that are already there, it's so easy to just get caught up and not hear those teeny little songs that are talking to you right now.

Leah: And talk about also guardians of vitality, those canaries in the coalmine, like such beautiful fragile creatures, and yet here they are, the heroes, going out ahead of us and singing this way or not this way. That's such a beautiful reminder of the guidance that's always available to us. And I think of trusting that, what we call the third way, finding your third way. Not the radio channel that crushes you or makes you ill. Not the one where you have to give up your dreams in order to preserve your health or your livelihood, but this beautiful middle way. And it does sing to us. And I think your canaries are a beautiful metaphor and symbol for that.

Jennifer: Thank you for always making these connections and thank you so much for the Art School and taking the time to talk to me today. It's such a gift to work with you.

Leah: I feel the same about you. Thank you, Jennifer.

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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, as I said, this week's coach with me is so meaty, so hang with me while I set the stage.

In this conversation with Jennifer, you can hear how she came to realize that a lot of her struggle and even physical illness came from trying to fit herself and visionary creativity and huge creative life force into preexisting templates, ways of creating, ideas, avenues that were too small and ill-fitting. And that they required loyalty to old paradigms, like those kinds of paradigms in which we make these sort of soul-binding or soul-crushing contracts that sure, we can create what we imagine, but it's going to come again at this soul-binding life-crushing cost.

And Jennifer is not alone. I know this paradigm myself; I have known it. I still fall back into it now and then because this art of living, it's alive and it's an art and it is a practice.

I know myself that oftentimes, if I'm feeling stuck or even feeling crushed, to not mince words, it works in extreme scenarios too. So, if I have a sense that this is what's going on, I'm stuck, I'm feeling defeated, just not what I know is ideal for me or desired, it clues me in that there's something going on somewhere within me where I am thinking too small. I am being too small.

And I see this play out over and over again with clients too, that the self-concept is too narrow, it's too small, or it's just ill-fitting in other ways, trying to squeeze yourself into some performative way of being or someone else's model for who you should be or how something should be created.

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And that really impacts your day in and day out relationship with yourself and how you're able to handle creativity and the challenges that come up with creativity, especially the ones that come up in your own mind and body and spirit. Which we could argue are really the lion's share of them.

The way you see yourself and your potential and your relationship with yourself is going to impact what you're willing to commit to, what goals, dreams, vision for your life you're willing to commit to. And then what actual just tangible time, space, money, support, attention, devotion, seriousness, grace, latitude, joy, gratitude, and a wealth of other resources and support you're willing to give yourself that are necessary in order to bring that to life, to really bring to life your life and bring your greatest life to life, the next greatest version of you.

So, I wanted a coach with me for you that would give you some support around expanding your capacity. So, today we're going to talk about the themes in this episode as well as the Olympics, and Google X. All of that right here today in this coach with me. So, I told you it was a big, meaty episode.

So, let me say again, the biggest theme throughout this conversation is that the magic of creativity is real and then the subthemes, there are three elements, three items we can do to ensure creativity manifests its magic and work its miracles in our lives in powerful ways.

One, declare these powerful intentions. Two, commit to giving ourselves the necessary space and container. Create the capacity structures that our creativity needs. And three, cultivate a strong, extraordinarily loving relationship, friendship, lifelong friendship, companionship with yourself.

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And actual sidenote and pause, because as I'm recording this – I don't know if you've heard, but there are screaming children and laughter – I mean, they're having fun. They're laughing and my husband is getting into it too. I'm recording this on a Saturday.

Obviously, each of those themes deserves not only its own episode, but we could coach for at least 12 weeks and then another and then another, which is what we do in the Art School. And it's not because you can't get the concept down in that amount of time, or even conceptually much, much faster.

But it's because there is a process. It's the process of taking knowledge from just being information to taking it and implementing it and making it transformational. And that that process is what makes containers for creativity and magic and transformation, like the Art School so necessary and so powerful, where we think deeply but we also don't just stay in philosophy and theory. We implement. We experiment. We tweak. We iterate. We work. We apply. And we practice, practice, come back again, and practice.

We hold a space for ourselves and one another and then practice some more until you know this way of being by heart and until that's what you're living. It's that way of being that makes your dream inevitable and you live yourself into the dream.

The fact that this is practice and it requires a certain level of attention and commitment is why I've likened the Art School to an Olympic training facility for creatives. Again, it requires a certain level of commitment, consistency, and receiving coaching, participating in a powerful, high-caliber feedback loop and community. And this is just an aspect, a brief summary of the container and the process that really helps people break free from

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limitations, build the internal and internal skills to experience, navigate, and overcome and or transmute obstacles, and ultimately to be able to create not only a specific goal or dream or project in front of them, but to take this set of meta skills, meta way of being, meta practices and apply it over and over again to create the life of their dreams and then create what is their dream for their life.

So, another analogy for the Art School that I love to think about that Jennifer mentions in this conversation is Google X. So, a brief description of Google X from Wikipedia, it's an American semi-secret research and development facility and organization founded by Google in January of 2010.

So, that sounds maybe kind of spooky. But just stay with me and listen to their mission. X's mission is to invent and launch quote unquote moonshot technologies that aim to make the world a radically better place. A moonshot is defined by X as the intersection of a big problem, a radical solution, and breakthrough technology.

Also on Google X's website, they write, "At X, we've learned that breakthrough innovation happens when passionate teams of people have the audacity to challenge each other's perspectives and aim for the seemingly impossible."

I said before, the magic of creativity is absolutely real. And part of what I mean by that is that I believe in the human genius, and that we've barely scratched the surface of our potential; mind, body, spirit, whole beingness as humans.

And these things that I just love thinking about, not whether we learn to tap into our genius and evolve, but how we will do it and what is the greatest,

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highest, most loving use of that potential, of our lives, our time here, and of our life force, our vitality?

So, the question I most love is, how will we direct our energy, our attention, to experience more of what is actually possible for humans, from humans? And as I mentioned earlier, in this episode, we talk about three things that we can do to ensure that creativity can manifest its magic and can work its miracles in our lives in these powerful ways.

And while there are obviously more than three, I do think these three are master keys, at least at the time of this recording and in this particular time and space. One, we declare our powerful intentions. That was really a theme that I talked about in episode 120, the one previous to this. Two, we commit to giving ourselves the sort of space and container, the capacity structures that our creativity needs. And three, we cultivate that strong, loving relationship with ourselves.

So, what does this have to do with Google X? Well, if you think back to last week's coach with me, where I give you a series of prompts to get you thinking about the channels that you tap into, one of my responses to the channels I choose to tap into is this; why can't more people have to the kind of container that is Google X?

Those are the kind of questions, the greater questions that I am tapping into when I think about what am I fascinated with, what am I passionate about, what is my work really about? Where do I really want to direct my life force?

Because I would love access to a container like that. So, I created my own prototype for it. It is still a work-in-progress, as most scientific endeavors are. And then, I've expanded my channel, dialed into an even larger

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channel so that I share that process, that container via the Art School and the other work that I do.

So, again, while at Google X, they write about how breakthrough innovation happens when passionate teams of people have the audacity to challenge each other's perspectives and aim for the seemingly impossible. It's at the Art School where breakthrough, creativity, and life transformations happen, when these passionate creatives that are members of our community have the audacity to challenge their own limiting perspectives, support, and hold space for the greatest visions and expressions of creativity and life force of one another, and that together, they aim for the seemingly impossible, they aim for their dreams. They aim for their moonshots.

Because even if we miss, when we're living in this way, there is no way that that's a miss. It's an incredible journey. And as the saying goes, you shoot for the moon, and even if you miss, you land among the stars. And having been actively a part of this process and having created this community and experiencing it, I have a new appreciation for the last part of that old saying, land among the stars, because I really think it's those souls that you experience along the way. You don't just land among them. You get to be among them all along the way.

And something I want to make really clear here is that these principles, declaration of intention, creating necessary containers and structure, and relationship, that it's through those that I have the audacity to declare that the Art School, though on a smaller scale physically but not in spirit, has something in common with Google X.

And whether or not you are interested in the Art School or coaching or whether or not this particular container appeals to you, if you are someone who is aiming to create your dream and in a way that is soul-building and

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life affirming, if you're aiming for the seemingly impossible, I'd invite you to consider, here's the coach with me, what part declaration of intention, containers and structure, and relationships, especially with yourself, have to the project of your big goals, your big dreams, and your moonshot goals.

And if you're not sure where to start, start with the relationship to yourself, beginning with your self-concept. So, taking this even more specific, if you knew two things about yourself, one that you're someone whose potential for genius merited them a spot at a place like Google X, and two, you knew that you were willing to experience anything along the way; fear, exhilaration, joy, doubt, gratitude, failure, success, limitlessness, rejection, magnificence, if you were willing to experience any of these things along the way to creating your big dream or moonshot because you knew you would maintain along the way this ability to have your own back, this ability to have a very strong loving relationship with yourself, no matter the mental or emotional drama that you were experiencing, because it's not just about managing your mind or emotions until you get to a place where you don't have as much drama, which is completely available to all of us.

It's also being willing to be with yourself so that you don't use coaching and you don't use evolution as this way of trying to be defensive and create unnecessary barriers between yourself and the world.

So, knowing those two things, that you are a genius and that you're able to experience a wide range of things and be with yourself in a stable, deep, sacred way, what would be different about what you were willing to declare for yourself?

And if you knew you had so much, so much potential inside of you and that it really just needed the proper container and structure and some skillsets about how to be with yourself through difficulty, how would you actually go

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about – think about this very specifically. Answer this very specifically. How would you set up your life accordingly? What would need to change so that the greatest version of you and expression of your creativity and life force could come to fruition?

So, I just gave you a lot. So, let me quickly summarize again. I am inviting you to think about what these three things have to do with your relationship to your moonshot goal, your big dream, declaration of intention, the requisite container and structure, and relationships, particularly your relationship with yourself and a way to begin exploring that relationship with yourself is thinking about who do you think you are, and how are you with yourself through the creative process? Through the highs and lows?

These three things can absolutely not only revolutionize your creative process, but create your own profound transformation and really open the door to new possibilities and new worlds. And for those of you who have listened thus far, I'm going to give you one last bonus coach with me tip. State a powerful intention. Move yourself with the intention. Know that you're going to have your back. And then trust that once you've set that in motion and once you've committed to that intention and to being with yourself throughout the process no matter what, let yourself then not be overwhelmed by the greatness of it, but let yourself fall in love with the process and take one step after one step.

I know it seems contradictory that step by step and tremendous belief and declaration and commitment could take you to the moon. But there is something so poetic and paradoxical that it must be true, step by step. And you are going to make it to the moon and find yourself among those beautiful stars.

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Thank you for listening to another episode of the Art School podcast. If you've enjoyed this podcast, if these episodes have been meaningful, useful for you, the best thing you can do to pay it forward is to share, is to subscribe. And I absolutely love it too when you take the time to go to iTunes and leave a review.

And when you are ready to take this work deeper, when you're ready to really work with me and coach with me in a much more intensive and immediate, in very personal individual ways, then we would love to have you join us in the Art School.

You can learn more by going to my website, www.leahcb.com and you can also book an exploratory call with my team. You can email support@leahcb.com with exploratory call in the subject line and you'll have the opportunity to speak with a member of my team. It's a service that we want to offer as long as resources allow.

Because I know it's important to me, it's important to our team that if you are in a place where you have a big goal, a big dream, even a moonshot and you've declared that intention, or you just need some support around that and you really want the ideal creative ecosystem, the sort of sacred container where magic and miracles happen and you want to have, for your life and for your dream, the best support and coaching and community that you can invest in, that money can buy, we want to make sure it's a right fit for you.

And we're happy to have these – they're not sales calls – just no-pressure calls where you can ask questions, learn more, and just touch base with an actual warm and really extraordinary human being. So, again, if you're interested in one of those, you can go ahead and email support@leahcb.com with exploratory call in the subject line.

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

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So, to close, I want to leave you with this quote from Astro Teller, who is chief moonshot officer at Google X, “We relegate the big thinking to someone else or some other organization, playing a weird kind of not-it game...” oh my gosh, I love that and I think Astro Teller has a point. And not only do I love it because it reminds me of how my kids respond when we ask them to do chores or who gets to go and lock the chickens up at night when we’ve forgotten and it’s dark and cold, but because I see this in my own life. And I see this in my work.

And so, here is what I want to say to you. What if instead of playing the game of not it, you decided to play a new game? You decided to put yourself in the game? What if rather than not it, you declared that this is the year you are it, this is the year you choose you? Tag, you’re it, my friends. You are it.

Have a beautiful week, everyone, and I look forward to talking with you next time.