

# Ep #127: Embracing the Mystery of the Creative Dance



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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

## Ep #127: Embracing the Mystery of the Creative Dance

“In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost. How hard a thing it is to tell what a wild and rough and stubborn wood this was, which in my thought renews the fear.” That is from Dante’s *Inferno*. I’m sure you have heard it before and I’m sure this is not the first creativity podcast or conversation in which you have heard that quoted.

But I have a different take on that today, on how to find your way out of that dark wood. I hope you will join me and find yourself renewed by this conversation if you have felt yourself, at times, lost in that dark wood where the straight way was nowhere to be found.

So, join me today for what will be a wild but fun and productive conversation in which our thoughts will renew not fear, but your creativity and your joy.

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*. Happy spring. It is a beautiful, glorious, glorious day here. And I, again, unlike a few weeks ago when I was wishing you could drop in, so you could see kind of how dreary things were.

This week, I wish you could drop in to see – it’s a testament to this too shall pass. Which is one of the reasons I wanted to record that episode. And also one of the reasons why I love this podcast conversation with you, where I consistently do it every week. Because this week this weekend, it is so gloriously beautiful.

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I have all the windows in the house open. It's our first spring in this house and it is everything and more that I envisioned it would be. We have so, so many windows, so many beautiful, huge windows in the house. And essentially, I told my husband, I'm like, "I don't exactly want a glass house. But as close as we can get to feeling that we are outdoors, but without the harsh winter that we have and not without the bugs."

And we really love the views we have here, the sunrise, the sunset, the woods, the prairie. And we thought a lot about how to situate and design the house to make the most of nature. And I dreamed of throwing the windows open on a day like this, and here it is. So, it's always better too when you can share. So I'll have to take some videos and photos and post those on Instagram too.

So, if you don't already follow me on Instagram, what are you waiting for? Head on over there. It's @leahcb1. I'd love to connect with you there. And also, if you haven't connected via Facebook yet, you can find us @theartschool1. Our private Facebook group, it's open – it's closed and a private group, but anyone can join. You don't have to be a paid or enrolled member of the Art School to join that community. And I would love to connect with you there as well.

Also, I am recording this right around Easter weekend. So, I just want to wish a belated Happy Easter to any of you who celebrated and also a belated Happy Passover to my Jewish friends who have celebrated that recently as well. And to everyone, oh my gosh – well, in this hemisphere – happy spring. And those of you down under – I know we have a growing Australian audience and New Zealand as well, so much love to you guys over there. and shoutout to my Vietnam audience as well, which is also growing. So good to hear from you.

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And I would love to hear from more of you. So, write to us. Let us know what you are up to. Particularly, I would love to hear what fun, amazing things do you have planned for the rest of 2021. Lay all of your fun plans on me. And also, fun, joy, it's a strategy. And I have a lot of fun things coming up here in the next several months personally and in the Art School. And I kid you not, I am completely serious when I say – it's ironic, I know, but completely serious when I say fun is a strategy and fun is definitely part of my \$2 million-self strategy, like on purpose.

And I'll be sharing more of that, more of the behind the scenes and specifics in coming weeks and months. One of the fun things I have coming up is I will be offering a mini coaching intensive, likely beginning mid-May, we'll see. But this is going to be a small group.

And here's the thing. This is going to be a very, very fun group. Well, my husband was like, "Maybe you should qualify that because sometimes your version of fun might not be everyone's version of fun." So, here's how I'm going to qualify and describe that.

If you love to have your face coached off, if that sounds like so much fun for you, if you're like, "Yeah let's go. Let's get in it. Let's see what we can do and let's see what we can create," if you love to jump in the deep end and love to go and go hard, this will be an epic and an epically fun immersion experience for you.

So, again, it is going to be a small and intimate group, so email us, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) if you'd like more details. But I'll also be announcing more soon. But if you want to get on the wait list, again, it's a great idea to email my team, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) and just put "immersion" in the subject line and we will add you to the waitlist.

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So, today's podcast, I started with that Dante quote because there's something that has been an ongoing conversation I have with myself and with creative friends and colleagues about the hero's journey, something that – I love Joseph Campbell's work. I love the concept of the hero's journey. And I am also fascinated by the fact that most of these myths were written by men, and let's say for me, even if women were supposed to be part of the audience too.

And I can't help but, when I contemplate the hero's journey, wondering if there would be a different story and a different narrative arc, a different plotline, a different transformation, a different call, everything, if it has been written by women and for women.

Like, as woman, does the hero's journey as we typically think of it, does that necessarily represent the feminine experience? And then, when I think about that, I think, "Well, perhaps the entire hero's journey needs some second looks, and third, and fourth." Because men have a feminine aspect too.

And granted, some of these myths have the feminine written into them, but it's also, who was controlling the pen? And a place where the rubber hits the road for me in particular is I have been working on this novel that is a modern myth for women, a modern myth for a creative genius woman.

And I get to the part where there's supposed to be pain points and I'm like, I'm trying to extract myself from the paradigm of the patriarchy and everything that says, "This is the way you have to write it." And I'm like, but is that actually the story that wants to be written and is that the story that I want to perpetuate?

And so, I'm considering this just creatively in terms of the story. And then also looking simultaneously at my life as a coach. And I do not want to be a

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symbol for you suffering. And I don't think I am. I hope not. If you get that impression from me, please let me know and I will work to awaken myself to that and course-correct.

Because while I am human and I'm open to experiencing all things and I for sure have had my bouts of victim mentality and it's something that I've been awake to and aware of and working on, ultimately I do believe that I am bigger than that story, than those patterns and paradigms.

And particularly as a coach, what I want to do is represent creating whatever it is that you want and creating it on your terms. I joke sometimes about waving a magic wand, but it's not actually that I want to skip over the part of creating. Like, I'm in my studio quite a bit this weekend and loving it. I don't want to skip this part. I love this part.

I love this part of the process. I don't want to just wave a magic wand and boom, there's my painting. I love being in it and the conversation of it, and even like that part where there's maybe some tension because I don't see where it's going and then there's a resolution. There are a lot of parts actually where I'm like, "What the heck?" or stronger language, "What the heck is going on here?"

But I approach that in such a different way than the me of years past. And that is a testament to the power and the miracle of coaching and doing this growth work and being committed to growth. Because there's that saying, "Wherever you go, there you are..." and I get that. And also, I know that I have really transformed by being awake and intentional through this work, through enlisting the help of coaches, through training, through doing my own work.

And particularly, it's been so powerful for me to apply this inner work to also my creative process and coaching. And what I know from years past is that

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I would have a tendency for such heaviness, such self-loathing, such despair – it was awful – around the messy middle of projects.

And I am for sure familiar with the dark night of the soul. And just because I say that with levity now, does not mean that it didn't feel like that. And it wasn't just one. And there comes a time too when I just chose to believe that I could move beyond that and I just didn't want to live with that heaviness. I just did not want to live with that heaviness.

And this is where, again, really Joe Dispenza's work was and continues to be transformational. So, I highly recommend his books if you haven't heard me recommend them on earlier podcasts. But I wanted to share with you this story and this reminder because many times, my clients are brilliant and creative. And then we launch ourselves into the unknown. And it does feel unknown.

And we work with the reframe of, "Okay, it's not scary. Maybe it's not even uncomfortable. Perhaps it's just unknown." Or you work with being more comfortable with being uncomfortable. There are all of those things.

But one thing that I want to offer you is to consider that the heaviness is optional. That the feeling of being lost and tortured, completely optional. The suffering, optional. Does that mean that there isn't heavy lifting? Does that mean that there isn't failure and heartbreak and rejection? 100%, I just journaled myself out of feeling so heartbroken and rejected just a few days ago. But I'm so grateful that I was able to feel it and process it and not just stay with the suffering, like self-imposed suffering and heaviness of it.

So, I recently shared something on Instagram and I wanted to share it here with you because I received so many messages saying that it was a timely and needed message. And it ties into what we are talking about today.

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So, I wrote, “Happy studio Saturday, everyone. I’m currently in a what the heck is any of this going to become part of the process. This used to be a problem for me; a big problem. Because I used to take this as a sign that’s something wasn’t working. So, therefore, I used to take this as a reason to be confused, overwhelmed, doubt myself, and actually I’ll just add in, worse, hate on myself, think that I was never going to amount to anything, think that it had all been monumental waste, not only of time and money, but of my life, and whoops, there go the years draining away...” but I was trying to shorten this up for an Instagram post.

And then I continue, “Therefore, I took all these reasons too as a reason to stop. But back then, I started to coach myself and asked, what would happen if I took overwhelm and confusion and doubt off the table? What if I were just no longer available for those kinds of interpretations and reactions to this part of the process?”

“The answer I received is that I would be free. I would be free to be clear, awake, and I would just keep going. And that’s what I’ve done. And it’s been essential to training and strengthening my own creative completion muscle. It’s allowed me to stay in the mystery of the creative dance and also see it through; through to the completion of so many paintings, four, then five-figure single sales, and six figures as an artist.”

Not to mention too – I didn’t mention it in this post, but it’s the process I apply too to my coaching business, “So, now I know, I am always right where I need to be. The place where you are, right smack dab where you are is the only place the magic ever, ever finds you. Then happy, messy, chaotic, glorious studio Saturday it is then. Say yes to the creative mystery, no to overwhelm, confusion, and doubt. And make yourself instead fully available for what wants to happen through you and on the other side, which is creative success and thriving. In short, stay with it. Stay in it.”



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Which also happened to be names of paintings that I also ended up completing that day, by the way.

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. I am going to repeat something that I have said often on this podcast before. Because again, I'm just feeling that it's timely. And also, it bears repetition.

This work is not just an intellectual conceptual work where you just think, "I read about it, I heard her talk about it, I got it, I'm good." This is a training. This is why I liken the Art School to being an Olympic training center for creatives, for anybody who wants to make their dreams come true and has a big vision that they want to create out in the world.

It takes repetition. It takes lifting weights, continued repetition, consistency, increasing the weight, and practice. So, here is what I want you to practice. What are you no longer available for? How can your hero's journey look differently? What suffering can you put down? What self-imposed oppression can you put down?

To be clear, I am not just saying put on rose-colored glasses and don't feel anything. I'm saying quite the opposite. Cultivate this extraordinary way of being, which is willing to feel all things. Be someone who is willing to be fully alive in this way, spanning the breadth of human emotion, from love to heartbreak and everything in between.

This is the invitation to your life. This is the invitation to becoming a creative force of nature. This is really the invitation to living a life of your dreams and beyond your wildest dreams. This is living truly awake and fully alive, fully committed to it, staying with it, staying in it while you're here.

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It takes a lot of energy to create something that you've never done before. It takes a lot of energy to create an impossible dream. It takes a lot of energy to be intentional about how you live and how you create. And that is not a bad thing. And that also doesn't mean that it's this daunting mountain of a thing.

When I say it takes a lot of energy, I keep saying that because I want you to realize what a precious resource your energy, your life force is. And so, why weigh yourself down with self-imposed suffering, with self-imposed limitations?

And here's the other thing that I want to offer. This can be really hard work to do on your own. So, give yourself the gift of, whether it's therapy or a coach or a group, it's really hard to see the places where we argue for our own limitations, or where we have just been so accustomed to feeling this heaviness that we think it's us.

We haven't had an opportunity for someone to see objectively and reflect back to us, "Actually, that might not be yours." We haven't had someone listen to us and hold space in a way and then say, "Do you realize that you're thinking this? Do you realize that you are assuming this is true and it's not really true, that it's a story? Have you thought about this?"

Because those moments can change your life forever. I have had moments like that and they have changed mine. I've had moments like that this last year and I have been coaching and doing this work for a long time.

I would not be where I am without coaching. Because I, first of all, was ashamed that I felt this heaviness, that I felt this overwhelm, that I felt the doubt, that I felt the fear, especially the self-loathing. I just assumed that was me and that that was a moral failure and flaw. I just assumed that this

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heavy blanket that I felt over my life was just my fault and just who I was and that there was no getting out from under it because it was me.

But through coaching, through meditation, through thought work, through movement, through so many modalities, but especially being shown, having a mirror held up of, “This is what you are thinking, this is what your mind is saying, these are the feelings that it’s creating,” and learning how to question that and then learning how my thoughts and feelings create my experience of my life, to say it was life-changing is a grand understatement.

And it’s not something that I could have done on my own, and it really took the willingness to commit to my emotional wellbeing, spiritual wellbeing, mental health, and also a willingness to invest in my growth and in my dreams in what, at the time, seemed like a really out-there way.

I mean, I remember when I first invested in a mindfulness-based meditation course, mindfulness-based stress-reduction, a Jon Kabat-Zinn program. And it was \$400-some and I almost didn’t do it because I was fresh out of grad school and that just seemed like way too much money on a weird thing. Even though as I read the brochure, I knew it was everything I had been looking for.

And all along the way, every time I have overcome that hesitation to invest in myself and invest in especially things that seemed more intangible. But truly are not, it’s your life, like your mental health, emotional health, like my creativity, and then like dreams that sometimes take years to continue to grow.

Every time I have done that, it has come back to me one hundredfold; one hundredfold. And so, I wanted share that story alongside of what you no longer want to be available for. Because it might just seem like you’re like, “Well, it’s just who I am.” Question that. Question that.

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Anything that feels like it is oppressing you, anything that feels like it is a dimmer, darker version of the life that, in your heart, you know you're capable of living, tell yourself, "I will no longer be available for that. I am no longer available for that limited, dark version, that heaviness. That is not me." And with time and with dedication and with help, you will find your way to this place where life is still life, you are still human, but oh my gosh, you will feel transformed.

And I think that is the hero's journey, but then also, there's something beyond. This book too, this hero's journey 2021, what it is that we're writing together now that we get to live into and discover, finding out what it is to create from our deep innate power and from love for ourselves and our lives with joy, with peace, with trust. What are you no longer going to be available for and what will that liberate you to do? Who will that liberate you to be? How will that liberate you to live?

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have enjoyed this podcast, if these episodes have been useful, inspiring, empowering, meaningful to you in any way, I am so grateful. And if you would like to help me spread the word and pay it forward, the best thing you can do is to share, is to subscribe, is to go to iTunes and leave a review.

And if you are ready to take this work to the next level, if there is a next level this year out there in the world, in your bank account, in your creativity, in your heart, in your mind, and in your soul that has your name all over it, then you'll want to join us in the Art School.

If you are not already on our mailing list, you can email us, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) and we'll make sure that you hear the latest information on free trainings that we offer. I do offer a free workshop every month, as well as any upcoming opportunities to work with me through the

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Art School or through special pop-up programs like this upcoming immersion course.

Also, I will be opening just a couple spaces in my private coaching practice. So, if you are curious or very interested in private coaching, please email us, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) and we can send you the information on that.

So, in closing, I really would love to know, what are you no longer going to be available for? What has been needlessly weighing you down on the way to creating that next big goal, achieving that dream, at that next level for you, whatever that may be? Externally but also in your heart, mind, and soul what is just not there at that frequency? What are you just no longer available for once you're in that place?

And I really do hope you take some time after you consider these questions to stay with that energy that comes back to you, when you're no longer available for whatever it is that's been weighing you down, feel the energy that comes back to you and ask yourself, "Gosh, what could I do if I didn't have that, if I weren't carrying around that old thing anymore, that overwhelm, that doubt, that fear? What would I do with that energy?"

I am fascinated to hear your answers. I hope you are as well. And now I'm off to run and then I'm going to paint some more in my studio. It's spring break week here this week. And so, doing all of the things that fill my heart and then deep-diving with our Art Schoolers later this week. Life is good, my friends, and I am so grateful that I get to share it with you.

As two of my friends texted me this weekend, I love these sentiments. I'm like, "I'm going to use those on the podcast." One friend said, "I just love you so damn much." And the other friend said, "I love your guts." That just cracked me up. I'm like, "I'm going to start using that all the time. Actually, I'm even going to use it on the podcast."

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So, for all of you listening, I love our guts. I love you so damn much. Have a beautiful, beautiful week, and I will look forward to talking with you next time.