

Ep #148: Stating and Living into Your Destiny: Taking Inspiration from Octavia Butler



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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“I shall be a bestselling writer. After *Imago*, each of my books will be in the bestseller lists of LA Times, New York Times, Washington Post, et cetera. My novels will go onto the above lists, whether publishers push them hard or not, whether I’m paid a high advance or not, whether I ever win another award or not. This is my life. I write bestselling novels. My novels go onto the bestseller list on or shortly after publication. My novels each travel up to the top of the bestseller list and they reach the top and they stay on top for months; at least two. Each of my novels does this. So be it. See to it. I will find the way to do this. So be it. See to it. My books will be read by millions of people. So be it. See to it.”

Those words that I just read are from a personal journal of Octavia Butler, a MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow, member of the Science Fiction Hall of Fame, and bestselling novelist whose books did in fact go on to be read by millions and millions of people. Octavia Butler was an African-American female author who achieved extraordinary success over her decades long career, becoming one of the greatest science fiction writers of the 20th century.

If you are not already familiar with her work, I hope this episode is what prompts you to go out and begin reading her books right away. And if you are familiar with her work but haven’t heard this extraordinary story about how she declared her destiny years before much of it came to fruition, you’re in for a treat this episode.

Not only is her body of work an inspiration in itself. But this backstory is mind-blowingly amazing. I hope it knocks your socks off. And if what you’re needing is a fire lit within, I hope it does exactly that too. Enjoy.

You are listening to *The Art School Podcast*, a show for artists and creatives who want to become the next greatest version of themselves.

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Learn how to cultivate an extraordinary way of being and take the mystery out of making money, and the struggle out of making art. Here is your host, master certified life coach, artist, and former lawyer, Leah Badertscher.

Welcome, everyone, to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I am so glad you are here. And wherever you are in the world, I hope you're well, if you're going through hard times. And my heart, thoughts, and prayers go out to the many places in the world that desperately need it; Afghanistan, all areas affected by so many natural disasters. I hope you are safe and well and taking care of yourself so that you can also do what you can to help, no matter the smallest act, it all adds up.

And I know this is the kind of audience, this listening audience, movers, shakers, dreamers, and doers. So, if you've been on the fence thinking, "My contribution, it doesn't matter." It does. And I think that is why a creative act is a loving act, because it can seem like, in the face of things, that what we are able to do as individuals is so small. But then you have to ask, what is love and creativity? That it's what wants to happen anyway.

There's a quote from Mother Teresa that I love where the story goes that someone asked her, you know, "Do you ever feel like a failure? How do you cope with that knowing that there are all of these people that you can't help? So many people still dying or suffering in the streets that you just can't attend to?" And she responded, "God did not call me to be successful. God called me to be faithful."

And when I think of faithful in my own life, I think loving, creative, doing what is mine to do. It's not that your heart doesn't break and that you don't feel all of the things. And you do what you're called to do.

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And I know so many of you and I know that resonates with you as well. So, you're in my thoughts and prayers too for your continued encouragement and strength. And I also want to dedicate this podcast to you, to offer some inspiration and creative magic and badassery to flow into your week. And again, either blow on that fire within you or maybe light another fire wherever you most need it.

Because I just love this story. I mean, Octavia Butler is a giant of an artist, just a literary genius and visionary. And then when I heard of this story then too on top of it. I was like, what? It really is the best example of truth is stranger and so much better than fiction. And yet she wrote both so powerfully.

So, I will get to the juicy part of that story, the continuation from what I introduced you to in that intro in just a moment. And I also just wanted to pause and give a shoutout to all of my amazing Art Schoolers. We have just finished our first virtual artist date of the first week and I am so in love with this group.

This session is going to blow the roof off. And they're going to be talking about this for years to come, the things set in motion and the creativity and the dreams high-fived and that were rolled out and set in motion in this session. So, I couldn't be more grateful and excited. And I also have the good fortune of having this momentum created by – so many new members are now familiar with my work because they've been podcast listeners.

We also have, every time, such a large portion of the returning class. It's like a growing portion that are alum. And they bring with them all of their accrued wisdom and their own momentum and experience and it really is

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an experience and a place like none other. So, to all of you listening, thank you. And yeah, buckle up. This is going to be amazing.

Also, a big shoutout to all of our alum who have participated in the past and didn't return this round but plan to in the future. I just also want to thank you because I know what we're doing this round wouldn't have been possible without your participation other rounds. And so, you're very much with us in spirit and it remains as true as ever that a rising tide lifts all ships. And once in Art School, always in Art School. So, you're with us too.

And for those of you listening who haven't been in an Art School yet and are like, "Wait, how do I get with this also? How do I join up?" There are a few different ways you can learn more. You can email us, support@leahcb.com. You can also visit my website, www.leahcb.com and follow the work with me link to tabs that will give you more information about the Art School, about upcoming masterminds, about working with me privately.

And there is a brand new way to work with me privately. I haven't offered this format before, but this is available through the end of 2021 anyway. And that is private coaching on a month-to-month basis. So, for those of you who are like, "Well, I don't know if I really need six months or a year. Maybe I want two power sessions in a month and then see where we are after that," just for the next few months, I am offering that. I've never done it before. I'm following my intuition that this might be the right time to try something like this. So, if you've been considering working with me privately, this might be right up your ally. And again, you'll find more information on my website or you can email us directly, support@leahcb.com.

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So, now onto this extraordinary story about Octavia Butler. So, I read in the intro from her page in her journal. It begins with, “I shall be a bestselling writer.” And it goes on, as I read. It gets juicier even and I didn’t read all of it. But I will do that towards the end of the podcast because this is exactly the sort of thing that I would listen to on repeat to get the energy of it in my bones and allow it to rearrange my cells.

Again, this page was taken from one of her personal journals. And she not only wrote this, but in fact, then lived it out. And also, as I stated in the intro, if you’re not familiar with her work. Let me just give you a brief overview.

She was an African-American female author, and again, had this extraordinary success. And in the landscape of science fiction at that time, it was predominantly white male. So, she was already defying the odds, being as amazing and then as successful as she was. And then also, she had overcome a very challenging childhood, goes on to write these outstanding novels and achieve literary acclaim in this predominantly white male arena of science fiction.

So, not only was she constructing these mind-blowing fictional realities with her imagination and words, but she created her own reality from her dreams, which many would also have called fantasy in a very similar way.

She claimed her destiny by writing down what her future would be in her journal years before much of it would come to fruition. And this was far from the only writing and work to fulfill her dream that she did. As she wrote in her journal, “This is my life. I write bestselling novels.”

Another aspect of this self-fulfilling prophecy was that she found fulfillment in writing. She achieved her success through the actions she took and those acts for her were imagining worlds and writing, “See to it,” she wrote.

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Now, there was more to that page that I didn't read in the intro that I'd like to read to you now. She goes on to write, "My books will be read by millions of people. I will buy a beautiful home in an excellent neighborhood. I will send poor Black youngsters to Clarion or other writers' workshops. I will help poor Black youngsters broaden their horizons. I will help poor Black youngsters go to college. I will get the best of healthcare for my mother and myself. I will hire a car whenever I want or need to. I will travel whenever and wherever in the world that I choose."

And she finishes, "My books will be read by millions of people. So be it. See to it." That last aspect there that she included reminded me of something my friend Tererai Trent has often said and written about, including in her book *The Awakened Woman*. And that is that our dreams take on a greater power when they are tied to the highest good of all, to a greater good.

And you can hear more about that from Tererai herself in the interview that I did with her in this podcast last year, I think it was. Gosh, it might have been longer. It is time to have her back.

And for those of you that are inspired to learn more about Octavia Butler's life and career and legacy, you will see too that she overflowed her generosity, her affluence far and wide. And I think including too, to us today, that I know, including to us today too, with her works of art, her novels, and then also with this work of art that was her life and this story which emerged. I think it became known around 2016. I think that's when her personal papers became available.

And I'm so glad they did. I love any kind of insight into a writer's process, any sort of backstories. And this one is one of those backstories of all backstories.

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Clearly, I love it. I wrote about it in my newsletter. Which if you don't get my newsletter already, please, get my newsletter. I will send you awesome stories like this. And you can sign up in the show notes. I also wrote about it on Instagram. And then I thought, this may be the dose of creative magic that this audience needs this week.

So, I hope this story not only inspires you, but also, you know what's coming, this is the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to do more than just be inspired. I want you to lean in and really work with me, and coach with me. Take this information and apply it to your life, do something with it, create.

So, I believe that clients drawn to my work have a big-time artist that just wants out, who wants to be seen. It wants to be recognized. It wants to be known. It wants to be understood. And all of those things are a process of unlocking that potential and moving it out into the world.

My clients have someone they are meant to be, a life they are meant to live, and they know it. So, I hope you, dear listener, that you hear this story from Octavia Butler's life and take this as a sign that you too are capable of literally writing your own story and then fulfilling it, of writing down your destiny and then living into it.

So, my friends, my questions for you are, what dreams are you ready to claim? What life are you ready to live? What is the life your soul is dreaming of? So be it. Follow Octavia's lead. Get started today. Fill in this blank. This is my life. Will you write, "I sell bestselling novels?" Will you write, "I make \$200,000 a year from my paintings? I have created a seven-figure empire being who I am, successful on my own terms. I raise happy children and a loving family and I live the life of my dreams on my own terms." Whatever it is for you, so be it. And see to it.

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Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. So, I have a favor to ask of you. I have not done this before. But this is me going out on a limb and walking my talk and being vulnerable and asking for help, asking for your support in helping achieve one of my goals, and also a bigger dream of, as I've said before, unabashedly and yet part of myself wants to kick up a shame storm. I will say it anyway.

I want to reach a million people. And I know I cannot do that – obviously I can't do it alone. I'm one person. I'm not a million peoples. And so, I would love to ask your help.

You know, if each one of you listening sent an episode that you thought was meaningful to a friend, that would already double my listenership. If each one of you sent an episode to two friends, or just recommended the podcast generally, that would triple my listenership.

So, if any of you out there are thinking, "Oh, she doesn't really need my help or support. Just one person doesn't matter." Oh my gosh, do you ever matter. And this is another place to demonstrate that radical act of kindness, creativity, love, and paying it forward. This is a place to demonstrate that radical act of faith that you do matter and you make a difference.

I will also say, it hits me in such a surreal and profound way when people who have been listening then join the Art School or reach out to me. I cannot tell you what that means to me.

So, please, never think that you listening doesn't matter because right now, not knowing exactly who you are, it still matters deeply to me and then it's just about more than I can take in. But I'll take it and I'll keep trying to grow and expand it when I do get to connect with you, you know, over our Art

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School calls or through an email or also I love and so deeply appreciate your reviews.

Also, to the person who sent me a snail mail, thank you. You know who you are. That's so awesome. You made me laugh and you made me cry. You made my week.

So, thank you all for listening. And again, if you would help me with this goal, this dream, I would love to 10X my audience by the end of 2021. I guess I should have led with that. That's what I'm up to. That's my moonshot for the end of this year, is to 10X my audience and in a way that is aligned with my values and in a way that feels like fun, that feels like flow and creative joy and like being aligned with synchronicities and being supported.

So, if that sounds like fun to you, I'm so grateful. And thank you in advance. Best audience ever. I love you.

And now, for the close. So, I saved us some time here because what I want to do here is read for you that page again. Because even if your particular goal or dream is different, I think this energy that Octavia shared via her personal journal, I wonder if she ever knew that this would come to be. I hope so.

I think that energy, you can feel the driving powerful pulsing nature of it, just reading it off the page. and again, this is the sort of thing I geek out on and I would totally listen to over and over again to help me write these kind of powerful programs into my being, you know, what my destiny is, so that I know it by heart. So, I'm thinking that some of you geek out on the same things that I do, here we go. I wanted to read it again for you. This time, in its entirety.

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So, again, my friends I hope you take that. And if you’re not an author, then you substitute what is your life. “This is my life. I...” and then you fill in that blank and then you go out in the world and you fill in that blank. You make that your life. Have a beautiful week, everyone. And I look forward to talking with you next time.