

Ep #149: Thunderbolt Energy



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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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“We have to recognize the difference between archetypal and personal energy. Archetypal energy carries a much higher charge than person energy; the difference between a thunderbolt and a duckling’s quack,” Jungian psychologist Marion Woodman.

I’ve recently shared this quote with my community, via my newsletter, and I wanted to share it again here with this podcast community, especially on the heels of the Octavia Butler episode that I did last week.

I love working with people who have big dreams and a big vision, and what it takes to create that is big energy. But most of us are not conditioned or enculturated for it to be okay for us to not only tap into that big energy, but to give ourselves permission to know that we are that energy, that we have the ability to tap into it, just as much as anyone else that we see out in the world, moving, shaking, turning things upside down and creating, living extraordinary lives.

You are not here just to be a minor player or a pawn in someone else’s story. It’s time for you to be the storyteller. And what you need to do that is to grab the pen. And I have a feeling, if you’re listening to this, the pen for you looks an awful lot like that thunderbolt.

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*. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, I am glad you are here. And I have some great energy to share with you this week, particularly if what has brought you here is that you do have a big dream,

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you do have a big vision, and you know you've got a sleeping giant within you. Maybe it's partially awakened. But maybe it's time to, you know, get the party started.

I'm also – I just have to share this with you. I am recording this the day before I leave to go to Denver for a few days. I am visiting my baby brother Will, who is a vet out there and also is maybe the second biggest Brandi Carlile fan I know. We are going to go to Brandi Carlile and the Colorado Symphony at Red Rocks. So, I am being excited.

Will had sent me her memoir as a late Mother's Day present. Holy smokes, whose baby brother sends them a Mother's Day present? So, that was so sweet. And on the inside of the front flap, he had written this really wonderful message. And we share a love of music and Brandi Carlile in particular. Though his favorite artist is Pearl Jam. I would have to be sure to acknowledge that. He would want me to.

And then, he had written in a P.S. – so, the first time I saw her in concert, he actually bought tickets for me for my birthday. And it was in Des Moines. It was before The Joke had ever come out and she was on the Grammys and had that breakthrough year when then a lot more people got to know her. And so, she was playing at this outdoor amphitheater in Des Moines, Iowa. And he and I, we were up at my parents' house in Northern Iowa and we drove a couple hours south and it was this beautiful summer evening.

We sat on this grassy knoll, got there early so we could be front and center of the stage, took our shoes off. I remember feet in the grass, cold beer with the condensation sweating on the outside. I love my siblings to death and it was just a joy to be there with him. And then the concert was so good. Like, so good. Just a precious memory with him.

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And so, he had written in the P.S. on that front flap, he's like, "I can't wait until we can see her again." And so, he and I have both had seeing her at Red Rocks on our bucket lists. So, I got his package in the mail and had opened it. And the moment that I was reading that P.S., my phone beeped and it was a text from him. And he had sent a screenshot.

He's like, "Oh my gosh, did you know they rescheduled her concert from last year at Red Rocks and the tickets are almost sold out?" And I had full body chills because I knew it was a sign. I literally read his text at the same moment that I had read the P.S. "I can't wait until we can see her again."

So, I got online, looked at the tickets, and he had said, "Oh gosh, they're pretty pricey." And I am like, I am not turning down a sign from the universe like this. So, I got two tickets and we're on our way. And I honestly, I can't remember if I've already talked about this a lot on this podcast because it's one of those things where I am so, so excited, I'm a little bit afraid I will be obnoxious about telling everybody that I'm going. And they'll be like, "Yeah, Leah, we know. You told us, yeah, we know, Brandi Carlile at Red Rocks with your brother. We know."

So, then the other day I mentioned something in the Art School. And then afterwards someone sent me a message that was like, "Did you just casually drop that you're going to go to Red Rocks this weekend to see Brandi Carlile?" And I was like, "See, I can't tell." I couldn't tell if I was restraining my enthusiasm too much for fear of being really annoying.

But I will just share that unbridled enthusiasm with all of you here. Have I told you how much I love that band, their music, their singing, songwriting? Have I told you how it was like their music came on the scene about the same time I decided to go this route of being an artist myself and that it's been the soundtrack to my own journey and the soundtrack for countless studio sessions?

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So, it's this incredibly epic – I resonate with that music deeply. So, thrilled about going this weekend. And he and I are also – we're going to go hiking. I cannot wait. We're going to go to the Denver Art Museum. I cannot wait. And also safely, masked up, completely vaccinated, staying safe and appreciating those factors there. And then also getting to be with, like I said, my siblings are some of my favorite people on the planet. And so, being able to spend time with him doing all these amazing things is truly – I'm going to sound like a credit card commercial, but it's true. It's priceless.

And not only did I share that story with you because I'm super excited and it's kind of all I want to talk about right now. But there are also two threads in there that are very much related to today's podcast episode.

In Brandi Carlile's memoir – and I'll pull those out for you in just a minute. But where I'm going is that it can be so easy that you start off with your big intentions and your big vision or you have some kind of awakening or insight in life where you're like, "God, I feel it. I know it. I've touched it. I can taste it." Really, there is something else possible that really that vision, that dream, it's within reach.

I can totally be that person. I can totally be someone who publishes novels one after another. I can totally be somebody who has a multiple six-figure career as an artist, who paints. I can totally be someone who creates this life. You know, we are a combination doctor, creative, world traveler. It looks completely out of the box. Everyone wonders how you do it, but you pull it off. You know, whatever you can imagine, you can achieve.

You've had those moments where you've felt that rush of greater energy, a greater world, a greater something within you wanting to come to life. And then you can go for it and then go out into the world, and then you get sucked back into the familiar.

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And for way too many of us, the familiar is a very dialed down, quote safe. It's not safe for your soul or your life. It's a more normalized, you know, to convention and mediocrity. It's a place where you practice the kind of gratitude where you are grateful but you also know, in your heart of hearts, you are suppressing or repressing or denying these other desires and dreams. And by telling yourself it's too late or it's not realistic or that was just airy-fairy thinking or it's irresponsible, whatever it is, the pull, the suck of mediocrity is great.

And so, I am here week after week to throw you a rope to pull you out of it. It is not to judge anything that you've done. It is just to say, "Hey, stop telling that story where you are a minor player and you're not actually in love with your life. I'll throw you a rope that is really throwing you the pen that is really the thunderbolt that says, "Wake up. You are not okay with this. You are not okay with this."

It could be a moment of, for me, like, maybe he's right. Maybe the tickets are too expensive. That would have been totally ignoring the thunderbolt of the moment, the synchronicity of, "Here it is, handed to you, life, a dream. I couldn't even make it more clear. Are you going to take it? Are you going to take it with both hands?" Oh yes, yes I am.

I am also guessing that if you are listening to my podcast, you are not here because you're okay with settling. You are not here because you actually like your old familiar patterns of frustration and struggle and not actually getting what you want. I am assuming you are here because you want what you want and you want to know how to get it and you want to know that it's completely within your reach. And it is.

So, take the pen. Take the thunderbolt. Ask the bigger questions. Kick your way out of that whirlpool or grab onto this rope, this energy that I'm

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throwing you and ride your way out of it. You do not belong there. You do not belong there.

And so what I wanted to share regarding Brandi Carlile that's relevant to this episode – and then I'll get into some other content in a moment – she was writing in her book. And I've heard this story other places too, where she made a lot of albums and someone had made a remark to her at some point along the way that she hadn't done anything like The Story since The Story, that she hit a note in The Story, both literally and metaphorically, I think, that she hadn't hit since.

And it totally burned her to hear this. And then she was saying something to her wife about it and her wife Catherine said, "Well, have you?" And she thought about that and she's like, "You know, maybe I haven't." Maybe there was something difficult about the making of that album and that note in particular in there and then performing that.

I won't go into that here. But she realized, you know, "Maybe I haven't. And what would that be?" And then fast forward all of the things, all the life coming together, coincidences, encounters, meeting people, bouncing off one another. And she started to write The Joke. And then recorded it and ultimately knocked it out of the part, at the Grammys especially with that last note, like really going for it.

And she talked about in the book too that last note too where she thought maybe she would leave that out. But people fortunately encouraged her not to, and so she just rehearsed it and rehearsed it and rehearsed it. And even up to the last moment, like right before she nailed it in the Grammys, there was that moment where she could have gone either way. And she said to herself, "Fuck it." And went for it.

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And if you have not seen or heard that performance, oh my gosh, you need to do that and take that moment in. That is going for the thunderbolt energy. That is reaching for the note.

Also, just generally speaking, I think that theme of the small personal energy versus the archetypal energy, particularly as an artist but then also just as a human being and a human being who wants to do good things in the world, a humanitarian human being, that that theme of personal versus archetypal energy runs throughout that book in spades.

Even right down to some of the final scenes where – and I don't think this will spoil it for you. Still, you should read the book, totally – some of the final scenes where she's friends with Elton John and Joni Mitchell and she talks about having jamming sessions at Joni Mitchell's house, like in her house. And the first time she went, Herbie Hancock and Chaka Khan walking into the room.

And then, in later jam sessions at Joni's, Elton John joined. So, if that is not a room full of archetypal energy, I don't know what is. Also, I think all of this thunderbolt energy is too much for my mic. It just blew out my mic. It's no longer working. So, I'm switching over to my iMac microphone. So, my apologies for the difference in sound quality. But we will get this made and get this out to you.

So, I mentioned in the intro that I wanted to do this episode on the heels of the Octavia Butler episode. And also just because of right now, you can be so inspired by something like Octavia Butler's story. You can be so inspired by artists like Brandi Carlile and Elton John and Joni Mitchell and the others. And you can feel that resonance with something within yourself. And then, when you go out into the world to begin, you experience a disconnect.

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And I think so much of that disconnect comes from the energy that we are allowing ourselves. And part of that comes from our self-concept, the narrative that we are telling ourselves about the role that we play. You know, are we the hero or heroine in the journey? Or are we a minor player or a pawn? Are we actually the author?

And there can be such a reticence into stepping into the energy. It's there for you to claim. And something that comes to mind is one of my mentors, Brooke Castillo, when I was taking master coach training for her, I remember her saying that's he believes there's a sum of money out there in the world, a big sum of money. And it's yours to claim.

And you get to claim it or not. But if you don't claim it, no one else is getting it. It's not coming into the world and you claiming it doesn't take anything away from someone else. But there's this big pile that belongs to you; belongs to you. Are you going to claim it?

And I love that, speaking literally, referring physically to money and wealth. I also love that as an analogy for speaking to the energy, the creativity the destiny that you have available for you. It is there. It's yours. Are you going to allow yourself to be a big enough channel to flow that, to tap that, to claim that, to be that?

So, I recently sat down to write a last call to join the Art School email. And something entirely different happened. I realized, as I sat down, I'm like, I don't want to write a small doors are closing email. It feels way too duckling quack. To me, I want to write the truth of what I'm feeling, the truth of why I do this work. I don't want to hold back and try to pretend to be a minor player. I don't want to dial down my vision of what I think I'm doing, why I'm here, and what I'm about.

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So, I sat down to write what I thought was one thing, and then realized I wanted to tap into something much more true. And this is what I wrote. “So, maybe you felt this too, that in the midst of all the heartbreaking, devastating tragedy occurring in the world, maybe you’ve sensed that there is another profound energy rising as well. A part of you has even wondered that you are afraid that it was crazy thinking or grandiose that you were meant to be a part of it, meant to live out being the change you wish to see. First creating massive change in your own life and then letting that abundance pour from you in countless ripples, tidal waves.

“Maybe you felt that there is, has been, for some years and now it’s undeniable, a rising tide of potent creative energy that, when harnessed consciously and with great love can help us navigate this pressure-cooker era in all of our lives, globally and personally, and help us remain connected to a bigger, better more beautiful, thriving, flourishing future for us as individuals and collectively.

“Have you ever felt a time in your life when it is so clear that we have a choice? We have the power to take back the pen and write the stories of our lives. Have you ever felt a time in your life when the call is so powerful that you are a creative, visionary, an artist, a leader and you are meant to be that change you wish to see in the world?

First, leading your own life and then leading by your loving, empowered, courageous genius and also utterly vulnerable human example. We are so much more powerful than we have ever been led to believe. So much more powerful. Discovering and stepping into and owning your capital C Creativity will change all of that.”

And when I say capital C Creativity, this is an aside here, I’m talking about thunderbolt kind of energy, that archetypal energy. “Once you catch a glimpse, even the slightest energetic whiff of the truth of who you really are

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and what you are really capable of and what is actually possible too for you, limitlessness, it will be impossible to unsee and unknow. You can try, but you'll find you've developed an acute intolerance for any of the BS you used to not even notice.

“You'll develop an intolerance for anything that has the offensive odor of, who do you think you are? You'll never pull this off. People like you don't – you've never done it before. It will never work. You'll never change. You don't deserve that kind of life. Stop dreaming.

“You'll find you just can't stomach that stuff anymore and the only alternative is that you lay those stories down. They will only weigh you down where you are going. Instead, you'll find a lightness of being in your truth, the natural buoyancy of your beingness that defies gravity, odds, and the old ways of doing things. And you'll join this powerful moving tide and you'll rise.

“You rise, and your rising contributes to the current uplifting others as well. You rise up to the knowing that you are equal to your desires, dreams, and you have everything you need within you to follow through and fulfill them.”

I want to add a bonus aside here too because this came up in Art School this week. If you find you're at a point where you're like, “But I don't have, I am not...” If you don't have it and you're not it, then you should assume that you don't need it, that that's not necessary. Because inherent in the dream and in the desire and inherent in you are all the mechanics for its fulfillment.

So, if you're not – like I used to tell myself I'm not analytical enough. I'm not rational enough. I don't have the sort of orderly process and ability to grind out that other people have. Or I can do it but then I totally am burnt out and no use.

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That all changed when I decided, if I'm not a certain way, built a certain way, if I don't have something, then that must be the sign to me that it's not necessary. I don't need that part. Then it's just part of the physics equation that for the rocket ship I'm building, it doesn't require that part. How do I know? Because I don't have it.

So, back to regular programming. You rise up to the knowing that you are equal to your desires, dreams, and you have everything you need within you to follow through and fulfill them. You cut line to any of the small fish you've been anxiously chasing. The ones where you're trying to prove your worth and justify your existence and just get by. And you start to realize that you are the captain of this ship, your destiny, and you start tapping into a bigger energy to animate and cocreate your life.

Jungian Psychologist Marion Woodward said, "We have to recognize the difference between archetypal and personal energy. Archetypal energy carries a much higher charge than person energy; the difference between a thunderbolt and a duckling's quack." It's time for us to step out of any ugly duckling narratives we've been obsessed with and perpetuating.

It's time to stop investing our creative energy, our precious life energy in stories that we are small and separate and powerless and insignificant. It's time to be the thunderbolt. It's time to realize that you have the power to make it rain. You have the power to create all those things you've been dreaming of.

But when you're asleep and still believing the dream that you are a duck, you never would dare to admit that you want to create, much less actually dare to do anything about it. So, it's time to wake up, to claim your bliss, your joy, what makes your heart sing, what makes you connected to the knowing that your soul is 10,000 feet and more tall and has just been

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waiting for this moment where you remember who you are, what you're made for, and that you're ready to move. You are ready to rise.

I woke up this morning remembering an intention that I even just recently became so much more clear on, that I am here to create waves, create change, beauty, meaning, to be a part of this rising creative tide that is going out and going to change the world for the better.

A long time ago, it came to me that this was a time of renaissance. And that I'm going to do this by being myself, my thunderbolt self. I'm going to create and build a life all my own, and one that is a grand, courageous, loving, human story and adventure. Also one that is full of epic success and I'm going to do it by being myself. Not the duckling quack version of me. The thunderbolt.

I also woke up this morning thinking I would send a short and sweet last call for the Art School message. But then I sat down to write and this is what came out. I am as surprised as you may be. But it also feels so much more real that if I tried to squeeze what I'm really about and what the Art School is really about into a tiny mediocre, bland, generic, easily understandable, rational container.

I know what this thunderbolt energy wants for you to take away from this episode is that you are thinking about you and your life so differently, that you felt this invitation to let go of small exhausted survival and scratching the surface of your potential versions of your life.

And for many of you, I want to honor and acknowledge and applaud you and say that is really truly saying something. If you have created beautiful, incredible, meaningful lives and contributions, you tend to families, relationships. You are community organizers and movers and shakers and

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changers. You have created epic success and are a one-of-a-kind, magnificent human being.

And it's also okay to acknowledge the call to more. In fact, I think it is the waking up call that our collective consciousness is trying to give us, to get us to wake up and own what we're really capable of, so we can clean up our own side of the street and then pour our overflow of gifts out into the world. Those calls to more, our desires, our dreams are an invitation to both ride this rising, healing, awakening creative tide. And to contribute to it.

So, I closed this newsletter by saying it's not too late to join us. And what comes to mind for me now as I'm recording this episode are the words that are usually attributed to George Eliot, who by the way, did you know George Eliot, the prominent Victorian novelist was actually Mary Ann Evans? George Eliot was her pen name. I think we can probably figure out why she chose that.

But the words that are often attributed to her are, "It is never too late to be what you might have been." And I love working with people who have a deep sense that there is something that they're meant to do, someone they are meant to be.

And if that sounds like you, then you'll particularly enjoy this week's coach with me. So, this brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I want you to lean in and really work with me. Coach with me.

So, if you acknowledge and allow yourself that big vision, that knowing of who you're meant to be, what you're meant to do, what you're meant to create, how you're meant to live, if you acknowledge yourself, the fullness of that vision, then ask yourself, what truly is the energy necessary to fulfill

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that vision, to bring it to life? And have I been trying to go about life, have I been trying to go about being myself by tapping into only that duckling's quack version of personal energy? Or have I really explored what it is to open up and tap into and harness the power of an archetypal energy?

This is the kind of question that we are digging into, diving into in the Art School, and that I explore with my coaching clients. If you are interested in taking this work deeper, please email us, support@leahcb.com. I have a few openings for private clients for the remainder of 2021, including some opportunities for month by month engagement.

So, if you've been thinking you want to work with me, you're not sure you need six months or a year, for the rest of the year, I've created some sessions, some spots where you can choose from one to three sessions a month, just a month at a time.

So, to learn more, you can go to my website, www.leahcb.com and look up the variety of ways there are to work with me. And also, if you have any questions, feel free to email us, support@leahcb.com.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I so appreciate you being here. I feel a little bit like, well, for those of you in the United States, maybe you're familiar with NPR's part of the year where they do their drive, their fundraising drive, you know, because it's not-for-profit organization and they rely on funds to keep going.

Well, I am not asking you for funds. But I do want to ask for your help and support in reaching one of my dreams, which is reaching a million people. Which is, for this podcast to have over a million downloads and the incremental goal that I have for the remainder of 2021 to move towards that is to 10X my audience.

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And if you all sent this podcast to one person, that would already double my audience. That effort would move me forward. If everyone sent it to 10 people, I'd knock that goal out of the park by the end of the year.

And so, I so appreciate all of the sharing, the reviews you've already done. I love hearing from you. I especially love when, like is happening in the Art School now, I get to work with those of you who I didn't know I felt connected to earlier, but it is so epic and surreal to connect over – I want to say in-person. We'll get there again someday too. But for now, over our virtual classrooms, in Slack and on Zoom.

Thank you for everything that you bring to this community. And again, I would love your help in crossing that finish line. So, in closing, I wanted to leave you with something to chew on, take for your walks, journal, meditation, conversations with your friends and compadres and colleagues this weekend.

So, in another part of Brandi Carlile's memoir – and I dog-eared this and underlined it and put all sorts of exclamation marks by it – she talked about clearly making the decision to go all in on her music career and to make her success this time be completely about being herself and doing it her way.

Obviously, that made the hair stand up on the back of my neck. I connect with that for so many reasons. And also, we get the advantage of having witnessed that really worked for her. And so, for those of you listening, what would it look like for you to commit to that, to commit to reaching for the thunderbolt energy? How would that be different? And what would it be like to go really all in on this dream, this goal, desire, and all in on the aspect – or this is one of the sacred twin intention I've talked about on earlier podcasts, where you really commit to doing it by being you.

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This time around though, when you're thinking about being you, rejecting any small versions, rejecting any duckling's quack versions and really opening yourself up to the truth of what your own thunderbolt energy would be, really questioning and getting curious about all the places where you've been holding back and what it would feel like, even if it feels unfamiliar, does it still not ring so much more true to you to harness that thunderbolt?

Rewrite your story from that place. Have a beautiful week, everyone. I love you guys, I truly cannot say enough about how grateful I am for this community. And I just get so excited thinking about those of you that I have yet to meet, connect with in real life, that day will come. And until then, have a beautiful, amazing week. I'll talk with you next time.