

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them



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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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According to Wikipedia, an epiphany is from the Ancient Greek, “Epiphaneia,” a manifestation, a striking appearance. It is an experience of a sudden and striking realization. Generally, the term is used to describe scientific breakthrough or religious or philosophical discovery. But it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realization allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective.

So, I’ve been thinking about epiphanies, had them on the brain, knocking on my consciousness for months and months. And I realize that one of my core fascinations with the topic is not just in the event itself, that moment when the lightning bolt strikes and the realization or the insight occurs. It’s in the mystery that somehow the knowing was already there.

And before the light switch was thrown, the room was there, and then the switch is there and then we have access to something that has been that way all along. We have access to a knowing which we have somehow known all along.

It is contemplating this connection between epiphany and deep knowing, and does the deep knowing flow only after the event in linear time? Or does it suggest that that deep knowing was present before, or perhaps it exists, as I think, just outside of time and space?

These are thoughts, questions I love to consider, and I think without even needing to arrive at an answer, just contemplating the mystery of epiphany and the deep knowing that they reveal has stunning implications for our creativity, for our entire lives.

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

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

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

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*. So, this week, I am riding a magical, mystical high. If I could manage to swing the rights to the song, we'd have Into the Mystic, all sorts of soundtracks leading us in today. It has been quite the week.

We have had an epic week of coaching. I mean, I, every week, show up and bring my A-game. And then there has been also this evolution in my own coaching process where I feel that the real upping of the game for me now is to surrender more, to trust my skills and instincts. And then also to trust that I can hold a space for something way bigger than me to happen. And that when you invite in others, whether it's a one-on-one session with a client or whether it's a group, that there is something greater than all of us but deeply connected to each individual going on.

And it is a hard thing to put into words, but I've experienced it in spades this week, along with the rest of my Art Schoolers and those that have joined us for the masterclass.

As one of my Art Schoolers massaged me and said, "Man, you better take all that wild, magic energy and go make your podcast and spread that all over that listening audience. Everybody should have some of this."

And we were talking about this being the room to be in, like hitting the epic jackpot, being in a room where this kind of action, movement, coaching seems too small of a word, participation, and shifts, and conversations are happening. But there is definitely no other room I would rather have been in this week.

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

It seriously – I was telling a friend, I just feel like a million bucks. I feel so damn lucky to be square in the middle of doing what I'm doing right now, working with who I am working with and that that is an awesome feeling. That feeling where, as I was talking about in last week's episode, you're doing something that just makes that deepest part of you sing and it makes you feel like you're resonating with something that sings in the universe.

Trust me, building a business or coaching or art, whatever, raising a family, life does not always feel like that. But I feel like moving through those moments where it hasn't has also built muscles and containers and momentum and gathered and coalesced energy and let compounding and accumulative effects occur so that things like this can happen.

And so, wherever you are, I feel like I'm sending this message out to an earlier version of myself as well as anyone else who needs to listen. Keep on keeping on. And it is not pie in the sky to look for that which lights you up, that which gives you goosebumps.

And also know, it's so worth it to move through the times when it's boring and it's repetitive and you're doing things that feel like they're not adding up. But keep reminding yourself of who you are becoming in the process. Be really clear and proud and falling in love with that, remind yourself of that daily because that is the way of being, that is the person you are creating, that is the mindset, that is the emotional energetic state that you are building, those are the actions that you are making second nature.

And so, hold onto your vision. It is not too weird or too out-there to come to fruition. But you have to have the muscle to hold the space. And part of what having that muscle feels like is sometimes like you don't have the muscle and you just keep going anyway.

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

Sometimes, it feels like defeat. Many times, it does. Or feels like rejection, or it feels like people don't understand you or people don't get you. Keep going back to that internal self-referencing of, "What am I creating here? Why am I doing this? Who am I becoming?" And keep thinking of that, what hitting the jackpot would feel like for you in terms of waking up in a life and let it include how you move through the challenging stuff.

So, all this actually is not today's episode, necessarily. It's moving more towards the episode – another episode I have – coming for you. So, today's episode actually is useful if you also listen in conjunction with last week's episode.

But just to get you up to speed on one point in particular that I want to tie in, in last week's podcast – and even if it was only in passing – I was talking about the concept of that inner genius, your genius being something that you surrender to. And one of the reasons that I have arrived at this, and I obviously think a lot about creativity and how people create things and how people change and the process by which we go about that, and we seem to be conditioned to usually think of it in one way.

And that is that we have to go out and improve something, including ourselves, develop something, get something, and I am not going to disabuse anyone of that or throw that out the window at all. I just want to widen the conversation to include sinking into or accessing knowings we already have, who we already are innately, sinking into our nature, sinking into gifts we are born with, things that we know that we have never had to acquire, we just somehow know them.

And are there ways to go out and cultivate and refine and, yeah, just bring to evolve them, definitely? And I think though that there is an imbalance

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

towards continually seeking to add something to ourselves, rather than sinking into that which is within ourselves.

And so, I find this so interesting to think about in the context of epiphany and revelation, which are slightly different things. Because oftentimes, they have come on the heels of massive inquiry or search into an area. Which does include the part where we go out into the world and we search and we investigate and we think harder and you learn and think about things from different angles.

And then, there is this moment where the light comes on and a sudden grasp of the essential nature of how things really are is understood, is grasped, is revealed or known entirely or at least at a different level. Can we ever know if we know something entirely? I don't think so. But at least on a different level. And to such an extent that we can never unknow it.

And for macro-level things like gravity, the way we think about things going forward, the whole world is changed. So, I want to be really clear that I am not saying, "Don't learn. Don't evolve." I'm not saying any of that. Again, I'm just saying, I want to widen and broaden the conversation to include a knowing that we arrive at by other means, or maybe catches up to us, occurs to us. It arrives by other means.

I think another really fascinating assumption to look at is that it's on us, like it's our responsibility and also completely just centered around us to go about and do it, rather than like I was saying last week, after doing this work, really what I know is particular things choose particular people. And dreams, goals, visions, ideas choose a vessel.

I think that is, for me, one definition, one way of understanding too our genius, that there is a force within us that we do often disregard and we

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

don't pay attention to. I know my own life and I see it in front of my eyes, including this week, working with clients privately and in the Art School, what happens when people start to shift and sense within them that there is the presence of this larger force working within them and what happens when they turn towards cultivating a relationship with that force, trusting it, whether you want to call it your inner genius or inner guardian, an inner knowing or something greater moving through you, collective unconsciousness, your soul, the greater mind, whatever works for you.

But acknowledging that, even contemplating that, that it's not just on how we usually think of the human intellect and brain, but really thinking of ourselves as participating in something greater than us and that it's not just about us going out to achieve something, "Well I will become a creative genius by first beginning my work when I'm seven years old and then being accepted to Julliard and then apprenticing under X, Y, and Z, and then performing here or getting published there."

Those are all great. But rather, turning towards something where there is more mystery as well as all of those other things and surrendering to that. And why I am so fascinated by this, or maybe it has its claws – it doesn't feel like claws. It has me. It definitely has me – is because so many times, over and over again, I can see it from the outside-in as someone's coach. I can see that they are so much more than they are allowing themselves to see or know, that they know so much more than they are allowing themselves to know. There are these artificial barriers thrown up.

So, a question I will often use is, "What do you know that you're not letting yourself know?" Who do you know yourself to be that you're not letting yourself to be? Not everyone resonates with this kind of questioning. And I think it's not because not everyone has this aspect within them. Some

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

people call it the sleeping giant. But it's because not everyone is ready yet. And that's just fine. I wouldn't question anyone's journey.

But there have been so many times when I've asked this question, been in the right energy to ask it, they were in the right energy to receive it, and you can feel and sense something else awaken in them, something that's been given permission to be known or the person has been given permission to know that there is this something greater within them and acknowledge it. And things really start to change when you turn towards that.

And this week, we were talking about using horse-coaching language, like talking about joining up with that, or how do you nurture a relationship with that? And also talking about the things that stand in the way of connecting with that and nurturing a relationship with that.

And many of those things that stand in the way are things that we do encounter and work within coaching, whether it's mindset coaching or working with emotions, working with an active imagination. But I have this sense that something wants to come through for everyone, otherwise they wouldn't be in the room, like in the Art School room, or they wouldn't be my client.

And so, I know I'm working not only with the person, the personality that presents. But whatever it is that is working on their behalf. And I feel like this message was reinforced today too when we had the first of the dream analysis classes.

Moving into the messages that are coming through the unconscious and seeing what just almost unbelievable but believable, because you see it unfolding before your eyes, what nuanced, precise depth and wisdom come through these decoding of dreams?

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

You can see, again, lights go on for people and also there is this infusion of energy. It's like breathing with both lungs, with the entire being again. And again, it's these moments of yes, the light goes on, yes, there's the epiphany, the sudden realization, and what is so goddamn fascinating is that that knowing, it's a recognition. It's a recognition.

It's a reconnecting, a re-cognition. They've had the cognition. It's joining up with a cognition you've always had. And this is why I think it's so exciting to consider as an artist, but really as a creative human being for anything you want to create, to think that that recognition, that there is a cognition in you, there is a deep knowing within you of exactly what you need to bring whatever vision it is that you have to life.

Because that vision, I am guessing, includes you in your fullest, greatest expression. You continuing to express greater and greater levels of potential and experience greater and greater levels of fulfillment. Not once. Not a single time in all the time I've been doing this work, whether watching it through dream analysis or in coaching have I seen someone come into a deep knowing place where they have an epiphany, they drop into the recognition, the knowing, the joining up of that deep knowing, and I have not once ever had someone be disappointed by that or bummed out by that.

Not once has the knowing that they dropped into said, "Yeah, your fears and your doubts, you know what? They've been right. You are pretty much not cut out for it. You should hang it up. Really, just go back, dial it down. You're really pretty insignificant and puny, and you're right, your dreams don't matter. Your life doesn't really matter. Might as well throw in the towel and hang it up, or just sail right off into the sunset on that conveyer belt.

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

No, not once has anyone's deepest knowing has that kind of message for them. Because if a deep knowing has a message which then shows you, yes, the universe is vast and sublime and there is awe in the fact that we are small in proportion to the vastness of the universe, it is not the sort of realization that obliterates one or sends them into some form of nihilism or existential crisis. There is, again, a light that comes on and a deep, deep reassurance.

Also, though, the deep knowing that can be dropped into and remembered, reconnected with doesn't have to be about something, about the nature of reality or the nature of the universe. It can be something that just makes you feel known and seen and that your own innermost hopes and dreams and what you hope to be true about yourself, that those things are validated, that they are valid, that it hasn't just been you imagining it, but the deep knowing that you want what you want because it's who you're meant to be, that you love what you love because it was put there within you for a reason.

So, I wanted to kind of start this conversation emphasizing the deep knowing that yes, there's the event, there's the epiphany, but then there's the quote unquote after moment when you know something that perhaps you've always known, but you finally really get it.

And then, I also wanted to start there so that that vision is out in front of you, so then we can talk about, but what do you do before you're there? And I want you to consider that the seeking that you're doing, the dream that's planted within you as a part of that seeking all speaks to the knowing that exists, or perhaps those are clues. The dream is like the knowing throwing up an image of itself, like a flare, like a star, like a guiding star for you to follow.

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

People sometimes ask me if I have, like, shortcuts or hacks. And I don't like talking about that so much. But what I do love talking about are, like, what are the places where we unnecessarily delay ourselves and unnecessarily create suffering or make things harder for us than they need to be?

And I see one of these ways being when we don't trust ourselves. And granted, that gets to be a part of our process. If we don't trust ourselves, then we can honor that moving into learning how to trust ourselves is part of the process. And if that's part of your process, what I want to offer you is this conversation about there being a deep knowing and the way that it speaks to you and that that is valid and that you aren't just wandering out, lost in the dark for no reason, that it's not pointless, that yes, sometimes we do feel like we are wandering lost in the dark and that there can be true fear that it's pointless.

But the metaphor that I've used this week in the Art School is that – and this is how I see it for my clients – that the whole house is there. The structure is there. They're in the room. And then, you're groping around. You're letting your eyes adjust to the darkness.

And by the way, I can't remember who it is, but there is some artist or philosopher that has said, "It is in the darkness that the eye truly learns to see." So, there's that process going on. But what if we approached that part of being in the dark and groping around or banging into things as a legitimate part of the process, that we are clarifying?

And I won't go into detail here, but we go into much greater detail about how moving through the emotions that typically derail us, the emotions that typically either they shut us down, they paralyze, or we just don't do them, we run from them, we cover them up, we avoid going for our dreams even

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

in sneaky, unconscious ways because there is that particular emotion that we just fear that we can't actually move through.

So, we work a lot on how to experience, how to do these kinds of emotions and develop our relationship with ourselves in a different way, change our experience, our response to it from being one where we shut down to one where we open and we learn how to feel and how to feel it all and how that changes the wisdom that we're able to receive.

But that is a hard thing to do if you panic when you feel that you're in the dark. So, instead, one of the metaphors I was offering the Art School is that just know you're in the room. You are in the sacred room. This is the room to be in. And you're going to find the light switch. All of the mechanisms are there. The whole structure is there. The electricity is there. Power is on. Everything is ready to go. And it's this process of yes, groping around in the darkness, feeling your way, but allowing that to be, once you allow that to be a legitimate part of the process, something within you relaxes and you can go about it differently.

You can, again, let your eyes start to adjust to the darkness and start to trust being led as well. And I promise you that I'm not prescribing this because it's somehow virtuous. It is because the way people light up when they really move into being present with where their process is right now, even if it's in the moments before or the time before that recognition, that reconnecting with the deep knowing, even if the lights are still off, when you are present with where you are, even if the lights are off, even if you're groping around, your orientation to it changes.

The magic comes back into the room when you have the orientation that this is a sacred room you are in, then you have room for the sacred to come in. When you have the orientation that this life, this creative dance is

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

a dance with something capital-W, Wild, with a capital-C Creative, then you make room for that Wild, for that Creative, for those archetypes, for that energy to come in. And you can feel it, almost like you opened a window and whoosh, something fresh, something wild, something new, something different is going on. And that's the feeling. Like, "Oh, this is different. This is fun. And it is electrifying and alive in the best of ways." And then you remember, "Oh, this is what it's supposed to be. This is what it can be."

So, last week, I used the album Thriller and the creation of that to talk about following the goosebumps, following those moments for really reaching for something that is electrifying in whatever it is that you are creating.

And so, that is not to say that every single moment of creating anything feels electrifying. So, you have to be able to develop the kind of character, craft and mold your kind of character that can move through both and has the ability, has the capacity for many different kinds of energy.

Sometimes, it's that electric download, it's that epiphany. Other times, it is a tolerance and a determination and a trust and a love and a playfulness and a curiosity and this ability to take things seriously, not too seriously, have a light touch, but also honor yourself, that helps make the magic happen.

So, another point that I didn't talk about last week in regards to the creation of the Thriller album was about the album's title, and also the title song. So, Quincy Jones had asked the songwriter, Temperton, to come up with both the album title and also the title song, the title for what we now know as Thriller.

So, the songwriter goes back to his hotel room that night and he writes down hundreds of possible titles for this album. And the best he comes up

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

with, what he decides upon is Midnight Man. And now, can you imagine, having known that album, the title Midnight Man? It was never meant to be Midnight Man. It's so clear that that album is meant to be Thriller.

But that is what occurred to him after this process of writing down hundreds of possible song titles, thinking he'd nailed it and then waking up the next day being like, "Oh no, got it. It's Thriller." Temperton said it just popped into his head and then, also, you could see it at the top of the Billboard Charts, you could see the merch for it. It just seemed like a clear that's-it.

And then, a similar story with the title of the song that we now know as Thriller. That song was originally supposed to be titled Starlight, to go with some of the music in the chorus. And while they liked the song, they wanted something a little bit edgier, something that sounded a little bit more like Edgar Allan Poe. And so, Temperton came back again with the title Thriller because they had already named the album that and it just seemed to fit and was a clear yes, like and clearly a yes to all of us now in hindsight. How could it be anything – can you imagine that song, Starlight? No. The album, Midnight Man? No.

So, these are not only some of the things that I love thinking about that I could totally geek out over in and of themselves, however I also do have this pragmatic side. And how I want to turn it back around to you and to my clients is to say, if you consider this concept of epiphany – and there's no way I'm attempting to nail down the mystery of this, nor do I want to ever, and especially it would be absurd to do it in a single podcast episode, or to think you could, or what deep knowing is.

But why I wanted to highlight it was because, for me, one of the definitions, one of my own working definitions for epiphany is it is that event that the connection is made that we then suddenly know what we know, what we've

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

been waiting to know that we know, or what outside of us has been waiting to reconnect and be known through us.

And if you now, at this point in the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen, I want to invite you to lean in and really work with me, coach with me, I want to invite you to think about a few different things here.

What would change for you if you allowed yourself to imagine that there is a deep knowing? That either is searching for you, wanting you to make the connection, or you're searching for it, or both, but what would change for you? If there wasn't something outside of you, like one more thing you had to encounter, go get, you can still do all that. But if you also allowed yourself to imagine relaxing into a deep knowing, like, what would you know? What could you do if you gave yourself that level of permission? If you imagined that instead of an epiphany being like a lightning strike, that perhaps epiphany could occur by us flipping a switch, and perhaps that flipping of the switch could be giving ourselves permission to know what we know. That could be a single event. But I also want to invite you to consider more broadly and exhaustively, what ways can you give yourself permission to know what you know?

The paradox might be that some ways we give ourselves permission is by going out and seeking and seeking what other people know. Sometimes finding out what other people know helps us clarify that, "No, that's not it. And if I can clarify that that's not it, that must tell me I know more than I've been allowing myself to realize."

And here's another way you can approach it, an exercise you can try to perhaps get around the left side of the brain. You can even try writing this with your non-dominant hand. You could draw a column on the left side

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

about what you currently know, and on the right hand side, right at the top, if I were you, post epiphany, what would I know? What would an epiphany give me the ability to know? What do I want to be able to know? What do I want to have access to? What kind of imagination, what kind of ideas, and what kind of state of being? What kind of energy do I need to be in? What kind of quietness of the analytical mind and what kind of wild free-reeling imagination and spirit space can I allow myself to let some of those things come in?

How can I create that kind of sacred room space? The kind where all sorts of illuminating, thrilling things occur to you? The kind where your own deep knowing is felt, touched, holds you, you hold it, where it all is illuminated?

And finally, this part is so important. How can you be with yourself in the spaces before that happens? Because that does seem to be a critical piece of it, whether that's in scientific discoveries, creative endeavors, personal breakthroughs in people's lives, whether in health, relationships, finances, there seems to be this before phase where people are endeavoring and you still feel like light hasn't broken yet, that dawning, that realization, that owning, that knowing hasn't happened yet.

And I think that is one of the most scared spaces we can be in. And having that orientation that that is a sacred space for us to be in, that there is an invitation there to deepen our relationship with ourselves, to deepen our relationship and come into a knowing and an awake, aware conscious relationship of something wanting to happen through us and for us, that that is every bit as mystical and mysterious and profound and sacred as the knowing that occurs after the epiphany.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I so appreciate your ongoing efforts to help me reach a million

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

Ep #156: Understanding Epiphanies and Where to Find Them

downloads. A few ways you can do that, if you haven't already, are to go to iTunes, subscribe, and leave a review. Another way is organically to share this with as many friends, colleagues, allies, strangers in the coffee line, anyone who could use a sense of expansion of what's possible for them, and also a reconnection to their own deep knowing that they do have what it takes to create what they most want and they can do it from the inside out, like on their own terms.

And if that's something you want to learn to do in your own life and you want to be in the room where creative breakthroughs are happening on the regular, where we are normalizing extraordinary creativity, extraordinary results, and extraordinary living and process, then I would love to work with you in the Art School.

And the best way to stay in the loop about upcoming offerings, whether they be the mastermind, private coaching opportunities, or upcoming Art school courses, immersions, retreats, or extended events, again, the best way to stay in the know is by being on my newsletter list. And you can sign up for that for free by going to www.leahcb.com.

To close for you today, I have a quote from Joseph Campbell, "A real artist is the one who has learned to recognize and to render the radiance of all things as an epiphany, or showing forth, of the truth."

Have a radiant week, everyone. Thank you for being here and I look forward to talking with you next time.