

Ep #161: How to Make the Best Use of Your Imagination



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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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

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“The best use of imagination is creativity. The worst use of imagination is anxiety.” Deepak Chopra. In today’s episode, I want to share with you a simple but powerful tool for making the best use of your imagination, so that you truly can know that your ability to create anything you want knows no bounds. And here’s the real Creative capital-C revolution; that you can do this from a radically relaxed state. I hope you enjoy this episode.

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*. I am recording this early December and we are coming off a wonderful Thanksgiving week. For a number of reasons, we decided to stick close to home here in Michigan, rather than travel and see family for this holiday, so that we can travel with everyone fully healthy after Christmas and get together.

But it also allowed for this spaciousness, the ability to sink into the days. We got our tree. We went to this beautiful tree farm in Southwest Michigan and brought it home. We decorated it together. It was so cute. My daughter is the greatest Elf.

My boys helped too. And Blaise though was so into it. Brad and I had gone for a walk, actually, after we got the tree. And we were out on the walk and his phone rings and it’s her calling from inside the house, and she just said, “When you get home, can we decorate the tree please?”

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And if you've ever heard an eight-year-old's voice over the phone – I mean, I hear her voice every day. And still, when I hear it over the phone, it just breaks my heart open in the best possible way and melts me because it just brings me more presence knowing how precious this time is, this age. They're all precious ages. So, my husband was like, "Oh my gosh, we've got to turn around now. How can you say no to that?"

So, it was really – he built a fire, and of course, my kids had their fair share of squabbling too. But we also, I think with the downtime, it kind of relaxes their central nervous systems too. And we had a wonderful time. We played games. We had a fire, a quieter Thanksgiving that was simple and beautiful in our own home. And then, we also had a lot of friends over, over the next few days, and got to share the tree, the fire, and fun, and food with all of them.

So, extending all of these just warm, giving, generous vibes and energy to all of you, even if you are not in the US and don't celebrate Thanksgiving. I think it's a beautiful occasion. I mean, obviously we are not celebrating the oppression of Indigenous People. Let me just say that. That is no longer what the holiday is about for us. And my children have a very different experience now.

When I was growing up, Thanksgiving, and particularly in school there was always a Thanksgiving pageant and you dressed like the pilgrims. And it's changed. And there is progress. And there is also, still remaining, this ability to celebrate the harvest, the literal and the metaphorical, and having a ritual in our lives where we come back together towards the end of the year and share food and are together and celebrate the connections that we have and celebrate the good fortune that we have and also think about how we can extend that to others.

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Another heartwarming thing that I thought, “Oh my gosh, I want to share this with the podcast audience...” and then we’ll get down to the podcast. But in case, you know, you’re going about your week and you’re like, “Wow, what is going on in the world?” here’s just some heartwarming chicken soup for the soul kind of moments, tiny moments, but awesome.

So, at my youngest two’s school and the upper-elementary, they do this thing called advent angel. It is like secret Santa, but with this advent twist. And the parameters of it are that each child draws another child’s name in secret, and that you create homemade gifts, and that the last day can be a baked good, but everything leading up to that day, it’s just homemade.

And to see – so it’s my middle son who’s in this process now – to see the thoughtfulness and care that he puts into making something for – in his case he drew another little boy’s name, and each child feels out what some of their favorite things are, what colors. This boy had, on his little sheet, his favorite color is red. He loves dogs. He loves Minecraft.

And so, my son is taking all this in. And obviously, he knows him from school too. So, he’s making him these little origami figures, trying to figure out how to make Minecraft things out of origami. And this little boy likes Rubik’s Cubes, so my son was making him a homemade Rubik’s Cube. This little boy likes music too, and so Sammy was making him a harmonica out of rubber bands and popsicle sticks and straws, and then decorating it.

And he puts a couple hours, at least, into this and loves doing it. And then, to see what he brings home – like yesterday, he brought home – the person who has his name had given him a booklet of word puzzles, like wordsearch, crossword puzzles that were all made up of words of things that this person obviously knows Sammy loves. It’s so dang sweet.

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And it's just so wonderful too to see how the kids get into it and how they love to be thoughtful. So, I wanted to share that bright moment with you, a little bit of color commentary. And I hope that you are finding a lot of those bright moments. It reminds me of last week's – no, two weeks ago – the podcast episode where I was talking about Joe Dispenza's phrase about gratitude being the ultimate state of receivership and how I find that helpful to flip sometimes and say receivership is the ultimate state of gratitude.

So, I completely feel in gratitude, in receivership, witnessing the giving and receiving in my children's lives. And so, maybe just a little invitation to rest and dwell in that space and energy for you.

Also, not unrelated to the theme for this episode, and really the theme for this cluster of episodes this season, as we're moving from the end of November, harvest time, Thanksgiving, into Hanukkah, into Advent, Christmas, the Celebration of Lights, so many holidays.

Because there can be a lot of pressure on making this a magical and special time of year. Also because we know the new year is around the corner, that can also make us feel that there's this mounting pressure. And all of this pressure can end up making things feel anything but magical, and instead, actually very much anxiety-ridden, and that there is so much pressure and stress that we are even just missing out on the simple goodness in our lives and actually the magic that's just there for us to receive, thinking that we have to create all of it.

And obviously, this is a podcast about creativity and about helping you live from your zone of creative genius, helping you unleash your creative genius. So, I am all for making the magic and being a vehicle and an agent of epic creativity and making things that we love and are so proud of and that contribute in making an impact.

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And there must also be a place for the receptive aspect of creativity, where we create space to allow things to flow in for us, and also, allow things to flow through us. We have been talking a lot in this podcast – all the time, but particularly more recently too and in the Art School – about upper limits, about Gay Henricks' book *The Big Leap*, about quantum creativity, quantum leaps, and shifting to your next big level and evolution, really a creative evolution.

And I have spoken to so many people lately who feel a massive shift and who just feel differently and can't even quite articulate why. Because, as we've talked about before, the mind is the last to know.

So, how can we, particularly at this time of year when there can be so much pressure to push and to be in overdrive, how can we then stay connected to ourselves in mind, body, and spirit, how can we stay connected to our own innate creative genius, our own inner creative rhythm?

So, the quote that I used for the intro, "The best use of imagination is creativity. The worst use of imagination is anxiety," from Deepak Chopra. It reminds me also of a Buddhist saying, which is, "The mind is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master."

So, quotes like that, too often, we can hear and we can sense, cognitively get the wisdom in them. But then, we don't know quite how to slow down and take them in and integrate them in a way that actually changes our life, so that we are actually making the best use of our imagination, and not falling into what seems to be the default, the pull of making the worst use of it.

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Because if you look around, it seems there's beautiful creativity, yes, and there are so many of us suffering with so much anxiety. And so, cue the simple and powerful tool that I want to introduce today. And because it's simple, don't dismiss it. I will just let you know, it centers around a mantra or an affirmation.

And I'm well aware of the criticism and skepticism around affirmations and mantras. And a lot of that is well-founded. And yet, the criticism that ends with, "Well they just don't work," tends to preclude any thoughtful and really a discussion with more depth about why.

Is it that they don't work? Or that we're not taught the proper mechanisms? We actually aren't conditioned, generally as a population, to know how to meditate, to know how to use our mind. Because even if you look at that, those two easy sentences there from Deepak, "The best use of imagination is creativity. The worst use of imagination is anxiety." In those simple sentences, there is a huge assumption, "The best use."

It assumes that, as humans, we have the ability to use our imaginations, to use our minds and not be at the whim of them, not be trapped in them. I saw a line from Sylvia Plath the other day that said – it was so despairing, "Is there no way out of the mind?"

And that, you can almost hear a cry for help within that, and to that, there is so much hope in these ancient traditions, these traditions that have been around for thousands of years, that point to this greatly untapped potential of humans, in humans, in the human mind, to use the mind.

So, sometimes, I realize I have my own assumption in making this podcast, and that is that listeners of this podcast are already meditating, are already experienced meditators. And if you are not, let this just be my public service

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announcement, and not from a, “Do this to be virtuous,” place, not anything empty or performative or to check off some box that alleviates shame or gives some empty gold star. But simply because meditating then helps you move into a place where you even just start to catch a glimpse of what’s going on in there, first of all, and that we do have the power to move our attention and focus.

And so, if you also consider the Buddhist saying that the mind is a terrible master but a wonderful servant, and we’ll hear that and be like, “Yeah, agreed. But what do I do with that?” Well, you have to think about, “How are you as a master?”

Are you exercising the agency – and here’s an amazing word – dominion in your life? That’s not dominion as in dominating. That’s dominion as in owning your responsibility, your creative abilities in your life. Dominion is not something that needs to subdue any nature, but is at one with nature, knows the nature and knows how to interact with the nature.

What comes to mind to me are those times when I’ve witnessed people who have a way, a masterful and it seems almost mystical way with animals, whether it be dogs or horses or humans. They seem to be so connected with their own nature that they are exercising a sort of dominion in their own life where they are not bending anyone else’s will involuntarily to their own, but other creatures sense the safety and the leadership and respect that and respond.

And so, let me just be clear, when I say dominion, I’m just asking you to consider that as maybe a word you haven’t thought about in a while and is maybe a word you haven’t thought about as it relates to your own inner life and to, quote unquote mindset work, and that meditation is a way to come

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into familiarity, to become more acquainted with the inner kingdom, the inner landscape that is your own mind, with your own inner nature.

So, I won't make this entire podcast about meditation. And that could easily go down so many rabbit holes, and we'd be here a year later and still scratching the surface. But maybe just to be the extra nudge you need to begin, even just 15 minutes a day.

So, as exercising your agency, as the master of your mind, or as being someone who uses their imagination creatively, what are some ways you can begin? Well, I mentioned one already, meditation. And then the second, the one that I wanted to introduce today, that I am introducing today, is having a central affirmation or mantra; something that you orient yourself to, something that becomes your North Star.

And so, again, I want to just speak to a lot of the criticism and skepticism around affirmations and mantras and say that, a lot of the people that are saying they don't work, I'm wondering how much they have worked with it or with what methodology, or with what ways.

So, that's not to say that they're wrong and I'm right or anything like that. But it's also just to say there's room also for questioning skeptics and questioning doubters and questioning their methodology and not just – there can be this false and final authority when someone deems something to be ineffective.

And that puts us back in our place and we're, like, afraid to question that. But let's keep the conversation open and going. And so, I wanted to offer you a few ways of thinking about a mantra or an affirmation that may trigger something helpful, may invite you into a useful place. So, you can also think of this as a meta program.

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If you, your being, is the hardware and our thoughts, our beliefs are the software, what is the meta program? What are the meta programs running that are the engines, primarily driving and creating your life, your perception of your life, your orientation in life, and the results that you get in your life?

And within that too, I want to pull out that word orientation again, coming back to what is the pull star for you. How do you orient yourself in the world?

Are you orienting yourself to creating a heaven on Earth or a hell on Earth? And in general, sometimes that question alone for me can bring me such great relief and perspective and put me back in more of a seat of agency and ownership in relationship to my own mind and whether I am being more the master or more the servant.

And believe me, I have plenty of experience all the time being not only the servant, but the beat-up whipping-post kind of servant. And so, another word, phrase that I wanted to introduce that might be useful in helping orient you to how to think about this is, what is your guiding central intention?

And so, as you know, if you follow my work, at the core of my work is helping people, facilitating people shifting from a survival mode to that capital-C place, helping facilitate for them, living from a place where they flow their innate genius and they create their lives from that place.

And so, moving from that survival, fight or flight, into a deeply innately capital C Creative mode where you relax into your innate power, and from that place you're able to flow what's yours to flow. You're able to access the inner resources and marshal outer resources to create anything you

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can envision, and from such a different place than you've ever done it before.

Within that, having a central guiding intention to bring you back to what you want, the vision that you know can be true for your own life. So, it's within this context that I wanted to introduce using a mantra, an affirmation, and particularly referencing, since we've been talking about big leaps and quantum shifts and upper limits, using Gay Hendrick's ultimate success mantra that he talks about in his book *The Big Leap*.

He talks about an ultimate success mantra as being a comprehensive intention that you'll use to center yourself. So, again, think about how we're talking about orienting – how to center yourself in your zone of genius. And in talking about the ultimate success mantra, he says, "It's a set of instructions to your conscious and unconscious mind, designed to inform all your actions and decisions. If you use the ultimate success mantra as instructed, your life will gradually conform to the comprehensive intention..." think of that again as a set of instructions, "Contained within it."

So I want to pause there too and tease out some important words that he uses. Because I offered you some words and phrases before and he offers you some more. He talks about a set of instructions.

So, going back to Deepak's quote about the best use and the worst use of imagination and how that assumes that we are the ones using it, that we have this ability to be users of it, going back to the Buddhist saying about the mind can be a wonderful servant – if the mind is there to serve, are we communicating to it how it should serve us? Or are we just sort of abdicating our agency there and not having a conversation?

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So, having a central organizing principle, intention, having a mantra, having an affirmation can be that way we communicate to our mind as servants, to our imagination as creative supporter, as that animus, which is meant to support our creativity and move it into the world.

We can use an affirmation, a mantra to mold our mind, to help shape the servant, to give it instructions to both the conscious and the unconscious mind, like, what we actually want it to do.

Also, I wanted to offer this idea, which is not my idea. It is one I subscribe to. But that is that certain words and also tones have a resonance that part of our mind already taps into and that we then don't need to overthink it.

So, a word like abundance, that means so much within the human consciousness that there is already this great stream of energy. And if you think of a work like om... a sound, not a word, but a sound like om, that is used in meditation as well as many other Sanskrit terms and words are also – I am Catholic, there are words and terms that invoke a certain energy or a frequency with the use of that word. And it is not just an empty symbol word. It is actually inviting that energy inviting your mind to either be an antenna for that energy and call it in, or to rise, or to match that energy, so that there is so much more going on than the meaningless and empty repetition of words.

And I think sometimes too, that is where it can feel like mantras or prayers or affirmations fail, is because we have this orientation, typically this very conditioned sterile orientation that our words and our language and the resonance of our voice, or the resonance of our voice, even in the silence inside our mind, that that has no effect.

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And I think this is largely a product of an inculturation or conditioning that we, as individuals, have no power or effect. But if you think about the myth, the lore of – including fairytales with magical spells. You don't use any word. You use a certain word, or certain words in combination. And they invoke things.

And all of this is to say, those kinds of stories are meant to instruct us and to instruct our psyche. But if we don't think of ourselves as having a psyche or having a soul or having this other worldly connection, again, we'll stay in this sterile place where things like this won't mean much to you. It will just sound like more of the tyranny of positive thinking or what I think of as a bully-coaching approach to people. Like, "Just use enough positivity and affirmations to get over the dark side," and that's not what I'm talking about at all.

I actually think one of the core reasons affirmations and mantras and prayers and intentions fail us is because of this underwriting, overarching pervasive conditioning that we are not powerful and that we are not agents of our own mind, that we don't have the ability to use our mind and that our imagination and sort of just this – we want to subscribe to we have so much potential. But really, we're conditioned to think, "No, we're pretty limited."

And those boundaries are set and we don't play with them. We don't push them. And I think that's the deeper message in today's episode, really, is to sit with that and what is your orientation towards that? If you want to think about something that will change the rest of your life from here going forward, it could be a decision about how much mastery, how much potential for mastery do you really have over your own mind?

And even as I'm speaking and using those words, I'm seeing too where other conditionings and inculturations of language are part of the problem

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and failing us. Because master can mean something very negative, and mastery, there's still so much of that energy or the connotation of dominating and overpowering and even that master-servant orientation.

So, I'm doing the best I can with the words and phrases that we are familiar with. I do love Deepak's language of the uses of our imagination and creativity, and also this word dominion, thinking of yourself as being like a kind, gentle, loving caretaker, guardian, steward, kind, queen, having dominion over this land that is the inner and outer landscape of your mind and then of your life, of the life that that mind creates.

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, in this part of the podcast, I wanted to introduce Gay Hendricks' ultimate success mantra, the one that he shares in *The Big Leap*.

And that is, "I expand in abundance, success, and love every day as I inspire those around me to do the same." And he gives instructions in the book for how to work with this. Say it a few times in your mind, savoring the comprehensive idea that lives within it.

Think about that. Think about what he means by a comprehensive idea, and that also there is a reason he's talking about abundance, success, and love together. Because generally, those are the categories in which we think, "Something's got to give. If I make a lot more money, then I'm going to be exposed and somehow that's going to negatively impact my success." Or, "If I'm doing well in abundance and career success, then I can't also have love in my life. My family, my relationships, something is going to suffer."

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So, he's talking about the comprehensive idea of you moving out of the box of limitation and into this unlimited, gentle, beautiful unfolding magic, upward spiral where you continue to grow and evolve beautifully.

And then he says, "Whisper it to yourself in the quiet of your mind. Let it resonate in the vast reaches of your consciousness." So, even phrases like, "The quiet of your mind," maybe we'll do another episode on that, just staying, finding, letting yourself consider, even if it feels like an impossibility now, that the quiet of your mind is something you can have and something you can savor.

And then, he includes that instruction, letting those words, letting it resonate in the vast reaches of your consciousness. So, actually doing these things, sitting with that, how do you say something and let it resonate to the vast reaches of your consciousness?

I know a lot of people who I have talked to who have been frustrated with mantras and affirmations, was through n fault of their own, they had never been told something like, "Let it resonate through the vast reaches of your consciousness." Even if they'd read this book, their mind went right over it super fast, just like, "Those are words on the page. I'm not actually supposed to do something with that."

But when we slow down, like what is that? What unfathomable depths and outer galaxies are in the cosmic miracle that is you? Have you ever sat and tried to reach the outer reaches of your consciousness? Have you ever considered that that's something possible for you?

And then, have you taken a mantra, words like this, and considered that you are powerful enough to send a vibration like that to the vast reaches of your consciousness? And then ever allowed yourself to suspend disbelief

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and stay in the place of, “What if this is how the universe works?” as many great thinkers have said, through vibration, through energy, through frequency.

Oh, and would you look at that, me as a human, you as a human, are capable of creating vibration, frequency, energy, capable of receiving, capable of creating, capable of moving it out into the world.

Gay Hendricks goes on to say that “The ultimate success mantra directly counters the upper limit problem, which is based on instructions from long ago, to contract or to hold yourself in check. The ultimate success mantra is the antidote to years of conditioning, the ancient programming that convinced the unconscious mind you don’t deserve full success. I want you to mount a gentle but unstoppable offensive against that conditioning. And the ultimate success mantra is the best way I have found to do that.”

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I really appreciate your listenership and this ever-growing audience. And if I could ask for a favor from you this holiday season, I would really love your help in reaching more people with this podcast. And I have a goal of reaching a million downloads, which seems huge and maybe it is huge and audacious, it is awesome, and also when I think about doing it on my own, I definitely hit my upper limit.

But when I think about allowing in the help and support of others, it feels amazing. It feels completely doable and like magic. So, that is the favor I would love to ask from you, to subscribe, to leave a review. That is huge. That act of leaving a review just helps the podcast move up and up when people try to search it.

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And then also to share, to share with five friends, to share with 10 friends. So, thank you for your help in supporting me and helping this podcast reach more people.

And if you want to take this work deeper and apply these principles to your own life, move beyond your own upper limit, you can find out more about working with me by visiting my website, www.leahcb.com. You can also email us, support@leahcb.com.

So, it is early December 2021 as I record this. And we are currently accepting applications for the Art School Mastermind, spring 2022. So this is a six-month mastermind. It kicks off officially in January. Although I am offering two group bonus calls as well as a bonus one-on-one session with me for early bird enrollees.

And the deadline to submit your application to be considered for the early bird is December 14th. This next round of the mastermind is six months long, beginning the week of January 18th, and continuing through the week of January 19th.

Full details are available at my website. Also, I will say we are capping this group at 20 people. And we are less than a week into enrollment and already have seven applicants who are accepted and fully enrolled. So, if you are considering it, I'd highly encourage you to fill out the application. I've had people fill it out and tell me that they don't know if they're ready for the mastermind yet, which I completely respect. But they wanted to do the application for themselves and also because they felt like it was movement towards being ready in the future. And so, you are welcome to do that as well.

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One way I have been thinking about already creating and describing this upcoming mastermind, the Art School Mastermind 2022, is that whatever you're thinking of doing here in this mastermind, in this container, it's going to happen. That's how high the energy. That's how powerful the coaching, the intentions, the dreams, and the goals. And that is how utterly next-level the community is.

This will be pure and simple, you doing your best work ever, feeling your best ever, and being more fulfilled, happier, healthier, and wealthier in the process. And I will say too that, for the Art School Mastermind, it is ideal that you have in mind a central work that you are moving towards, a central vision.

So, whether that is a body of creative work, whether that is a book, whether that is publishing a book, whether that is you have the foundation already for a six-figure business and now you are growing it to seven and you feel ready for that, or maybe you are already an established artist and you are successfully selling paintings, and now you want to take that to the next level in terms of income, exposure, opportunities, and also consistency, and a consistency that serves you, not one that you demand from yourself, but really considering what is available to you in this lifetime and giving yourself that.

I've shared elsewhere in this podcast and certainly with the Art School community that one of my shorthand ways of thinking about legacy for my work is a PEGOT legacy. So, it's an acronym, PEGOT, for Pulitzer, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony. And that is not to say that it is about this externally driven empty process towards achievement, but it's instead, what do those things symbolize?

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To me, they symbolize somebody stepping out into the world and unleashing their potential, living from their zone of genius, so that they allow themselves the access to the inner resources and outer resources. They allow themselves to set up their lives in such a way where they are creating at that level, where they are doing their best work ever and also receiving the best opportunities ever, going for the best opportunities ever, removing any filters from their consciousness which have been syphoning out opportunities, wealth, relationship because of precisely the unconscious conditioning around, “Well that kind of success is not for me. I’m just not that kind of person.”

So, really, when I’m talking about the PEGOT legacy, it is about allowing the people who are drawn to this work because they know they have something within them. They know they have this God seed, this divine seed of creativity and they know that this is how they’re going to nurture it. They know that the dreams that they have are there for a reason.

And not there to torture them or frustrate them, but there to be moved out into the world and then also invite this deeply personal and spiritual and holistic, comprehensive evolution and actualization. So really, the PEGOT legacy for me is, again, a shorthand for creating a container and an experience and a community, a space where people become the person they really are, the person they were meant to be, they live the life, the full expansive life they were meant to live, they do the creative work, the work in this world that they are meant to do, that they have this gift of stepping into the experience of truly being themselves, truly living their life in this lifetime.

So, to close today, I want to share with you just a final word, final thoughts from Gay Hendricks on how to use the ultimate success mantra. He has so many sentences in this book that are really simple. And they could be so

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simple that you blow past them, or you could slow down and they completely disarm you and allow the wisdom to get in. And I wanted to share one of those sentences with you here.

“All you need to do is slip the ultimate success mantra into your thought stream from time to time and watch the magic unfold in your life.”

I have a beautiful story to share about this, but I will leave you with a bit of a cliffhanger and save that for next time. But in the meantime, here is, to you, slipping some beautiful language, intentions, guiding central principles, meta programs, orientations, unconscious, conscious instructions into your own thought stream, into your life, and watching the magic unfold.

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