

# Ep #170: Diagnosing and Overcoming Patriarchy Stress Disorder with Dr. Valerie Rein



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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Valerie: And yes, intellectually you may be very confident and you may really believe wholeheartedly that you're worthy of these things. But how we know that this programming is operating in the subconscious is through self-sabotage. Something is going to happen, either procrastination or, you know, you're doing great work, you're putting it out there but the money is not there, or you're working just so, so hard, it's exhausting, why is this so hard? And why am I never feeling satisfied at the end of the day?

All of these things are symptoms. Your subconscious is not onboard with what you consciously desire and it's actually driving the bus in a different direction. And what we know from neuroscience is that it is the subconscious that drives the bus. Our actions are decided in our subconscious.

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That was a clip from my recent conversation with Dr. Valerie Rein. Dr. Valerie Rein is a psychologist and women's mental health expert who has discovered patriarchy stress disorder, PSD, and created the only science-backed system for helping women achieve their ultimate success, happiness, and fulfillment by healing the intergenerational trauma of oppression.

Dr. Valerie's cutting-edge programs have helped thousands of women shift from, "How much can I bear?" to, "How good can it get?" from survival to thriving in their work and personal lives.

I have wanted to meet and have Dr. Valerie Rein on the podcast ever since I read her book *Patriarchy Stress Disorder: The Invisible Inner Barrier to Women's Happiness and Fulfilment* a few years ago. And then, as fortune

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would have it, I met her totally out of the blue, serendipitously. I'll share that story in this episode.

I mean, this conversation ran the gamut and also we barely scratched the surface of what she has to share. It is so rich and also will leave you wanting more in the best of ways. We talk about creativity, of course, and healing intergenerational trauma and how that impacts every aspect of your life, including your creativity. We talk about the subconscious, being a steward, attending to your central nervous system, embodiment over just purely consuming and intellectually learning.

We talk about the importance of creating deep safety, again, trauma work and healing from trauma, and I think you will find, no matter where you are on your journey, that this conversation offers so many a-has. Not only that, but again, invitations to go beyond the a-ha and really embody the transformation that this work offers, to really move beyond those invisible inner barriers to your own happiness and fulfillment.

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*. So, I'm coming to you fresh off a two-day snow day for my children. We had the big snowstorm here, which was actually lovely in many ways. I know we are very fortunate to be safe and warm. And I was also very thankful for the flexibility that I did have in my schedule this week to just put certain things on hold that could be put on hold, and to snuggle up with my kids and enjoy them paying outside and do a lot of extra baking

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and cooking and ping-ponging and card games and reading and snuggling before the fire. So, that actually all felt really nourishing.

And today, they're back at school. And also yesterday, they were super cooperative because I was on cloud nine, and also nervous about having the interview and the conversation, even though there's nothing about Dr. Rein – she's not intimidating, not threatening. I'm so inspired by her and I think so inspired that I had some productive nerves. And so, again, my family was awesome about laying low and being quiet, so we could have this conversation.

Before we launch into that conversation, I cannot overemphasize how excited I was to meet her. I mention a little bit in my conversation with her how I fan-girl'd and almost ambushed her. But actually, we met at the ICONIC Conference in Arizona. And I had just gone back to refresh my coffee and there was this woman with a beautiful energy, and I just introduced myself and said hello, and I went to ask her for her name and looked at her nametag and saw it said Dr. Valerie Rein, and then I was not cool.

I just said, "Oh, you're Valerie Rein, that wrote Patriarchy Stress Disorder," and she was like, "Yes, yes I am," in her beautiful accent. And yeah, I was just – I was not cool. I totally unleashed fan girl. And she so generously agreed to come on the podcast. I had wanted to talk with her, meet her, have her on the podcast from the moment I began that book and finished it a few years ago.

So, this was really a fun full-circle moment and probably contributed a little bit to my nerves. And also, fortunately, will not be the last conversation, so I'm looking forward to visiting with her again and seeing what other ways our work can align and that we can together support creatives and women

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and bring awareness to PSD, Patriarchy Stress Disorder, and the path of liberation from it.

And so, again, before we launch into that conversation, I wanted to share something that I shared on Instagram. It's very relevant; very relevant to the truth that not only can our bodies heal when our central nervous systems are called and returned to a homeostatic state, but that also allows us to heal our creativity, to create from a whole and holy and deeply empowered natural place.

So, one of my current masterminders had posted this on our Slack forum a week ago, "This container of the Art School Mastermind is the absolute most dreamy place I have ever been so myself, so not in fear, feeling safe to share the things I really want to share and honor."

That was profoundly important to me to read that. And also, I want to receive that because it is definitely my intention and by design that the Art School helps to facilitate a restoration of deep safety within ourselves.

And I also want to give credit to this member and to the other members because I design this container and this program to facilitate the creation of safety within ourselves, including restoring our central nervous systems to a state that is homeostasis, that is safety within ourselves and out of hypervigilance.

That doesn't mean we go to sleep. But that means we can be at peace and also be aware and take care of ourselves. But again, this member has done the work of creating that safety. Because there are always going to be things that activate and trigger us, including trauma within us. Again, we can heal. We can heal so much. We can heal so many traumas. And I also never want to ignore an opportunity to have us all take our own power

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back. And we don't need the world to be trigger-free. In fact, stressors help us grow, challenges and adversity.

But they also can be this invitation and portal into becoming someone with mastery who can learn to regulate their central nervous system, who can learn that they can partner with their central nervous system, who can learn that they can grow from trauma and that they don't have to continue to be traumatized by it.

So, I really wanted to also acknowledge this masterminder, my other masterminders, Art School clients in the past who have, yes, said yes to this container that I have designed so that they do have an opportunity to cultivate this deep safety within themselves. And I also want to celebrate that they said yes to that work, which requires being vulnerable, which by definition means you don't always feel comfort, and you sometimes feel fear.

And in that place too, you can learn to cultivate true deep safety. Because we're not just setting up circumstances so that you're never triggered, you're never activated, your central nervous system never has to worry about a thing. But we are learning to cultivate a relationship, a partnership with our central nervous system so that we can move out into the world, we're not fragile.

So, I'll continue with what I wrote on Instagram after she said this, that she has never been so herself, so no tin fear. Because this is what is available to all of us: the creatives that join the Art School Mastermind, and many of you listening, all of you listening, are already extraordinary, already magnificently creative, have achieved big and gorgeous success, and are committed to living fulfilling lives that are aligned with their souls.

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And they are also aware of ways where they have been holding back, where they allow themselves to be different and successful, but only so much, flying just under the radar. When you don't feel safe in the world, you will allow a trickle of your innate creative genius to flow. But the full weight, the gigantic force of who you really are, oh hell no. You'll keep that dammed and damned, lest all hell break loose and you flood, destroying yourself and those you love and all downstream in the floodplain with who you really are.

This sounds dramatic, but it's not an exaggeration. Successful, brilliant, gifted clients I work with harbor a secret fear that if they really let their genius rip, who they really are, then it'd cause harm, not only to their life, but to the lives of those they most love. In other words, in varying ways and degrees, they fear themselves.

On one level, they feel a call to create freely, unabashedly, unapologetically, ecstatically, exuberantly. On the other hand, there's this fear that it is shameful, wrong, reckless, or just downright dangerous.

On one hand, they're right. If you create as the force of nature you are, it is dangerous, fatal to the systems of oppression that we've internalized, systems that taught us to mistrust ourselves, our own connection to Creative Power, capital C, capital P, which is also our own direct connection to the divine, life, God, the universe, source.

When you can learn to no longer fear yourself, Creativity with a capital C, or your connection to it, it's not only dreamy. It's like waking from a dream and finding you are safe, you are home, there's no limit to what you can create from this place, from this extraordinary way of being that is just who you really are, when it feels safe to be you.



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So, that is the end of what I shared on Instagram. And so, much of what I was speaking to there, that there is just this fear of being ourselves. There is this primal mistrust of ourselves. This is actually what Dr. Valerie Rein's work is speaking to, this intergenerational trauma that we have inherited is that we have been oppressed and we have been conditioned to believe, over millennia, that we are not to be trusted, that our creativity is not to be trusted, that our connection to life and to the divine is not to be trusted.

And this is often the invisible barrier that we face, the way we upper limit, the way we self-sabotage, the way we hold ourselves back, and it's such a mystery to us. And then, we try to overcome it with just our mind, with just our intellect, with pure brute force and action. And then, we're exhausted. And because it's not working, then we think we are to blame. And we are not to blame. You are not to blame.

When I read this book, it was such a great a-ha and such a great relief, and I know many of you, that that's what's awaiting you around the corner, the a-ha, the relief. And then, I don't want you to stop there. I want you to take it further until you dissolve these inner barriers, really do the work.

And so, without further ado, let me introduce you formally to Dr. Valerie Rein. As I mentioned in the intro, she is a psychologist and women's mental health expert who has discovered patriarchy stress disorder, PSD, and created the only science-backed system for helping women achieve their ultimate success, happiness, and fulfillment by healing the intergenerational trauma of oppression. She holds an EDM in psychological counseling from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in psychology from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology.

Her Amazon number-one bestselling book *Patriarchy Stress Disorder: The Invisible Inner Barrier to Women's Happiness and Fulfillment* has been

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heralded as, “The most important body of literary work of our modern times,” and, “Perhaps the most important book of the century for women.”

Dr. Valerie’s cutting-edge programs have helped thousands of women shift from, “How much can I bear?” to, “How good can it get?” from survival to thriving in their work and personal lives.

And now, please enjoy this conversation with Dr. Valerie Rein.

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Leah: Well, I would love to welcome to the podcast Dr. Valerie Rein. And I will say, I wish I could cut to the moment when I first met Valerie in person, because I ambushed her at the coffee and tea station at Ali Brown’s ICONIC event, which fortunately didn’t scare away too much. So, she is joining us today. Welcome.

Valerie: Thank you, Leah. Thank you for having me. And that was a highlight, not only of my day but just a highlight of my life meeting you in this way because you brought in so much light and so much enthusiasm and sisterhood to that moment of us meeting in person. I just felt how you were living this work, how you were resonating with this work, and I just want to thank you for being a champion of PSD awareness and healing. By PSD I mean patriarchy stress disorder. I’m so excited to share with your listeners today.

Leah: It was my pleasure meeting you. And we were speaking, and then I saw your nametag and I thought, “Dr. Valerie Rein, is that the same Dr. Valerie Rein that wrote one of my favorite books, Patriarchy Stress Disorder?” Because it is, like – and also, I appreciate you using the word sisterhood because there is this moment when you meet another woman

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doing this work and a woman that has really just created a new paradigm for healing and empowerment. And part of that paradigm, we talk a lot about in the Art School and this podcast that our language – Desmond Tutu said, “Our language not only describes reality, but we create the reality we describe.”

And so, having a term for this phenomenon, patriarchy stress disorder, helps create a paradigm, helps create a new way. And revisiting before we started recording, I know my clients have read your book, and I also know there might be listeners who are not familiar with your work. So, can you describe for them what patriarchy stress disorder is?

Valerie: Yes. Women have been oppressed for thousands of years. And what I mean by that is that women’s bodies did not belong to us. We could not make our own money. We could not be sovereign beings making our sovereign decisions. We could not love who we loved. We could not marry for love. We could not get a divorce and have parental rights over our own children. Nobody cared about our ideas. Nobody cared about our contribution in the world, et cetera, et cetera. It runs very deep.

And we know from the new scientific field of epigenetics that trauma is genetically transmitted. Trauma is genetically transmitted. So, all of these thousands of years of oppression, all of these experiences have had their traumatic imprints that have been genetically transmitted, generation to generation. With their trauma adaptations, how to survive in the world, that has never been safe for a woman. That has never been safe for a woman.

And although we’re living in the reality where we have more opportunity than our ancestors, by a longshot, our biology has not caught up to our opportunity. Our biology still carries the imprint of trauma. And these imprints show up in how we think, how we feel, how we act, what choices

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we make, how we treat ourselves, how we relate to ourselves and our genius in the world, how much money we make. It reflects in our health, in our relationships, in our parenting, in our friendships, in everything.

And most of the things that we have been trying so hard to quote unquote fix in therapy, through personal development, have to do with this, have to do with intergenerational trauma or oppression with patriarchy stress disorder, and not with something quote unquote wrong with us.

Leah: Can you share the story – I mean, there are many striking stories you share in your book. Can you share the story about the research with the mice?

Valerie: Yes, in this study, researchers introduced the smell of cherry blossoms to mice while simultaneously zapping their feet with mild electric shocks. These mice were then bred, and their children and grandchildren, when exposed to the smell of cherry blossoms showed a strong fear and anxiety reaction.

To me, this study perfectly portrays how PSD functions. PSD, for women, is our fear of cherry blossoms and for us women with access to so much in the world now, cherry blossoms is everything that we authentically desire that has been historically prohibited and punishable for women on the patriarchy.

And that list is pretty long and exhaustive. If we think about it, everything falls under those categories, every authentic desire that we have for our fullest expression in the world, whether it is our sexuality, whether it is our ideas, whether it is how we play in any way, how much money we make, et cetera.

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All of this has been historically prohibited and punishable through pretty severe consequences. Much more severe than mild electric shocks. So, we can imagine how many instructions have been imprinted in our subconscious about how to survive in a hostile environment where we could not, not only reach for our desires, we could not even get in touch with our desires because that would be too painful and too dangerous.

Leah: And so, when you said these instructions have been imprinted in our subconscious, can you give some examples of what common instructions are. I mean, I'm asking because I know many of my listeners and clients will relate to what you say. Because for them, the fullest expression, they're artists, they're creatives, they're entrepreneurs, they're visionaries. They want to contribute. And so, if you could speak to what some of those subconscious instructions are.

Valerie: Of course. And they are even in our subconscious. That means the conscious story may be very different. But how we know that these instructions operate is that they're either holding us back from actually stepping into our genius and fully expressing it, or it takes a lot of really, really hard work to get our mindset right, to step into the spotlight and our fullest expression. And when we're there, we can't actually enjoy it because it's like it's a moving target, what's next? What's next? And that moving-target effect, these are also trauma adaptations from PSD that a woman's worth has been relegated to such a low place under patriarchy that if we step into our worthiness, it's a very challenging place.

It literally creates a dissonance in our system. That programming cannot digest, "Oh my gosh, am I worthy of recognition? Am I worthy of being seen? Am I worthy of being paid?" And yes, intellectually you may be very confident and you may really believe wholeheartedly that you're worthy of these things. But how we know that this programming is operating in the

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subconscious is through self-sabotage. Something is going to happen, either procrastination or you're doing great work, you're putting it out there, but the money is not there. or you're working just so, so hard, it is exhausting, why is this so hard? And why am I never feeling satisfied at the end of the day?

All of these things are symptoms. Your subconscious is not onboard with what you consciously desire and it's actually driving the bus in a different direction. And what we know from neuroscience is that it is the subconscious that drives the bus. Our actions are decided in our subconscious, according to neuroscience, which is literally mind blowing.

And so, understanding by looking at the evidence what is in our subconscious, and if the bus of your life is not moving in alignment with your desires, it's not your fault. It's not your fault. We need to take a look at what is driving and what is feeling unsafe deep down inside, and how to create that safety. And this is what this work is all about in uncovering and healing PSD and other hidden traumas is understanding what is creating unsafety, and we can pretty much guess that, that visibility, success, wealth, intimacy, all of these things, being seen, create a lot of unsafety.

Although, the story in the mind may be quite different, "Oh, I'm afraid of failure. I'm afraid people will reject me." And there is that in the mix. And from what I've seen, the fear of success is actually much greater than the fear of failure for women, which is not always conscious of that because consciously it doesn't make sense, why would I be afraid of success?

But when we look at the history, we look at it through the lens of PSD, we see, oh my gosh, every visible and powerful woman throughout history has been persecuted one way or another. And even now, look at the media coverage of powerful women, look at the social media gaze at women or

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women's bodies being policed or women's input in the world. You know, it's being judged so much harsher and with so much prejudice as compared to men.

And this is not about women versus men whatsoever. It is about understanding how this oppression has been affecting women and has been affecting men and it is affecting people across the gender spectrum. It is about understanding what is in our subconscious and how it's showing up in our lives.

Leah: I'm sure you have seen examples of this. One subconscious instruction or program that I've seen running in my own life that I have brought to the surface and worked with – and just this last week there was a powerful story with one of my mastermind clients, is changing the paradigm even around when women are brought to the conversation of, like, what is power? When the feminine is brought into the conversation of what is power.

Because part of, in my experience, I've seen women hesitate from – I don't think it's like stepping into their power. It's relaxing back into their innate power and that they don't have to become good enough. But it's coming as they are. But then, the paradigm of the zero-sum game, the paradigm of power that says power is about dominating another and power is about hierarchy and winners and losers.

And so, I see so many women then subconsciously – I mean, consciously they wouldn't want to dominate or hurt anyone. But subconsciously, they definitely step away from power or put themselves in losing scenarios, self-sabotage, as you said, because if they're operating in that paradigm of winners and losers, they are not going to win at someone else's expense.

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They do not want to allow themselves to shine if it somehow hurts another, endangers another. And then, there's also this behind closed doors and intimate conversations with people who are like, "I know this seems crazy but I have a primal fear, almost. I am fulfilled and happy and successful, that that's like Icarus flying too close to the sun." That there's some sort of hubris.

You know, these are doctors, women with Ph.Ds., mothers, teachers, that seems so irrational, they're afraid of letting loose and letting their soul out of their body and in the world, and it's almost like cringing, anticipating some authority coming in to smack them down. Can you speak to that?

Valerie: And they're right. That fear, although it appears irrational in terms of the current situation, that's not the scenario that's going to happen but that's the scenario that happened historically, generations and generations. Women used to get locked up in insane asylums for simply disagreeing with the status quo. Not even demonstrating and being activists. They could just express to their husband that they disagreed with him sleeping with her niece, and she would be crazy.

He would just literally take her to a doctor and she would be put in an insane asylum, and this practice persisted into the 1960s in the US and the UK. 1960s, we're not talking about ancient history here. And women came home with lobotomies and it runs deep. Yeah, we can talk about witch burnings, we can talk about all sorts of things. But these are the roots of the fear.

10,000 years of patriarchy, they are not erased in a single generation having more access to money and platform as we do now. In 1988, women in the US got the right to borrow money, take out a business loan without a male relative cosigner. 1988, society said, "Well maybe we can trust



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women after all.” And that trust is really everything because men have grown up in a society for thousands of years that trusts men.

And this is the greatest privilege that men have, is being believed in. society believes in them. All presidents in the United States have been male. Most CEOs are male. There is a tiny fraction of women, with even a tinier fraction of Women of Color. And the fact that this society does not believe in women has been imprinted very deeply, and then we don’t believe in ourselves.

And it’s not a mindset issue. We can’t just look in the mirror and say to ourselves, “I’m beautiful, I’m powerful, I believe in myself.” We can do all the right things, but it remains Sisyphus’ labor, we’re pushing that huge boulder up the hill, “I can do it. I can do it.” We’re working so hard. And at the end of the day, we trip up, something happens, we get triggered. We get triggered by something on social. We get triggered by something in our relationship. We get triggered by something with our kids. And we lose it, and there goes our belief in ourselves.

And tomorrow is another day and tomorrow the boulder is still there and we’re pushing it up the hill. It’s remarkable what women have been able to accomplish in an environment where the culture doesn’t believe in them. And the self-belief has been all but eradicated. It is a lot of rebuilding that we’re doing, a lot of reclaiming.

And I brought up that presence, that word sisterhood in the beginning, doing it in the community is really key because we’re talking about collective trauma and yet we’re all – like you said, these conversations happen in confidence behind closed doors. We all believe to a greater or lesser degree – and maybe it depends on the day, that there is something

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wrong with us. And we are in these silos of shame that somehow we're coming up short, we are somehow wrong and not good enough.

So, community is really key to coming out of these silos and seeing we're literally all in the same boat. It's not individual. There's nothing wrong with any one of us. But we're all affected by this shared condition and it can absolutely be healed.

Leah: I just love you. And it's one of the reasons I so wanted to have you on the podcast, in your voice, for this to be a conversation, for that very reason, to take it out of silos and take it from behind closed doors. Because it's a conversation we have in the Art School and the Art School Mastermind, and I want to open up the doors and have this be a conversation everyone has.

It is the paradigm of healing in community, and seeing so much, like you said, it's a collective trauma. And then therefore the healing is collective too. And I think that helps with the feeling that it is Sisyphus' task that's all on your shoulders. But when you realize that, no, it's not just all on my shoulders, and when you see someone else doing it, it gives you permission and emboldens you, and I think creates some sort of footprint in our collective consciousness that starts to pave the way.

And you talk about – I mean, I wrote down when you said, our biology has not caught up to our opportunity, and also that the biggest privilege that men have in society is trust, because those to me seem like a pathway out of – we can definitely use the work we've done against ourselves. Like you said, every day, if we're pushing the boulder up, and at the end of the day we're still not good enough, and instead to not have that work against us, but like, "Damn, I must be pretty strong by now." And now, Dr. Valerie is giving me some other tools too about working with the subconscious. About

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taking this out of silos and destigmatizing this and talking about the shame around it so that there is no shame, and normalizing these conversations.

What are some other tools? I know you have your beautiful Thrive experience, which I'm sure you deep dive, and I love the Repower tool that you share in your book. What are some of your favorite tools for people listening where they can access this?

Valerie: Absolutely. I think it might be helpful to understand what the trajectory looks like, what the healing trajectory looks like so that applying the tools makes sense in that framework. So, I talk about PSD and other intergenerational trauma, really any kind of trauma, by which I mean any experience that made you feel unsafe physically or emotionally in your fullest authentic expression and created trauma adaptations to keep you safe going forward.

So, I talk about trauma as the invisible inner prison and I have a five-stage journey framework for getting out of prison, basically. And the first step is waking up in prison. And it's so important. This is what we're kind of beginning to do right now in this conversation, beginning to reframe what is holding you back from, "Oh, it's me, I just need to work harder," because that's been the answer, "I need to fix myself and I need to work harder," to, "Oh, wait a minute, it's actually not me. It's never been me. And I work really hard as it is, thank you very much." And seeing that the walls of the prison are made out of these layers and layers of intergenerational collective personal trauma.

There is a lot in there, so waking up is not a pleasant experience, that's why a community really makes a difference. And what you mentioned before, the thriving experience, is where we hold this container for women, waking up in prison collectively. And these are women who have resonated

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with the message. They may have read the book and we hold this experience a few times a year.

Tickets start at free, at least at this stage. So [thethrivingexperience.com](http://thethrivingexperience.com) is where you can find out more. I hope you can join us because it is really not about simply understanding this intellectually. Knowing you are in prison does not set you free. And just hearing this conversation and going, "Okay, now I know what's affecting me." Alright, now what?

And so, after we wake up in prison, we begin to recognize also what is holding us back there, what are the prison guards? And those are trauma adaptations. Those are things that were developed. Either we inherited them or we developed them in our lifetime, that are meant to keep us safe.

They show up in the mind. They show up in the body, and in our actions. In the mind, they show up as the inner critic, the imposter syndrome, "Oh, who would want to listen to me?" They can show up as just feeling scattered, having a mental fog, having trouble focusing, or the state of, "I just don't know what to do." No clarity.

And all of this is created to keep us safe from stepping into our power at the end of the day. Because what would happen if you knew what to do? You would step into your power, and that is dangerous. And on the level of the body, so much can be going on that is attributable to this intergenerational trauma, is anxiety and depression, is trouble sleeping, or even when we manage to sleep, not feeling fully rested when we wake up in the morning, not being able to fully relax without a glass of wine or a pill, or get turned on or experience an orgasm.

Things are work, even on the physical plain. And there is such an epidemic of autoimmune conditions that affect women disproportionately to men and

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particularly women of color. So, looking at that, I can't help but wonder if intergenerational trauma of patriarchy and racism is playing out there.

And we look at the evidence of healing, we look at what happens for women in our programs on this healing journey, and they report health transformations, although we are not in the medical field, we're not offering medical advice or treatment in any way because their nervous systems rewire, because they begin to feel safe.

And when our bodies feel safe, the bodies can heal. It's very simple, theoretically. It's not that simple in practice. It does take time and it does take conditions and it does take tools, which we'll touch on in a moment.

So, these prison guards also show up in our actions and choices that are driven by our subconscious. So, every time you're finding yourself distracted or addictive behaviors kick in, overeating, overdrinking, over-shopping overdoing on social media, overworking is really big, it's always good to inquire, "Oh, something is feeling unsafe underneath it. Something is up. Maybe it's some emotion that I'm feeling, but I don't want to be feeling. Maybe I'm looking at an opportunity of expansion. Maybe there is a proposal that I need to submit. Maybe there is an opportunity somewhere. Maybe I need to have an important conversation, send an important email, and all of a sudden I'm finding myself on social, or streaming shows, and hours later it doesn't get done.

What's underneath that? And again, seeing the evidence in the women we work with who effortlessly release weight that doesn't feel authentic, release smoking, both nicotine and weed, and other things by which they used to cope, release ADHD medication under the guidance of their MD because their nervous system has changed, it wasn't doing it for them anymore and they didn't need it anymore.

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So, the body transforms. The actions transform. Of course, the inner critic, all that talk, the boulder, it just begins to get more and more holographic, so it weighs less and less and then it just reveals itself as a hologram. It's just irrelevant. And that's through doing this prison guard work.

And then, we evolve these prison guards to bodyguards, which is a very exciting part of the journey because when I talk to women about how much time, energy, and money, ballpark, is invested in the prison guard dance, either negotiating with them, fighting them, trying to dodge them, outrun them, and they tell me – like, the most common answer is at least 90%.

When I look at it with clarity it's like, yeah, that checks out. So, imagine if we reclaim even 10%. That doubles our capacity, which is insane. It's amazing.

So, by learning how to rewire our nervous system, how to feel safe with these experiences, there's no need for the prison guards to protect us by holding us back. Now, they can protect us on the journey by becoming our bodyguards.

So, we can use the protective mechanisms consciously versus unconsciously, when we need it, versus across the board. And that changes everything. That opens up so much capacity, so much flow in every area of our lives, in our sexuality, in our creativity, and our finances. Connection, everything just becomes more available when we are not so busy protecting ourselves from everything, from success, from intimacy, from wealth.

So that's super exciting. And then, once we have all this capacity opened up, then we can do deeper trauma healing work. So, we don't even go into, "Oh, let's start deep trauma healing work when we're already exhausted."

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No, we don't do that. First, we reclaim capacity, we open up bigger possibilities, and then oh, by the way, there are deeper layers we want to uncover and heal and we can do it now with more ease and, of course, a lot of support and community and guidance and tools, and we uncover and heal intergenerational, collective, personal layers.

And the fifth stage – so, I call that the fourth stage, tunnel digging out of prison. And then the fifth stage, we're savoring freedom, which sounds like a cakewalk. It is not. It is, for me, the biggest ass-kicker ever because it wasn't until my life started to express my deepest authentic desires that I began to feel really, this, really – my nervous system began to get so activated.

In the beginning of the journey when we feel, "if only I had my own show, if only I am financially independent or I have a steady income stream that I don't need to worry about, that doesn't keep me up at night, if only I have a partnership that is so fulfilling and joyful. If only, if only, if only," and those things begin to come in and that is when the system begins to go, "oh my god, this is so unsafe, run for cover."

And this is where women begin to experience a lot of self-sabotage and it's really painful. And there are a lot of celebrity stories in that regard that we see pop up pretty much on a regular basis. Our systems are not prepared for this because women have not had this for thousands of years.

So, our systems are like – imagine entering the Formula One driving, like, a 1980s Toyota Corolla. I don't know if they made Toyota Corollas, but it's like a base model from a long time ago. You can be the best driver ever and you can give it your all, but the engine is overheating, the vehicle is falling apart, and that's what we have, oftentimes, as quote unquote success.



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There are so many successful women who are just – my own story that I opened the book with begins with me ending up in the emergency room with symptoms of a stroke. And this is not a unique story.

I hear from women every day, “Oh, I had my wakeup call too,” and it may be in the health. It may be in any area, relationship falling apart and then, like, “Where am I? Who have I become? Where have I been?” But it is a sign that our systems need to be upgraded to a luxury car of your choice, to a Maserati or maybe it’s a rocket ship for you.

And it is a very physical physiological process, rebuilding the nervous system, reconditioning it. It’s not a mental process. And then, the mindset actually catches up. It’s amazing. The mindset catches up to our state. The body leads in this scenario and the mind follows.

And I find this a more elegant and more reliable and more sustainable process than the other way around, although I know people have success doing it the other way around too. And it can go hand in hand. But I actually find it a lot easier when my state is that of thriving and my thoughts are those of thriving. Opportunities open up and I can actually see them and I can seize them. And it starts with simple things.

Like we were having this conversation, “Okay, what’s the next step?” If this is resonating for you, empower yourself with some tools, which is exactly the question you asked me about.

So, on my website, you can actually download this toolset, a little kit that comes with the book. So, [drvalerie.com/resources](http://drvalerie.com/resources), and [drvalerie.com/book](http://drvalerie.com/book) is where you can download the first chapter of the book both in PDF and in audio. You can purchase the audiobook there too with bonuses.

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So, I'm saying all this because it's so easy to just say, "Okay, I heard it, great ideas." It's important to bring it into your body. So that's why the tools that you'll find there are going to actually help you feel it in your body. It's not about what you think, knowing you are in prison will not set you free. You're brilliant. If you could have figured that out, you would have figured that out a long time ago.

And it's both simpler and it's more complex because we are not taught to work through the body, to listen to the body, to be friends with our body. And that's exactly what this journey is about. And it's very different from what the culture teaches us.

Leah: I think that's one reason, one of the many reasons your work resonates so deeply with me. My path is Creative with a capital C, the Creative path, which is the path that must be embodied, the creative needs a language of experience. It doesn't speak only in the limited rational intellectual logical mind.

But one of the root words of the word creative, creature, right? It acknowledges the creature self. It acknowledges the soul, the psyche, it acknowledges the beautiful mind and brain. But I think too, aspects of it that are kind of relegated to being fanciful notions in modern culture, like the imagination, the imagination being a true source of wisdom, and that also there are other knowings that come through our entire embodied self, including our body. And then maybe something that is greater than the sum of the parts when you have partnered with your central nervous system and you have healed, that there is something that comes through.

And so, I love your approach, again. This is not just something you can hear once. It's not consumable. It's not transactional. And you wouldn't want it to be because what a beautiful process of getting to reconnect with

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all these aspects of yourself. And again, the root of the word healing is to make whole, and I think that work is so healing.

When we try to embody our physical self, our sensual self, our sexuality, when we try to embody being someone who, like “Who are you to be creative? Who are you to have a thought that you don’t footnote or credit to someone else, or validate?”

And I see, when you said the nervous system has to feel safe before it can heal, absolutely, and I think it’s that healed nervous system then too that helps us shift when it’s healed, and then we are in that safe place. Then we are also, all that energy that’s been tied up in staying out of the way of the prison guards, when we’re not longer doing that, all that energy comes back and can be creative energy, can move us, again, more effortlessly, more aligned with what we want.

And I wondered if you could speak to – that was such a beautiful part of your book to in the Savoring Freedom chapter, and when you talk about this phenomenon of you do start receiving all of these things that you’ve always wanted. And yet, even though you’ve been doing this healing – it’s what Gay Hendricks, you referenced the book *The Big Leap* in that chapter too and it’s a topic that comes up on this podcast and in the Art School is with those upper limits. And so, at every stage, is it your experience then that you can move deeper into this work to see what those upper limits are revealing?

Valerie: Absolutely, and every day, my quest is, as you know, the battle cry, if you will, or the party cry is, “How good can it get?” That’s my quest. How good can it get?

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Ad every day, I ask myself, what are the opportunities that I'm not even seeing? And it's not enough to ask myself. I've got to create deeper conditions of safety to even perceive them. I share this story in my book, the story of Leslie, who was transitioning, or desiring to transition from her corporate job where she was a pro, she was seasoned in her field. And she wanted to offer her services as an entrepreneur.

And she joined a very high-level mastermind with a coach whose name everybody knows, so she believed in herself. She invested in herself. She showed up. She showed up in those rooms. Great.

And then, after hearing her share, another entrepreneur approached her with an offer of a consulting opportunity in his business and he offered a compensation at the amount of some \$360,000. And when she was sharing this with me in a conversation about healing PSD, she quickly moved onto another topic. And I asked her, because I'm a curious person, what happened with the consulting opportunity? She said, "What consulting opportunity?"

Leah: Oh...

Valerie: Yeah, and it quickly became apparent that she actually did not register this as a real opportunity. She so quickly disqualified herself from it. Her subconscious did it before her conscious mind could catch up. Obviously she remembered what happened, but her subconscious disqualified her. And then her conscious mind created a story why.

But her subconscious was rooted in the trauma of patriarchy and racism and it just could not compute that her time and her genius could be so valuable to somebody else. So, after our conversation, she actually went back to the entrepreneur and the offer was still on the table, but then she

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really freaked out and all of these fight, flight, freeze, like the nervous system response, it's like flight really kicked in for her, and she ran.

She ran from him. She ran from me. Like, "I don't need this. I don't need the healing. I don't need this." And she just went back to where she felt safe, which is the status quo; her job and working hard on launching her business. And it breaks my heart because there are so many artists, so many creatives, so many people who are working hard on their dream without realizing that they're staying where it is safe, where they are disqualifying themselves from some major opportunities that are there every day.

Leah: You have said something about the most lethal prison guard in your opinion. And this resonates with me so much. I hear this again and again.

Valerie: It breaks my heart, Leah, this one. The prison guard of, "I'm good. I'm good. My life is good. I'm okay. I'll do it next year. There will be another opportunity. I'm good."

And you know what? You are good. We're all good. You can be grateful and full of desire at the same time. And we don't have to settle for the breadcrumbs of the patriarchy table. Yeah, you're good, you have enough breadcrumbs...

Leah: And allowing yourself your authentic desires does not make you ungrateful either.

Valerie: No at all. It's the opposite because the more you step into your power, the more you give permission to somebody else – you mentioned this earlier and this gives me an opportunity to circle back to this. This is so vital. Some women, the stories created, "Oh, I don't want to take up

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somebody else's space, so if I have more, somebody else has less." Well, it's very noble, but where is that a story? Because here, we stand to create a very different situation than what patriarchal colonialism systems of oppression have created.

From what I see women create and how I see women create who have hatched themselves from those systems, they're creating systems of abundance. The more I have, the more I can share my abundance. The more I am me, the more I am inspiring you to be you.

So, we all have more. Take up your space, not somebody else's space. You cannot take up somebody else's space unless you're in the box of patriarchy that tells you there is one seat at the table and you've got to fight for it.

If you're a woman, if you're a Woman of Color, there is one seat for you at a certain level. Bullshit. We need to set our own tables. And to do that, we need to step into our own power.

Leah: When you said women moving into these positions of power, what you've seen is that they generate systems of abundance, and it's not a zero-sum game but instead it's an expansive, generative, compounding amplifying. Because something that I hear often from aspiring artists is, "Do you know, it's like the top 1% who make it. It's the top 1%, 2% who make six figures, or who makes a million dollars, who gets that opportunity as an artist?"

But again, that's based on the old paradigm where it was one seat allowed. And what I've seen is that when you move people who are coming from an authentic, empowered, healed, generative place into those, quote unquote 1%, they take that 1% and from the inside, they expand it so that 1%

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becomes there's room for 50%. And if there's room for 50%, it just grows and expands, more like a sphere. And I think that's the magic of doing this work and healing and seeing other people do it and having that also, that community healing aspect of it calms your central nervous system...

Valerie: Oh yes, it's huge. Yes, Leah, 100%, literally, we are stronger, not just figuratively speaking that we're stronger in community. When we're in a community of people who have that regulation of their nervous system, who are using these tools, and who are also rewiring their subconscious and they're creating this abundance, it gets normalized. This is normal and we get recalibrated. High tide lifts all boats, so we all get so much capacity.

It's like going from working on a little laptop to plugging into this massive mainframe. Everybody brings their power and so, yeah, and we see women go really fast working in a community together, whereas they might have done this work, working really hard on the personal development, personal growth path for decades. But this is like rocket fuel. And then they create that in the world too. They create their own communities of abundance at the same time.

And to me, this is really how we change the world, by embodying this change. To me, there is no other way. We can post all the inspirational things we want on Instagram, but it doesn't change the fact that we're exhausted at the end of the day, we're not satisfied, and then we feel guilty for not being satisfied because our lives are so good and we need to be fucking grateful. And what if you can be really grateful and you can be really committed to how good can it get?

Leah: Beautiful. Beautiful. Thank you so very much, thank you Dr. Valerie. And again, you've seen my copy of your book. I can talk to you for hours and hours...



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Valerie: Likewise. And I love you too and I so appreciate this opportunity to have this conversation and we can have lots more. And I hope that this conversation inspires people to take that next step, not leave it at the level of, “You know, I heard something interesting...” because that’s just another prison guard.

Leah: Right, well thank you, again, so much. And we will have another conversation because, again, what you write about pleasure – I’m going to leave it there so I have a cliffhanger for people...

Valerie: Oh yes, let’s do that.

Leah: What does Dr. Valerie say about pleasure? I’m going to leave them with, “Oh, there’s so much more that I haven’t heard her talk about.” Because trust me, Dr. Rein has so much more and we are just scratching the surface. So, I will include all the information about how to connect with her in the outro and in the show notes and again, thank you so very much for the work that you do and for sharing it with our audience today.

Valerie: Thank you, Leah.

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Now, 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. You heard Dr. Valerie mention how a prison guard can be that we are just entertained by something that we hear, that it opens a door in our mind, we feel that something has shifted, that a door has been opened and that there is a different energy available. But then, to take it further and actually walk through the door.

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Another of the prison guards that she mentioned is this one of, “Well, I’m good.” Just be aware of these. Be aware of what are the ways that you cut off from taking next steps in your life and dissolving these inner barriers to your own happiness and fulfillment? What are the next steps that you can take to dissolve the barriers that keep you from aligning all of you, your subconscious, your mind, body, and spirit with your true desires, with your authentic desires?

What keeps you from exploring that? And I know that another prison guard in my own work, in my own life, and those of my clients I see is that of mistrust. So don’t let this stop you either. Don’t let this phrase, “But I don’t know the next step to take.” That is always a lie. There is always something you can do next. There is always something calling to you, particularly when you allow this to be an authentic life process where there is no right answer.

There are only the answers you make right by trusting yourself, by having your own back, by being committed. So, going to this place where you move beyond being curious and entertained by ideas and work and possibility, to being all in and committed.

Also, if your brain is still insisting that you don’t know next steps, here are some. There are some awesome opportunities to get connected with Dr. Valerie and her work. I’m going to include all of these in the show notes. You can download the first chapter of her book and book resources on her website. That will be in the show notes. You can follow her on Instagram, on Facebook. You can #patriarchystressdisorder and #thethrivingexperience and follow them for updates.

And also, you can sign up for their free virtual retreat, The Thriving Experience. The links to that will also be in the show notes.

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Also, I have so many free easily accessible resources in addition to this podcast. I offer them through my newsletter. You can sign up by going to my website, [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com). You can find me and connect with me on Instagram, @leahcb1.

Also, new announcement, if you are listening to this in the month of February 2022, I am doing something very special that I have never done before. For the month of February, I am going to be coaching for free in our Facebook group.

So, the Facebook group in the past, it's open to anyone. And I have just kept it out of archive because it's been a place for Art School alumni in particular to keep in touch with one another. But this month, even though it's a free group – it's closed – but you can ask to join. Just answer the questions. I am going to be coaching like you all are going to the creative Olympics.

I'm going to be coaching like you are all my private clients, all in my highest-level mastermind. Come one, come all. You don't have to be an alum. We're going to talk about all of these places where we have invisible inner barriers. We will talk about the embodiment piece, the energetic piece, the mind-body connection piece, of course, the rigorous thought work piece.

We're going to talk about the creative piece, how this could be your most creative, your own prolific AF – if you've listened to my last podcast – month ever. Your highest-income month ever.

This is my birthday month, actually, and a birthday month for many beloved people in my life. And I've been thinking too about the theme of forgiveness

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lately, and a different twist on that about forgiveness also meaning trusting ourselves so deeply that we know that our lives and our gifts are for giving.

So, in the spirit of my birthday and the birthdays of many people I love and want to celebrate, in the spirit of the work of the Art School, inspiring, liberating all of you to live your fullest expression, to live lives that are for giving, to know that your creativity is innately, infinitely valuable and worthy and meant to move into the world, we are going to be unleashing some major creative genius this month in the Facebook group.

And that link will be in the show notes. It's theartschool1 on Facebook. But also, just join by following the link that's in the show notes. Again, answer the admin questions and come on in. It is going to be a party.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you would love to learn more about this work, you can do so by going to my website, [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com) and signing up for the Art School newsletter. You can also connect with me – I love that – on Instagram, @leahcb1.

If you have any questions about signing up for the waitlist for the mastermind, for future Art Schools, or working with me as a private client, you can email [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com).

To close, I also wanted to just go back to that cliffhanger I mentioned about pleasure. Again, there is so much more to this work and I highly encourage you to read this book if you haven't already, to dive into Dr. Valerie Rein's work.

And if I haven't enticed you enough, let me leave you with this quote from the chapter Savoring Freedom, "I have seen women take their businesses to the next level by following the breadcrumbs of pleasure. They shift their

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focus to the activities that bring them pleasure, which incidentally happened to be in their zone of genius. In *The Big Leap*, psychologist Gay Hendricks writes about the leap one takes from their zone of excellence to their zone of genius. For myself and my clients, I find that jailbreak makes the leap possible, effortless, and inevitable because it activates a woman's authentic genius and makes that G-zone magnetic. A woman's zone of pleasure is her zone of genius. When we let our pleasure guide us, we find ourselves at our peak performance."

So, I hope this episode has inspired you, not only to think about how good can it get, but to begin to take the steps to live into that. Have an amazing, beautiful week, everyone, and I look forward to talking with you next time.