

Ep #177: Understanding the Emotional Fundamentals



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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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

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In her beautiful, amazing book *Atlas of the Heart*, Brené Brown writes, “The approaches to understanding emotion are nearly endless.” I 100% agree with that and would not argue with one of the foremost researchers and experts in this field of emotional intelligence.

But that being said, what I wanted to offer in today’s episode is an abridged conversation, a starter conversation on what I would call some emotional fundamentals.

I see this kind of emotion work, the way that we approach it in the Art School, which is a way, by the way, that I am incredibly proud of. It’s unique. It’s a combination of so many different fields I have studied and my own personal life experience. And I do it, we do it like no other place I have ever seen.

And I am incredibly proud too of the meaning and the transformation that it creates for my clients. And so, I see this emotional work as truly being fundamental for not only building the mindset and the way of being of an affluent artist, of a creative genius who thrives in the world, but also as being fundamental to being a human being.

And I want to normalize having these conversations and also make them more accessible. So, I hope you enjoy today’s episode, an abridged conversation on some emotional fundamentals.

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.

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Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. So, behind the scenes detail, I am creating prolific AF in terms of my podcasting today. So, I am creating some back-to-back episodes, also because I just love being able to carry through the continuity of energy and stay with my stream of thought.

I also know I will be preparing for a workshop on the fundamentals of being an affluent artist, which is set to open, be offered at the end of March, beginning of April. So, that will be going on probably as this podcast comes out.

But if you missed that, if you missed the opportunity to sign up for that live, never fear. The digital course will be available for purchase after. So, it's not too late. You can have that self-study and have access to that and keep it for as long as you want. It is something that I highly recommend repeating and doing over and over again.

And in that week, we will definitely be covering the emotion fundamentals. And so, today, I wanted to give you a taste of what we'd cover in that week, also a taste of the work we do with emotions, how we work with emotions in the Art School.

As I said in the intro, I am incredibly proud. I love how we work with emotions in the Art School So many of my clients, many of whom are veterans, veteran clients – I want to say consumers. That's not quite the right word – of coaching. But they believe in it and they've done a lot of coaching.

Some of my clients too are also therapists, psychologists, coaches themselves and they will say they have never worked with emotions this way, never worked themselves with emotions this way, never heard it presented this way, never been able to access it quite this way.

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And I also find that, in order to do more advanced work down the road, it is absolutely imperative that this is foundational work because I think it's foundational work for us as human beings.

This, hopefully, going forward, will be more and more a part of our common public social curriculum. And in order for that day to arrive, it needs to become part of our vernacular. We need to become more emotionally fluent and to normalize these conversations. It's such an integral part of mental health, the dearth, the lack of conversation and sophisticated conversation that we have and understanding that we around emotions and normalizing that conversation for everyday laypeople human beings I think definitely is part of our mental health crisis, our problems there.

So, we can remedy that. If we can have as much technology in our smartphones as it used to take to send a man to the moon, we can make some big leaps in terms of our emotional fluency and really how to understand ourselves so that we can have well-regulated central nervous systems, that we can feel the range, the spectrum of emotions that humans are built to feel and we can not have it consume us, not have it drive us to do unwise, unloving, shortsighted things.

And again, I know that sounds like a tall order, but here is where we're starting. We're starting with these conversations. And I will say, it's a tall order, and at the same time, we're built for this.

And when I'm working with clients who have never done this work before, it's like they're breathing. It's like they've been waiting for this. It's like taking a drink of water after having been in the desert, but you've been in the desert your whole life and you never knew water existed.

This is something that we're born to do and that learning curve can be steep. But then, once you get the hang of it, you feel how healing and

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restorative it is. So, without further ado, I want to share with you something that I wrote on the Art School Facebook forum and shared with my masterminders too.

And this is, again, an abridged conversation. And I think this too will give you a glimpse into how I teach and work and interact with my audience. Because this is something that I just offered for free in the free Facebook group. I don't want to hold back any kind of this information because, again, I am not underestimating coaching because I know that these tools, this is not just, quote unquote, lower-c coaching.

These are really the tools and the practices that can help alleviate human suffering, needless human suffering, and can help us evolve, heal, and expand. And so, I'm not overstating that. I don't underestimate my own belief in coaching. I don't dial it down. And I'm not overselling it.

This is how important emotions are. Just look at the world today and how the inability to navigate and process and feel emotion, how much trauma that causes and how much pain and suffering. And so, from my point of view, from my understanding, the pathway towards healing is through this not only knowledge and learning, but actually practicing these things one human at a time, healing ourselves one person at a time, one group at a time, like in the Art School. And then, that is contagious.

Anyone in the Art School then takes these skills out and they share it with their family. They share it with their friends. They are leaders they share it with their companies, with their organizations, with their audience, with their clients.

So, without further ado, here's what I wrote for my audience on the Facebook group:

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I've been thinking about exchanges here, in the mastermind and with private clients. And so, I want to have an abridged conversation on some emotion fundamentals. Being emotionally fluent is absolutely fundamental to creating a way of being of an affluent artist. One thing that I see is we have so many ideas about emotion that we've had for so long that we aren't even aware of the ideas we have about emotions.

We think, because we experience emotion, we understand it. But the fact that we fear emotions tells us that we don't understand it. As the wisdom goes, what we don't understand, we fear. And there is no shame here. It's just good to know.

We can even understand something and then forget that we know what we know, that we understand that. We're all here for the training, which requires repetition and practice. And so, with emotions, when we don't really understand them, we subconsciously or consciously live in fear of them. We resist them.

Knowledge is power though and the truth will set you free, the truth when we don't resist it, when we're not resisting emotions. I mentioned earlier in the week in the live chat that I did on Facebook that changing your relationship to yourself changes your life.

Within the context of that, changing your relationship to your emotions changes your life. So, where to begin? There's no one right place to begin other than where you are. I've offered a number of ideas about how to change your relationship with your emotions to one that allows for greater self-understanding, knowledge, intimacy, compassion, trust, interest, and curiosity.

And now, I want to offer this; some fundamental principles of what emotions are, which may help naturally dispel for you what they are not.

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Not something to be feared or avoided or resisted, but instead something to welcome and accept as a source of awe, wonder, meaning, and wisdom, to look at emotions, to view emotions as a way, a part of you is trying to communicate valuable information to you that is information that's meant to serve you, not detour or destroy you.

All of your emotions have wisdom. Trusting them and understanding them is integral to understanding and trusting and knowing yourself. Here are some fundamental principles that will help you with this process.

Even if you, quote unquote, know this intellectually, it's good to remind yourself, "Yes, this is what my emotions are." You have probably heard me say this 1000 times, but it's worth repeating; emotions are energy in motion.

The Latin derivative for the word emotion, *emotere*, literally means energy in motion. The actual experience of emotion is the experience of energy moving through the body.

While the experience can vary dramatically and be so beautifully complex and nuanced and dynamic, or incredibly intense and hard to bear, generally speaking you can describe the experience as felt physical sensations in the body of expansion or contraction.

Researcher Barbara Frederickson takes it one step further and describes the upward and downward spiral effect of emotion. An upward spiral correlates with expansion and feelings we describe as including joy and happiness.

A downward spiral correlates with contraction and feeling described including resentment and fear. Also a fundamental principle is that emotional energy is neither good nor bad. Emotional energy, therefore, in

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and of itself, is neutral. But emotional energy is something we often assign a lot of story, a lot of thoughts, and a lot of meaning to.

The feeling sensation and physiological reaction to emotion makes a specific emotion positive or negative for us. Here is another principle of emotions. Feeling is the language that we use to label our emotions.

We experience an energy as a physical sensation, literally as energy moving through our body. Then we have a reaction or thought to that sensation. And then, we label that sensation as, for example, anger, sadness, joy, or fear, et cetera.

So, why does it matter that we understand emotions as energy? It matters because when we understand the true nature of something, we know how to interact with it.

Emotions as energy suggests to us that they are resources because energy is a resource, right? A potential fuel. It's a potential carrier of information. We know from other aspects of life and sciences that energy carries information. Therefore, our emotions, energy and motion also carry information.

And how does energy that is in motion act? In other words, how does emotion act? What is the nature of it? It wants to move. When we know this, that it wants to move, and we understand this to be the nature of emotions, we can then know that the way to work with emotions is to allow them to move.

How do we do that? We allow them to move by feeling them? How do we not do that? In other words, how do we deny the nature of emotion? How do we deny the fact that it wants to move? How do we not do that? How do we not feel emotion?

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Well, we suppress, we repress, we ignore, we deny, we try to outrun, we try to distract. But when we feel our emotions, we allow the information, the wisdom they carry to be metabolized, to be processed, to be integrated, to be understood, received, and also released.

When we ignore or suppress or repress, we deny ourselves both the wisdom that emotions offer and we deny the emotion, that energy the opportunity to transfer and transmute any energy to us or for us.

And we also the deny emotions the opportunity to be released. It is this last part, this part of us not feeling emotions but rather denying and suppressing them or repressing them that then leads to, one, low emotional intelligence and or fluency, because we're denying ourselves access to the wisdom of our emotions. We are denying ourselves a conversation, a fluent conversation, a fluent exchange of information with our emotions.

Two, not feeling but denying and suppressing our emotions also leads to burnout. Three, it leads to being stuck or blocked or underperforming or being under-fulfilled or overworking, overperforming, over-functioning, forcing, because we are avoiding choices that could move our life forward and liberate and evolve our creativity and potential because we fear we cannot handle the feeling of the emotions.

One story to illustrate this point, there is an excellent story of an aspiring, gifted musician who could not get her career to take off because of emotional energy that she described as, "Debilitating stage fright."

She described this as, "A rush of powerful energy, a huge body of electricity, that it was so intense." And the story she had about this was that it meant something was terribly wrong, that she was too scared to go on and that she couldn't handle it.

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Another performer described almost the exact same sensation. But the way he interpreted it was as exhilaration, feeling so alive, as a readiness to perform.

That latter performer is Bruce Springsteen. So there is a very similar description of the physical experience and sensation of emotion, but very different language attached to what feeling was there, therefore very different meaning and story attached to the energy, to the emotion. But the emotion itself was that pure neutral physical experience.

Jack Kornfield has said something similar in his quote, “The difference between excitement and fear is breath.”

So, that, my friends, is the abridged conversation on emotional principles that I wanted to offer you today. And 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.

That was abridged, but it’s also like a masterclass. There was a lot of dense information in there. And so, did you know that this podcast has a transcript? I have every podcast transcribed. So, you can go and download this and use the printed form to make notes. And this would be an excellent episode to do that for.

And if you want to make sure that you never miss an opportunity to get the transcripts, just make sure you sign up for my newsletter at my website, www.leahcb.com because every week I send out an email that features every episode and will always then summarize the episode and also give you the link to my show notes so you always have a handy link to find the transcript. So, you can download this, read it, highlight, hone in on parts that stick out for you.

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Which brings me to my coach-with-me invitation for you. What part of this conversation about emotional fluency, emotional fundamentals most stood out to you as wanting to dive into?

Go back to that. Spend some time with that. Think about that. Think about your own emotional fluency, what that means to you, if you've never even thought about it before.

And if you're kind of at a loss for where to begin, might I make a suggestion? Because I know far too many people struggle with this, experience this. And that is burnout.

I work with big thinkers, very creative people who have achieved a lot. And a common phenomenon is holding back from what they really want to create because they fear that they will burn out. They fear the violence they will do to themselves, exhausting themselves, killing themselves in the process, this work of learning to be with your emotions, learning to work with emotions in a whole new way can absolutely transform your relationship with creating anything.

You might find you work less and create more. You might find you have more energy to work more than ever – and when I say work, I don't mean just sitting at a desk or that you become a workaholic. I mean showing up for your life.

You can get burnt out like raising a family even though you love your children. You can get burnt out in friendships, even though you adore and love these people. You can get burnt out doing what you love. And that, I truly have seen changes when you learn to navigate, deal with, process, learn from emotions differently. It changes everything.

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And so, if you were looking for a place to dive in, I would explore for you, contemplate, really, where do you get burnt out? Is it from the actual living, being, flowing who you are in whatever medium, whether it's a relationship, a family, music, making money, writing books? Or is it really, what burns you out is that your own experience of being inside your body and your emotions and in your head and that being a really hard experience, feeling like being in the world with your sensitive, emotional self, if that feels like a minefield and you get so activated, that's a great place to begin exploring and that's a great place to begin to ask yourself, "Can I imagine a scenario where I don't experience burnout? Where actually being in all of these contexts that I love is generative for me; the more I do it, the more energy I have?"

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. You know I love to connect with you. And the easiest way to do so, and a really fun way, is on Instagram. My handle is @leahcb1. And if you are listening to an episode, you are taking this work and applying it to your own life, to make art, to make your life, your art, I would love to connect with you and hear about it.

You can #theartschool, #theartschoolpodcast and also you can tag me, @leahcb1. Also, if you have any questions about working with me, whether privately, in the Art School, in upcoming workshops, in free coaching opportunities, in the Art School Mastermind, privately, you can email us with questions at support@leahcb.com. You can find out more Instagram. And the best way to stay in the loop and staying connected is by signing up for my newsletter, which you can do at my website, www.leahcb.com.

I also, through my newsletter, will share when I have a new release of my own art. I share things that I don't share anywhere else. It's just a lovely, tight-knit, delightful community and I would love to have you join us there.

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To close, I wanted to share another quote from Brené Brown's book. And this is one where she's actually quoting a sociology professor, Eduardo Bericat from the University of Sevilla as saying, "As human beings, we can only experience life emotionally." And if that doesn't make the case for becoming more emotionally fluent, I don't know what is.

To think that our experience of ourselves and life could be limited because we haven't evolved emotionally, we haven't grown our emotional fluency or awareness or skillset. That's, to me, just a tragedy because it's also an avoidable one. And I love Brené Brown's work and I particularly love this latest book Atlas of the Heart. So, I highly recommend that. And also, I highly recommend joining us for any Art School coaching experience.

Because again, we do emotions in such a unique and powerful way. I hear that again and again from participants, that they've never done this work in this way before and that it's one of the most powerful pieces for them. It's often the piece that unlocks things that they've not budged in other ways, through other means for quite some time.

It really is life-changing and it applies to everything, because it's you. It's you as a human being. So, obviously it's then going to influence how you show up, not only creatively in your work, in your art, in your ability to create success and results that you want. It shows up in just when you're alone with yourself and dealing with life and living life. It shows up in relationships.

So, I also would like to make this case that whether it's through working with me or working through another coach, learning via books like Brené Brown's work, that you give yourself that gift of expanding your range, your fluency, your discovery of yourself emotionally.

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