

Ep #197: The Case for Beauty



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With Your Host

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In this week's episode, I want to make a case for beauty. I want to make a case for how your relationship to beauty can help you to more deeply trust your own instincts, can help you to unleash and nurture your creative genius, how beauty can help you cultivate the way of being that makes all of your creative dreams and your biggest goals inevitable.

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 creating this for you in advance. I am getting ready for our family's annual week, my extended family included as well as my own sweet little family, on Lake Michigan.

If you have never been to the shores, the Eastern Shores of Lake Michigan, you must come. It is like the Mediterranean of the Midwest. It is still a pretty well-kept secret. The natural beauty – I just cannot overemphasize how incredible the natural beauty, the lake, the surroundings. And then, it does something to you.

That kind of beauty, it has an effect on everyone. So, it's an excellent place for family gatherings. It's one of our family's go-tos, and we call in our extended family once a year. It's become a tradition almost annually. Almost every year. Not consistently, with some babies that were too young in there, but pretty consistently every year since we moved to the area 15 years ago already.

It's also a magical vortex of a place to hold creativity retreats, which is why I held one at the beginning of June and it's also why this is our location for the mastermind retreat. And I am so excited, I got the house that I wanted. It's an incredible house. I also saw, now it's on the market for three and a

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half million, and they assured me though it would not be sold before the retreat.

So, we get to enjoy the space. It's got a pool, two hot tubs, a beautiful interior, plenty of space for people to tuck away and just relax and get quiet and journal, meditate, integrate, spend some time deliciously, luxuriously, spaciously focusing on what nourishes their creative soul and their creative dream and letting go of anything else.

It's incredible the alchemy that can happen in a space like this. And again, also plenty of space for gatherings and community and dinners. So, it's going to be exquisite.

And if you have not applied for the Art School Mastermind, this is just one example of the kind of magical goodness and beauty and highest level of care, and I mean creature comfort care, beautiful food, the best surroundings, and also inner care in terms of guidance and coaching and also the community support.

I don't know of any other creative community like this and I have had the privilege and honor of being a part of quite a few really extraordinary high-level groups, creative groups, coaching groups, entrepreneurial groups.

And part of the reason that I invest in those things myself is because I know how powerful they are for my life and supporting my success, and also because I learn so much as a coach and as a guide for others from all of these experiences.

And I love learning from different places and taking a little bit of this and taking a little bit of that, and then mixing it with our own original medicine to create something that hasn't been done before, that can't be found anywhere else, but leaves everybody feeling like, "That's exactly what I was looking for. That is exactly and more than what I needed," and leaving them feeling like they have hit the jackpot.

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And beauty is such an important part of that. It's not only an important part of that for artists, but for all of us. And it's not only in this episode that I want to make a case for beauty. It's in every day of my work and of my life. It's not a luxury reserved for a few. It's something we all need. It's sustenance for the soul.

There's a story I wanted to share about when my dad was a young farmer and my family was moving through the farm crisis, barely hanging on, or not hanging on. And our family farm includes our homestead, which has the farmhouse and has an acreage, which has a beautiful fruit orchard and some gardens and a grove of trees that protect the house from the winds that come across the prairie, particularly from the north and the west.

But also because it's beautiful. The trees, the grove, they're beautiful. They provide shade. They're a habitat for birds and animals. It's part of the landscaping. My parents have built it up over the years.

But back in the day, in the early 80s, like when I was saying, they were barely hanging on in the farm crisis, and my dad was a young, very wet-behind-the-ears farmer. It was after my grandfather had passed away and my dad came home to take over the farm.

He had a lot of older veteran farmers in the community come and tell him, with candor and with scorn, that he was stupid for leaving up the grove and the extra trees and the garden because those were all what we would call tillable acres.

And for those of you who aren't familiar with the term, tillable acre means it's a plot of ground, a certain size of ground where you could cultivate cash crops, corn and soybeans, that then you could sell and have an income for.

And it's not an understatement to say, at the time, they really could have used the money, But my dad, even though he will tongue-in-cheek refer to himself as a humble old dirt farmer, he wanted to have the trees in- that

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area remain because he said, “Every man, every person needs beauty.” And to get rid of those trees and that area of what was part of our home would make it very stark. And I can tell you something, it would have changed, absolutely it would have changed not just literally, but spiritually, metaphysically, emotionally the landscape of my childhood.

And there’s more to that than just sentiment. And I am grateful for my parents’ wisdom in that and holding strong and really understanding, even when times are tough, that we’d make it, and also, beauty was what would help us make it, that it wasn’t superfluous, it wasn’t holding us back, it wasn’t an Achilles heel or a downfall, just some of the warnings my dad had thrown his way.

It wasn’t pride. It was essential. And I think that – not I think, I know that philosophy. It was more than just a pretty thought. It’s what they clearly lived by and made decisions by, including when times were very tough/

And of course, things like that get into the fiber of your being, so I am so very grateful for that, for my parents’ devotion to beauty while also being the pragmatists that farmers must be, and for their tenacity.

And I wanted to share that story just so you would have a story in which to attach what I want to share for the second part of this episode. I have been researching so many different things, and I have one big vision in the works.

And I’ve been going deeper and deeper and getting more clear and more clear on this vision and writing helps me find my way into it. And some of that writing, I’ve been sharing out on Instagram or in Newsletters here and there while I work on feeling my way into sensing the texture and the fabric and the nuances of the greater whole.

And so, one of the fragments of this greater whole I recently shared on Instagram. Because what I had been researching were some things around

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sacred geometry, which make an appearance in my art, which first made an appearance in my art totally unintentionally.

I didn't really know much about sacred geometry at all except for some references I'd heard about long ago to the golden ratio, but I didn't really understand it.

But, without knowing what I was doing, I found certain patterns, certain repeating patterns and inspiration, I would say almost a compulsion towards creating these patterns showing up in my art.

And I thought, well that's interesting. And then, I just happened to come across, at different times elsewhere, these symbols where I learned, that symbol I've been making, that's a known symbol in sacred geometry.

One example is Metatron's Cube. It's in my She Rising painting. I had mostly completed this painting but I felt there was something that belonged sort of at the crown chakra area or the third eye area even between those on the abstracted figure of this woman that's also suggestive of an angel.

And I knew there should be something there. A crown wasn't quite it. And then, I started to see the shape emerge, just in my mind, in my imagination. And that's just where it needed to go. And so, I made it. And a few weeks after that, I was scrolling on Pinterest, which I want to do because I love the pretty pictures. And I saw actually a post from Danielle LaPorte talking about Metatron's Cube.

And I thought, oh my god, that's the symbol that's in my art. I had no idea. Which just gave me the goosebumps because it made it even cooler that that was what came through so powerfully and it tied into the overall meaning of the painting and I wasn't consciously, rationally intending that.

And I just love that too because it's another example that we know so much more than we think with our rational mind we know. We are so much more

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plugged in than oftentimes, almost all the time, our rational logical mind will allow.

So, it's allowing ourselves to open our mind to that and see what wants to come through when things get really magical and really interesting and the world is alive and electric again.

We are alive and electric and fascinating and fascinated by the world again. Which is one more point that I wanted to make for beauty. We dismiss beauty and just a nice thing and we like what we like without really examining, why is that? I have always been fascinated by this. Like, what is underneath our experience of beauty?

How is it that you can be someone who is not a trained musician but you can be so deeply moved by the works of Beethoven or Mozart? You don't know the musical theory, the mathematics behind it. And yet, it speaks to your soul. It strikes a chord, there is a resonance.

And I've always been fascinated by, what is that within us? What chord is being struck? And this language of beauty, what part of it is responding to that? And what part of us is beauty speaking to? And what would it be like to live more and more from that place?

I have also seen my own and clients' confidence and lives open up and blossom and flourish the more they trust themselves. And developing, cultivating an intentional relationship to beauty, developing an intentional orientation towards your response to beauty and what it is within you, so much deeper than how you usually think of yourself or your identity, that part of you that responds to beauty.

Becoming more and more deeply acquainted with that awakens that part, gives it permission to be more present in your life and to be more known to you as you, as who you really are.

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And when you get in touch with that frequency of you, with that being, you make very different decisions. You make very different choices. And that creates a very different life.

And if you are making choices from a place where you are in touch with the vibration of beauty within you, you're making choices that are going to create a very true and a very wildly beautiful sacred life.

So, back to the post I wrote on Instagram. I wanted to write something that would inspire people to trust themselves more, to see themselves as part of this universal intelligence that creates beauty, that they are also beauty, otherwise they couldn't sense it, they couldn't respond and move to it, and to know that they are also created from that same intelligence that creates the beauty they see outside themselves.

And to ask themselves, to ask yourselves, what will change? What changes in how I think about myself and my life when I know that I am of the same pattern of intelligence and beauty as created this flower, as created that harmony.

So, here is what I wrote, "The golden ratio is a reminder of the relatedness of the created world to the perfection of its source and of its potential future evolution," Robert Lawlor, Sacred Geometry Philosophy in Practice. I think this, the quote above and what it describes is one of the countless reasons beauty speaks to us on a deep intuitive level, moves us in ways that are undeniable, even as they are beyond our rational comprehension, and is absolutely vital for our wellbeing, survival, and creative revolution, evolution.

The golden ratio is also known as the Fibonacci Sequence. At other times, is referred to as the divine proportion. It's found throughout the design of the universe, from flowers to hurricanes, shells to the human body, star systems, to human DNA.

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When we're feeling lost, off track, out of alignment, when we forget this cosmic relationship to an astonishing cosmic design, beauty brings us back. Like a cosmic tuning fork, the resonance of beauty reorders us, or reminds us of the divine order that we fundamentally, literally, physically are.

I've mentioned our DNA closely approximates the golden ratio, but it's also found in other cycles of life, including birth and death. The reproductive dynamics of honey bees follow a Fibonacci pattern, and the angle of a hawk's sight as it's approaching its prey is the same angle found in the pitch of the Logarithmic Spiral.

Our creativity, our innate genius is attuned to this deep, literally universal resonance and can emerge, unfold accordingly, like petals on a flower, like fingers unfurling from a fist, palm open, universal gesture of giving, receiving, this too is how your creative genius can evolve when you remember, feel your part in a grand design beautifully.

Honoring our relationship to beauty, acknowledging this as who we are, developing an intentional awareness to the beauty and intelligence that creates us runs through us, changes how we create, and live.

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, take this information and make it transformational.

So, in this coach with me, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to pull out a few pieces from that post that I wrote that I want to focus in on and invite you to contemplate and offer perhaps a coaching question or a prompt.

I'll reread the quote from Robert Lawlor, "The golden ratio is a reminder of the relatedness of the created world to the perfection of its source, and of its potential future evolution."

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So, I included, as the image with this post, a close up of one of the zinnia flowers from my garden. Because talk about a perfect pattern. And this is just one small flower and there are thousands and thousands of flowers out there, all different, all perfect.

And in taking in and considering this one single flower and just being with it, I was blown away and reminded of a biblical quote about, you know, see the lilies of the valley, basically how they don't have to toil.

And if that much perfection is in the DNA of a flower, then how magnificent must we be? But do we give ourselves time to meditate on that? Or do we glance over that and think it's a silly cliché? Or do we actually let it penetrate the armor of our jaded defenses and sink in and do the work of changing us?

I love his word choice of the perfection of the source. Because we usually think perfection is something that we have to achieve rather than assuming our design, our make is perfect as we are because we come from that perfection of source.

The other phrase that I love in this quote is that it speaks to the potential future evolution. Because here, again, we live in a society where it is so easy to focus on what is dysfunctional and what could go wrong, to catastrophize, to constantly be anticipating the worst-case scenarios, and that is the bias built into our problem solving education and it feeds well into the bias built into our central nervous system and brain.

So, I want to speak here to the actual healing power and effect beauty and natural beauty can have on your central nervous system, on your brain.

I talked about being at Lake Michigan and the effect it has. I am not just speaking metaphorically. There is a real coming down. I see it in the people that I take there. I see it in my children. I feel it in the many trillions of selves, of my cells – that's also true. It is a reordering.

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And if you know about entrainment theory, I believe in an environment like that, that we are entraining to the beauty of a natural environment, and that that brings us to a place where we feel more like ourselves again, more like who we really are.

It wasn't something we had to strive to protect, to create, to perfect, and achieve. It was an attunement to nature's beauty, that does reorder you in terms of brings you back around to your natural organization.

And again, talking about that line, the potential future evolution, we want to create a world based on our bodies, our central nervous systems and brains, where we are coming from our highest potential, our best selves possible, rather than constantly reacting from fear, which perpetuates problems and reasons to be fearful, rather than reacting to dysfunction, which doesn't allow us to access our highest thinking, our highest problem-solving skills, or the imaginal world where we could envision a future that's even better than now or it's been in the past, and create that.

We can't access those places when our bodies are our brains are in a constant state of fight or flight. This is another reason why beauty isn't just superfluous, isn't just something you add in as an afterthought or as a luxury. It is essential for future evolution.

So, here's something else I wanted to pull out and make into a prompt for you to consider. This line where I wrote that beauty is like a cosmic tuning fork, its resonance reorders us and reminds us of the divine order that we fundamentally are.

What things in your life work as a tuning fork? What things are your known go-tos that just help you feel more like yourself again. Just as I was describing with the example of going to the lake, it could be something as easy and accessible as it is for me too, of five minutes in an art journal scribbling.

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We were just talking on the Art School Mastermind today about this phenomenon where someone can be scrolling and you're looking for something, you never find it, you feel more terrible, you feel more lost, versus giving yourself just five minutes to play around in an art journal, how satisfying that is, how it feels like a grounding and you feel more like yourself.

It can be that accessible. It can be letting yourself daydream out the window. What for you – I don't want to get too lost in examples in case none of them resonate with you, but what for you are those cosmic tuning forks? What beauty does that for you?

And then here's the big question. And you've just got to be very honest with yourself. Are you giving yourself enough of that? Or does it just get scrunched in as an afterthought? Do you find yourself, as in the story about my parents and the farm, do you find yourself plowing down the grove of trees which give habitat for what's wild and beautiful and gives shade? Do you find yourself plowing that under? Do you find yourself sacrificing that and telling yourself you don't really need it, or you'll give it to yourself once you get ahead?

And yet, you are then depriving yourself of the very fuel that would give you the stability and the sacred ground to stand on in order to thrive, in order to create. And I understand the inner conflict and what can also be an external conflict that can come up when it seems like a choice for beauty can be judged by yourself or others as irresponsible or even reckless.

I have made plenty of decisions in my life that, at the time, I knew were made being true to my soul and true to beauty. And I also had to work through a lot of self-doubt and harsh self-criticism, and also navigate it from the outside, that those decisions were dumb, irresponsible, reckless.

And I'm so glad that I did. I now have proof to show for the fact that it wasn't dumb and it wasn't reckless. I was actually being a very good

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steward of my soul and really learning what it meant to trust my instincts and really getting an on-the-ground first-class education in the difference of what I can create and who I can be in life when I'm sacrificing what's essential to me, like beauty, and trying to create, versus what happens when I take true, soulful, exquisite care of myself and believe in myself and believe that radical love and nurture are absolutely the most powerful way to grow anything, to grow a creative career, to grow your inner artist, to grow a business, to raise a family, to make money.

I can now say, yes, I would bet on beauty and myself every single time. And for the last part of the coach with me, I want to strongly recommend, as I have before, meditation, so many different kinds of meditation, including and especially this kind, where you become very familiar with who you are when you are attuned to beauty and what is beautiful to you

Many of us are already meditating all the time. As I mentioned, our culture has a bias towards the catastrophic and the dysfunctional and fear and failure and what could go wrong, or what's wrong with us and how we're not enough.

We are actually meditating when we worry on these things all the time. We are becoming familiar with them. We are becoming familiar with our world view, that that's how the world just is, we are becoming familiar with a self. We're actually, unintentionally on default, cultivating a self that is attuned to that.

So, since you're already meditating, all I'm suggesting is that you shift your focus and you shift your meditation time. And it is again and again deciding that a powerful creator is someone who knows they can direct their focus. And what you focus on grows because what you give your attention to is what grows, because what you give your attention to is what you give life to.

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So, meditate on something quite different. Meditate on beauty. Meditate on things, phenomena like the golden ratio, which again is a reminder of the relatedness of the created world to the perfection of its source and of its potential future evolution.

Meditate to the feeling of being on track. Meditate to the feeling of things unfolding within you, around you, for you, through you, beautifully.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I would love to ask for your help in the evolution of this movement and of this podcast and of this community. I have shared in the past how it is one of my intentions to create a podcast that reaches one million downloads.

As I mentioned in this episode, what gets a lot of airtime, oftentimes in our world, is what's going wrong and what could go wrong and the ugliness and the disaster. And I am not denying or putting my head in the sand about any of that.

But I want to broaden the conversation to show what else is going on, what else is happening in the world. I want to broaden the focus to include beauty, to include agency, to include a place for our imaginal to come in, to be informed by spirit and mind and heart and a multitude of people to create something better than what we've seen in the past, better than we can even imagine.

That kind of change is possible and it is more possible if we broaden the conversation. And so, it's my hope that this podcast is a dent in that. It might be a drop in the ocean. But you can help with those drops. You can help amplify that impact.

And so, I have a different request than I've made in the past. In this episode, I would love it if this podcast reached 10 new people. Now, I know this podcast gets thousands of downloads, so I think 10 is pretty easy. And I am wondering who out there – and it's very easy for my brain to wrap

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itself around 10 individuals too, to really connect to 10 individuals hearing this who have me as their coach in their ear, or their pocket and their earbud, every week who are like, "I can do that. I'm one of Leah's 10."

So, if you want to be one of my 10, I would love to have you be one of my 10. All you need to do is share this episode, this podcast, with one other person. Let me know when you do. Send us an email, support@leahcb.com, connect with me on Instagram. I'm @leahcb1, and let me know that you're one of those 10.

And I will have some very beautiful ways of thanking you too, and also celebrating this tribe of 10. So, I thought this would be a fun way of going about it. I don't know. It's an experiment. We'll see how it goes. But it sparked something in me, and so I have to believe that will spark something in at least 10 of you too.

And I highly appreciate you playing along with me. It feels like a game. So, thanks for being along for the ride and, as always, thank you for listening.

To close today, I wanted to extend a beautiful invitation, an invitation to beauty. I love creating beauty at every turn, whether it's in art – and with that being said, not all of my art is traditionally beautiful. But I'm talking about a resonance here. I'm talking about a resonance of truth and presence and meaning.

I love to create that kind of experience if I have people over for dinner. It's why I love spending time in the garden. It describes the experience I have with dear friends and my beloved family. And it also describes the Art School.

And so, I wanted to invite you to come closer to this incredible community. We have the free Facebook group. The link is always in the show notes. It's also The Art School 1 if you search on Facebook. And the only thing you

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have to remember is to please answer the three very simple questions that you will be asked when you ask to join.

That helps me ensure that the people who are there want to be there. that helps me maintain the integrity, the energetic integrity of that group, and helps me ensure that no one is there to spam other members or that no one's a robot. No offense to the robots.

And then, the other ways to come closer, sign up for my newsletter. There's going to be so many things that I have coming up to share and offer that will often come out earlier than the podcast is released, or you might miss a podcast episode and then miss a free workshop or miss an opportunity for free coaching, two things that I have coming up several times actually over the next several weeks, including before the end of August.

All of that information will be shared on the Art School newsletter, which is my set of emails that I send out, not too often, by the way. And so, be sure you're signed up for that.

And as always, you can apply to join the Art School Mastermind, or ask to join the waitlist for the next Art School. The Art School is a place to remember and to attune to beauty. The beauty that is, and the beauty that is you. It's a place to help you reorder and restore yourself to your natural genius state.

At all times, I'm thinking about what can I create that helps people return to who they really are, to feel like themselves again and allows their gift, everything within them to manifest the dream to come forth.

I deeply believe that is how we are organized and designed as humans. We are designed to thrive. We are designed to be creative geniuses. We wouldn't be on this planet if we weren't. And we wouldn't be on this planet with the kind of beauty and astounding innovations and creativity if it weren't the case.

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And it's not just the case for a few of us. It's the case for all of us. And our potential speaks to us in our longings, in our response to beauty, in our desires, in our goals, and in our dreams.

And again, the Art School is such an extraordinary place to attune to the energy of your highest potential, of the beauty that are being called to express, create, live, have, and be.

The Art School is a highly creative, beautiful community, and I would love to have you join us. So, until next week, I look forward to seeing who's in the tribe of 10 and wishing you, as always, a very beautiful week. I look forward to talking with you next time.