

Ep #200: How to Set a New Standard for Your Life



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

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“Anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you,”
David Whyte, from his poem Sweet Darkness.

This is the 200th episode of *The Art School Podcast*. And I was thinking if I could remind you of anything, if I could wave a magic wand and grant, bestow anything upon your life, it would be for you to remember who you really are.

Because I know, if you can remember that, you’re going to know everything that you truly desire and dream for is within your reach. And that is what this work is about, my friends, you remembering who you are, waking up from a dream that you are small, you knowing that those dreams and desires planted within you are there for a reason.

And then, having an opportunity for you to join up with what wants to happen through you, knowing who you are that’s the experience I wish for you. I’m waving my magic wand wildly, if you could see me over here in Michigan. That’s what I’m wishing for you in this 200th – it feels like a birthday kind of episode.

So, listen in today because we’re going to continue our conversation about what you can do to create a life that really makes you want to celebrate, and what to do when life just doesn’t feel like that.

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 do have a lot to celebrate today. 200 episodes. 200 consecutive episodes. I am so grateful to everyone listening because, truly, it is this communal creative experience where it evokes something different in me.

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It's been such a healing process for me, like the actual use of my voice, the use of my words and showing up week after week to share this.

So, thank you all and thank you all for writing to me and connecting with me and letting me know that this work is making a difference in your life. That's truly the best fuel and the best thank you that I could ever ask for.

When I was musing on what this episode could be, I kept coming back to that David Whyte poem. And I know I have referenced that poem and those lines here on the podcast before. I definitely have in the Art School. And I think the reason it's clear to me now, now that I have recorded it, what I now realize is the reason I chose it is because those lines, "Anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you," is like a way of summarizing the creative compass that I have used to navigate this creative journey of having a podcast.

And that doesn't mean getting it right all of the time. That means, a lot of times, going in directions where I'm doing things the way I think they should be done and it feels terrible, and yet I press on because I want to get it done, and then I'm like, "Wait, that's not right. That feels too small for me. I don't feel alive. I don't feel as congruent. I don't feel as much in my integrity or flow.

And so, it's through that process, that process of trial and error, of innovating which requires iteration through constantly showing up, through that kind of feedback and paying attention to my own inner experience as the primary tool of feedback.

My own inner experience, does this make me come alive, or does this feel too small for me? Does this feel like, oh gosh, even though this is the way I'm told you should make a podcast or this is the way to reach your goal of a million downloads, all great advice, all great things. And yet, if I go in that direction and I feel cramped, I feel like I dread it, I feel like I'm not myself,

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I'm not in my flow, actually a great test for me – I feel so in my flow with clients. It just feels like channeling.

It feels like profoundly being engaged and like something in me is collaborating on working out a puzzle with something deep in them. It feels like being in flow. It feels like oneness and wonder. That feeling is kind of my set point. It's my baseline for judging other things. I'm like, does this feel like it, feel like when I'm coaching? Because that brings me alive.

And so, there was a beginning part to that verse from David Whyte that I purposefully excluded from that intro because I wanted to give you, Paul Harvey style, the rest of the story in this episode.

The beginning of that verse goes, "Sometimes, it takes darkness and the sweet confinement of your aloneness to learn anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you." Let me repeat those lines, "Sometimes, it takes darkness and the sweet confinement of your aloneness to learn."

And I have definitely learned and continue to learn from darkness and the sweet confinement of my aloneness. Sometimes, that can just bring it into sharp, very acute relief, the places where I'm trying to go in a direction that's actually too small for me, that doesn't keep me alive. And that is such a gift while also being very difficult to move through sometimes.

And so, my plan for this episode, as I mentioned last week, I was going to cut in some snippets of me coaching my mastermind clients because we've been talking just about this, about deeply trusting ourselves and deeply trusting this inner sense of being directed by what brings us alive and what, even though it looks like the safe path to success actually shuts us down, makes us dread our work, the process, magic, and we just feel some sort of light go out, even though we know we could just carry on, soldier on, and get the job done.

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These are all successful people, all highly-functioning people. And now they're looking for an evolution in their experience. They're looking for success on their own terms. They're in the pursuit of fulfilment, and from that, from that place of being congruent, bringing something very new and fresh and original to them, through them into the world, that being success for them.

And this is so counter to what we're taught in most of society. We're taught that this is the way you're successful, this is how you succeed in this paradigm, this is the ladder. But over here, in circles like the Art School, what we're doing is a revolutionary act. It is a creative revolution.

We are deciding to trust our own knowing and to build from that place. So, again, what I was going to share from a call with my mastermind were these snippets where I am coaching them, and coaching them back into their vastness, into their greatness, and challenging them, and then also guiding, facilitating an experience of moving back into this place.

Because having a felt experience is a game-changer. And I realized, as I listened back to the recording, that I can't do it justice without including their part, and obviously, I wouldn't want to include their part. That's private coaching.

What I do want to do is give more and more and more of you an opportunity to taste what your aliveness feels like. So, I want to invite you to come to as many free workshops as I offer. I want to invite you to come work with me closely, personally in Seattle. It's a small, private retreat. It's a very economically accessible retreat. Also, you can come to the single workshop, Wednesday evening. Because what I know I am so good at, like when my client said today, "This is your genius," like, I know. I cannot be humble. I know. I love this.

And actually, all humility aside, if it's true, it's not bragging. And that's one of the reasons I was put here on this planet, I know, is to help people

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regenius. to help people experience the fullness of what is available to them, both within them and then out in the world. And then, having an opportunity to work with you and to see me work with other people is one of the best ways I know to do this.

So, if to this point you have listened to the podcast and you are a follower and avid listener, I love that and I want to also challenge you to take it deeper. Come to one of my free events, a free virtual workshop, sign up for an opportunity to win private coaching with me. Come to Seattle. Come see me in person. Sign up for the mastermind.

So, one of the reasons I am being so enthusiastic about this right now is a recent personal experience I had, again, with that darkness, that sweet confinement of aloneness with trying to make myself do something in a way that felt too small. And I just cannot. I just cannot. But I tried for a day, three days actually, and came in and out of it, and it felt miserable.

And here was what I realized I was doing. I was trying to play too small by holding back and not being enthusiastic, something that we have been talking about a little bit on the podcast, so much in Art School, is this ingrained fear, conditioning we have around being too much of a show off, being too egotistical, too pushy, having too much, I'll say bravada, because I'm a woman, and I have seen over and over and over again, so many times, and it makes me angry and it breaks my heart, brilliant, gifted people, mostly women, holding themselves back for fear of being shamed for being too egotistical or bragging or full of themselves.

Or we're conditioned to go to this route of, sort of, sweet humility and letting our work speak for itself. But meanwhile, no, the work actually always doesn't speak for itself and we actually have very real barriers out in the world to overcome that we have internalized too.

And so, something we've been talking about a lot in the Art School is that this has to be a grassroots healing. We have to champion and encourage

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one another as we stand up in our fullness using full voice, letting everything be seen, our greatness and also our imperfections and our shadows.

And in positions like mine, I have to go first. So uncomfortable for me. And I have shared this in other places, but one of my greatest takeaways, one thing a mentor that I hired for a year last year – I was in Laura Belgray's amazing mastermind last year, and one of her main pieces of advice for me, at the end of that nine-month program, was to show off, that I should show off more, that I have a lot to show off and that I should show off more.

I did not want that to be wasted on me, uncomfortable as it is. And I really wanted to examine why that felt so cringeworthy to me. Not cringing for her. Cringing for myself, why I felt shame at the thought of showing off when this is work I so deeply believe in.

Every week, I get to have the most profound conversations. I get to see real time transformations happening in people's lives that impact not only their creativity and allow them to take their work to the next level, but flood the banks, as my friend Betsy Pearson writes and enrich everything around them, that experience such profound healings in relationships.

I have people whose marriages heal and deepen and grow. People lose weight effortlessly without trying because something within them – I don't know why, they don't know why, it's like I wasn't even trying, it's just like I realized all of a sudden, I'd lost five pounds, I'd lost 10 pounds. A fullness that returns to your heart, an inner peace. This is work that is for everyone.

Creativity heals. It heals and this approach to creating a life that is true to you, that you build from the inside out, that you build on the foundations of what you truly desire, it's life-changing and I want to do a better job at shouting it from the rooftops.

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Because I was thinking, if I could wave a magic wand – this is what I was thinking when I was feeling so miserable. I was feeling so miserable because I was thinking I'd received some advice about the way I should do things in order to get X, Y, Z result. And I'm like, that just – I hate the thought of that. It feels so small to me. It feels like holding back. It feels like taking Niagara Falls, putting some of the water in a Tupperware container and saying, "Here's Niagara Falls." It's not.

I just want to be the torrent that is me and I don't want to sacrifice that in anything I've cultivated for success because then that's not success for me. That's not what I believe in at all.

So, I'm being an example here and I asked myself, "Why do I feel so terrible?" I did all the things too. I moved. I prayed. I meditated. I swam. I journaled. I did EFT. I talked. My husband said some very helpful things.

And then, I realized I was still resisting the magic wand. If I could wave a magic wand, what would happen? And I realized, I would be free to vocalize how profound and powerful this work is. Period, pause, and I would let it be that simple.

And so, that, my friends, is a real-time example of something that has come from darkness and feeling alone, and then something clicked. I just had, on the other side of that, I mean truly, when I experience darkness, I experience darkness.

I am a sensitive soul and it's taken me a while to realize that that's a gift and that feeling things deeply, while hard sometimes, is not a curse.

I have had therapists and psychologists be like, "You know, I'm just going to be honest. I don't think I can handle you. I don't think – you're self-aware and you feel things deeply. I just feel out of my wheelhouse and over my head." And I'm like, oh great. Great.

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And I've had astrologers look at my chart and, like, suck through their teeth, sort of, "Oh boy, are you okay?" And I have cultivated such resilience while having this deep sensitivity. And so, I then also have so much compassion for the artists and the sensitive souls in the world who want to feel, who want to truly be themselves, and then sometimes feel like, "Oh god, I don't know if the world can handle me. I don't know if I can be who I am in this world and that it can be safe and that I can lead the beautiful, thriving, flourishing life I want."

And you can, my friends. You can. You can. You can. And one of the best things you can do for yourself, if I could wave a magic wand again, is to remind you of who you really are, you beautiful, sweet, genius soul, and remind you, you are meant to come alive. And anything that doesn't make you come alive is too small for you.

And I have worked with so many clients who, initially, they needed to be in sort of an anger, middle-finger stage of, "Well that doesn't make me come alive so screw that." And I totally honor the whole process, the anger, I honor all of it. And I have also then seen clients come to this place where they're like, "You know what, I can't believe this. It feels like a miracle. I don't feel I even need to be defiant. I don't feel angry at all, even when people tell me things that my past self would have wilted or gone into a rage or gone off, just shut down. I feel so grounded and peaceful. I trust myself."

I call this when you are in your knowing, this place of when you are in your knowing, you're in your knowing, you're in your knowing. It feels miraculous, and you know what? It should not. It should not feel miraculous to feel you can trust yourself and to feel that you can live from in your knowing.

Everyone deserves that. There are many pathways to that. My particular love is through creativity because I know it's an aspect, as humans, we are all humans and that it empowers us when we are from our knowing, and

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couple that with full agency, making choices from our knowing, wow. Breathtaking.

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. I'm going to wave my magic wand again this week or hand you yours. Let's wave them together.

Think of a world where it's big enough for you. Wave that magic wand. Imagine that. What happens when you imagine a life where you are really alive? What happens when you imagine being so in that knowing? You know what you know, what you know, from somewhere so deep within you it has no beginning and no end. But it is solid, sacred ground.

It's the kind of ground from which you can open up, channel what wants to happen through you, and it just goes out and out and out. It occurred to me, I have these paintings – I don't know if you've seen them – that are these radiating color beams from a center. Usually there's a pair of wings in the center and that's it. That is sort of my shorthand signal, emotional signature for what this experience feels like, of being in your knowing, and also being supported, being in touch with invisible forces supporting your life.

This is what it feels like when you're joining up with what wants to happen through you. You're in your knowing. You are trusting yourself. What happens when you imagine all of these things?

Really go there. Again, don't just take this information passively. I want you to go there, feel a shift. Can you feel something shift in your mind, in your body, in your spirit, in your energy when I say, what happens when you imagine this?

Those words are intentional. It sends you into the right hemisphere. It pulls you out of the stuck, the limited, linear thinking and opens you up to possibility again. It opens you up to a place where you can get in touch with

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your own inner guidance, that creative compass that I've been talking about, that creative compass that I will be talking about in Seattle a lot and working with you one-on-one, up close and personal with if you can come there and come to the retreat and come to the workshop.

What happens when you imagine these things? What opens up? What expansiveness do you experience? Saturating in that, and then remembering anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you.

You have permission – not mine but your own. You have permission to live a life where you're like, "You know what? I've learned that lesson. I have learned that anything or anyone that does not bring me alive is too small for me. And I am owning my permission to choose differently, to choose aliveness while i still have this precious life."

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. I love you all being here and listening. I want to send a special shoutout to my dear friend Wendy who I know has been listening to this as she was training for a special marathon in Patagonia.

Ever since I met Wendy several years ago, I have known that she's been working towards one of her goals in this thing called the Live Journey Map. It was one of her goals to run a marathon on every continent.

And she has been steadily moving towards that. This time though, even after completing the longest runs, for very good reasons beyond her control, she had to decide to pull out of this year's marathon. And so, I wanted to celebrate her anyway.

She is such a beautiful soul who stubbornly continues to tell me she doesn't think she's creative. Like, oh no, no, no, no, she is so incredibly creative and an inspiration to anyone that knows her. So, I'm sending her love on a run and I'm sure she'll be in Patagonia next year.

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To close today, I want to encourage you to remind yourself, you have permission to set a standard in your life. It could be a new standard. Maybe it's a new standard you've had and it just needs some revisioning, calling back and reinforcing, but that your life is so precious, anything or anyone that does not make you come alive is too small for you, I want to encourage you and again remind you that you have permission and you have agency.

You can make choices that are big enough for you, that do not limit you. If you don't know where to start, start by noticing what makes you come alive. Notice those things. Celebrate the heck out of those things and look for ways to say yes to those things more and more and more.

Think again of the one to two-degree shifts I've talked about. Notice the places where you don't feel alive, that feel too small for you. Examine why you're staying in those places. What is it? What are you afraid of? What will happen if you begin to say no to those places?

The next thing you can do, start saying yes to places that invite and encourage you to come alive, that don't put limits on you, like listening to this podcast, yes, like joining my free Facebook group, it can be another space too where people, they are way outside of the box and they are so willing – it's a constructive environment where they're willing to hold a big enough space for yours too.

The Art School Mastermind is on a level of its own in terms of containers. And I've been in a lot of containers and have built this one intentionally because I've been in containers where I felt that my potential was seen and that there were no limits placed, and I've been in containers where that wasn't the case.

And both of those have been priceless experiences, priceless kinds of experiences because they have definitely informed my approach to the work and my design for my own containers. And I continue to work, to

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learn, to study, to hone my craft, to develop the kind of space that is large enough for the expansiveness for a thriving human soul.

Let that be a gold standard for you. Let yourself own that as a possibility for your life. Empower yourself to make more and more choices in that direction. And also, get help where needed. That was something I did. That's another magic wand, right? That was a hard one for me to pick up for years, asking for help. But you and your aliveness and the greatness, the creativity that want to come through you are so worth it.

Have a beautiful, creative week, my friends, and I look forward to talking with you next time.