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With Your Host

Leah Badertscher

The Art School Podcast with Leah Badertscher

Aging out of possibility is not inevitable. Life experience, years of life experience, decades of life experience that include putting your heart on the line, that include going for it, but that also include not going for it, procrastinating, holding back, avoiding, all of these life experiences can actually be used for you.

We've been talking a lot about possibility, even more so than usual here on *The Art School Podcast* and in the Art School community. And we can't talk about possibility without also talking about what often arises as a couple of large elephants in the room. And these are the messages that we receive in society, both expressly, implicitly, that are embedded in our culture that, as we age, our possibilities decrease, that as we rack up more failure and more attempts, that our disappointment actually hardens our heart and eclipses our chances for success and the fulfilment of our dreams, for a life beyond our wildest dreams.

And this does not have to be the case. So, in shifting this paradigm, it's important that we have a deeper, broader conversation that we know how to suss out the difference between a disappointment that's coming from a socialized shame that we have somehow failed society and that therefore we are bad, and also hold a place for the wisdom that our years offer us, that the wisdom, our own deep and true disappointment, our own deep and true heartbreak.

Not about failing other people's expectations, but truly, what are the places where our heart is calling us and still wants us to go, even if we haven't made it there yet? That is what we will be discussing in today's episode and I want you to leave with a spirit of knowing, not only is it never too late, but there has never been a better time, that you have never been more ready, you have never been more in your knowing that everything you've been dreaming of, longing for, craving in your life is within your reach, that nothing is off limits for you.

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.

Woo-hoo, everyone, welcome to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. Hello, and welcome. I am feeling it today. This is going to be a good one. I have had a day full of amazing one-on-one calls giving me life. I definitely feel like I'm soaring. And I thought, what better time to hop on and record the podcast?

And I want to say too, this is a manifestation of a dream for me that, at one time, was a possibility, that at one time I couldn't fathom how I would fit all of these different things in my life, the creation of something like a podcast that fulfils me in artistic, creative, expressive ways, that I feel like gives me an opportunity to serve and to support others.

I couldn't have envisioned how I would do that, and then also then work one-on-one with people, work closely. How would I speak to a large community, many of whom I will never meet, and then how would I still have the opportunity to work and dive deep? That happened today.

How would I be able to do this and then also paint? That happened not today, but I have a full-on painting day tomorrow and some very exciting painting projects in the works. How would I be able to do that and be a mom, raise my family, spend time with my family in a way that feels right to me?

Well, after I record this podcast, I'm picking one child up early from school – because I get to have that flexibility that I'm grateful for – to take her to a doctor's appointment, come back, take everybody to piano lessons, and

then meet my husband for a little bit before he goes to a business dinner, and then the kids and I are going to have some fun tonight. Maybe even hit the pool again – one of my favorite things this time of year, by the way.

I've had ideal days where, in the morning, I will get to talk to a client who is literally across the world and who just literally cracks my heart open even wider with her brilliance and her soulfulness every time we talk. And then, in the afternoon, I will take my kids to the pool and get to play with them and swim laps and stop at this lovely farm stand our neighbors have where I get to buy organic vegetables, crazy amounts of organic vegetables for less than \$10 and come home. I love to cook.

And then, I will be able to walk and run, and it's just, I share all of this not from a place of, "Oh my gosh, look at how well I'm doing it." I'm sharing it from a place of, at one time, I could not see how all of these different loves and passions of mine, poetry, creative writing, creative non-fiction, podcasting, business, coaching, mothering, marriage, relationships, health, fitness, spirituality - there is more I'm leaving out.

I couldn't see how all of these things could fit together. I was conceiving too small of myself, coming from a figure-it-out paradigm. And then, with time, shifting into being led by something greater than the small, analytical mind. My dear friend and one of our brilliant masterminders, Anna Ryan Drew, has a concept she calls – that is also going to be the title of her amazing book, which congratulations, she just finished the manuscript for this last week – the soul leads the brain.

That kind of life, the soul leading the brain, your creativity leading the brain, your spirit, something greater than how you've been taught life needs to be. That is what allows all of these aspects of you that feel like fundamental truths to flow into the world, and then the world organizes accordingly. Not you trying to fit yourself into the premade prefab shapes that society tries to

give you. This is about capital C Creativity, creating from your true self and then creating the world accordingly.

Because that is, after all, how the world is created if we give ourselves permission to reclaim that authority, to be that powerful. And I have something better to share with you than just my own experience. It's what I get to experience all of the time in working with the groups that I am honored and privileged to work with. For instance, the Art School Mastermind, where there is a community of people who are onboard and normalizing that this is how they live, creating their life and then creating the world.

Not letting former paradigms and thought forms and expectations and societal standards and systems tell them and define the scope of what they can and cannot be. But instead, rediscovering, reconnecting to that genius, regeniusing, nurturing that knowing that has always been there, releasing any conditioning that obstructs that knowing, and from that place, then creating.

So, just in this past week, as I said, Anna finished her book. I've gotten to read some of it. It is breathtaking, so moving, just words don't yet describe it, except for hers. So, I'm so glad that those will be available to so many, many more people.

Another woman in the group is nearing her final edits for her book to return it to the publisher. She's gone from 5000 down to five edits in less than a week's time. Another woman announced that she has basically purchased her dream, purchased real estate in Costa Rica for her dream retreat center.

And another celebration this week was someone setting a goal a little over a week ago of selling \$15,000 worth of art, and she did so in less than a

week. I can't remember if I celebrated that last week or not. But I definitely wanted to shout that out here.

So, there is so much more, but I want to give you a glimpse of a few of these because it's not only this external event of the thing happening that is amazing and we're celebrating, and it totally is. But it's that I know the backstory and the process. And that is the most powerful, most breathtaking, and the most inspiring and instructive aspect of it, this deciding to choose possibility, deciding to carve pathways in their life that allow for possibility, deciding to become aware of limitations, and then doing the work.

And the work looks different for everyone, of releasing patterns of being loyal to those past limitations, releasing loyalties to past identities, expectations, any way that we cooperate in our own oppression, releasing that, and then realizing, as those old things crumble, that there is this period of wobble in the transition as we allow our knowing, as we allow this new kind of intelligence to replace an old kind of scaffolding or structure that allowed us to funnel some rational mind, intelligence into life, but essentially we knew kept us somewhat hollow, feeling empty, and not at all able to unleash our potential, that kept us yes, grateful, and also sensing there is something more.

So, I wanted to begin with celebrating these stories because they're worth celebrating, and also because years ago, Martha Beck said this, and I so believe it, that it's oftentimes not that we need more information. It's that we need more stories to have faith in.

And I think that is the power of community. So, whether it is the community of individuals, like in the mastermind, who do get to know each other personally, I think too of this listening audience as more of a community, that you too get to decide to look for those stories that give you faith and

then have the discipline, discipline your mind, body, and spirit to train upon those and give your attention, your relentless attention and love to those stories to have faith in and to cultivate you, your own story that you have faith in, that you trust.

And I also get that it's really hard to do that if you don't have examples, if you can't see what's possible, if you can't see other people doing it, if you can't be in an energy of possibility.

So, that's why I want to pour it on here. I want to pour on the stories, I want to pour on the opportunities for you to have access to people who are living in this way, people not unlike you. I want to pour on this energy of possibility.

So, part of my brain for this week's episode was like, haven't you dwelled on possibility enough? Like that thought, that limiting thought was there for like a nanosecond, and then I heard Emily Dickinson say – I mean not literally. You know, she's there, she's a mentor in spirit, say, "I dwell in possibility, a fairer house than prose."

So, that is what we are doing, my friends. We are dwelling in possibility, that fair, fair house this week. Before we do that though, I wanted to make sure to mention – because I often forget this by the time I finish recording and I'm like, "Oh yeah, those things, those things I wanted to invite you to."

I have opened – if you haven't heard me talk about it already, new spaces for one-on-ones on my calendar for the remainder of 2022. And here's one of the reasons why.

I have noticed that when I am like, "Gosh, I could use a coaching perspective right now," and sometimes I have an ongoing coach on

retainer, and other times I don't. And other times, I just really want to be able to talk to somebody like within the next week or two if I'm moving through something. And I understand why, but a lot of coaching arrangements aren't set up like that. And I haven't done it myself for a long time for similar just pragmatic business reasons.

So, recognizing how much I am feeling in this season of my life that that would be really helpful, that maybe I do, maybe I don't then want to sign up for six months or a year working with someone, but I for sure would love that opportunity of an outside perspective to get outside of my own head, to be able to have someone listen to me in ways that are always so helpful for me and help to keep me, I guess, not stuck, but get out of it a little quicker and be able to hear my own wisdom.

And I always find too that in every session with a coach, there is usually one thing. I'm like, "Oh, there it is. That's what I needed. That's really going to help me unlock and move beyond and feel like I'm getting some traction or perspective again."

So, in the spirit of creating what you're craving and also in the spirit of responding to desires, needs that I've heard expressed by many of you to explore coaching, but in a different scenario. Maybe you're not at the point where you want to commit to six months or a year. I totally respect that.

Maybe you're interested in the mastermind but you actually don't know what the experience of working with me one on one is really like and you want a taste of that. I totally get that too.

Also, in meeting people's desires as mine to have access at a time when you need it and not have more than you need, this will suit that as well. So, I'm opening a limited amount of spaces on my calendar, again, for the rest

of 2022. You can purchase a single session if there's one available on a day that suits you. You can purchase a package of three or six.

So, that information will be available through my newsletter, on my website, and also simply if you just want to email us, support@leahcb.com. We can connect you with those details.

I also have released, for the month of September, in the spirit of possibility energy and back-to-school possibility energy, my digital course from the possibility immersion that I held. It was a week-long course and we recorded it and turned it into a digital course that you can listen to at any time. Because I have heard from many of the participants who took it that they listened to it on repeat and that they wanted more things they could binge on, like more videos, more audios, that it provided the right kind of snapping into a kind of spiritual alignment.

And so, that is at a highly discounted price, \$47 for the month of September, that's also available through the show notes and on my website in the shop. And I also have a free workshop, on the topic of possibility, of course, that's going to be so much fun, coming up the end of this month, September, it's a Tuesday, I believe that's the 27th. Yep, it's the 27th.

So, that will be so much fun, particularly since I will be returning – this is something I forgot to mention, from my own being a participant at a retreat that I'm going on next week, a writing retreat on an island.

I am just bringing a lot of writing materials, paper, pens, my laptop, and yoga clothes and my swimsuit. And I cannot wait. It's going to be so awesome and I'm really stoked to have it set up where I get to come back into Art School meetings and a workshop with all of you that Tuesday.

I've also mentioned this secret thing that's going to drop. More on that soon because this part is getting kind of long and I want to get back to the episode. And of course, come play with me in Seattle for the live event, the talk, and also then the live retreat. I would love to deep-dive with you there.

I always intend for retreats to be some of the most magical, life-changing experiences people have. And so, if something is calling you, if you feel you want to greatly expand not only your sense of the possibilities in your life, but your knowing that nothing is out of reach for you, if you want to truly touch your sense of deep empowerment and knowing that nothing is off limits, come to these live events and retreats. I would love to do that work with you.

Okay, so that wasn't irrelevant to today's episode. But I do want to then continue with this conversation about not aging out of possibility, not thinking that because you've had disappointment and failure because you haven't done it yet that you will never do it.

I work with so many people who have been successful in their lives, but then are now in more of the second phase of their life, maybe the middle phase, mid-40s, 50s, 60s, who feel like they are just now coming into their own and they are blowing it out of the water.

Part of what's necessary in order to do that, no matter what your age, is to recognize where you are implicitly cooperating in limitations. And one of the ways we do that is by subscribing, consciously or unconsciously, to these messages in society that when we get older, there are just fewer possibilities for us.

Our reticular activating system, the RAS in the brain, because it's listening to what society has said, it doesn't scan the horizon for things that could make us come alive, for ways that we could renew ourselves and put our

gifts into the world and astonish ourselves and come into our own because we've been told that doesn't happen unless you've done it by the time you're 30.

So, it's about blowing up those old, crumbling paradigms and, again in general, recognizing where you are cooperating in limitations and where you're eclipsing the possibilities in your own life. And age is one way we do that.

Another way we do that is by looking at the places where we have been disappointed, like we feel disappointed that we haven't achieved something, that we either haven't given it our all, I think. I hear a lot of harsh self-judgment about that. That's something I want to change too. That's not actually helpful. Your disappointment, if it's true to you, can be helpful. But shaming yourself for it is not helpful. Actually, it's counterproductive.

Those places where you've had failure and your heart broken also do not mean that you are less capable, that there are fewer possibilities for you. And in fact, quite the reverse is true. And a lot of times, all it takes is just some nuanced shifts in your orientation to disappointment and failure, to life experience and mortality and age.

So, I want to read something to you that I wrote to those that are on my email list. When's the last time you really felt that anything was possible? Can you remember the last time you wanted to become, create, or achieve something and then proceeded accordingly and pretty much assumed your desired outcome was inevitable?

I can't help but reflect on this during this time of year. Here in Michigan, in my family, we're feeling all the back-to-school vibes. This makes me pause and call into clear relief something we often take for granted.

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We send children to school and assume they'll have new experiences, new levels of learning, and potentially new friends and teachers. We send children to school with the expectation that they'll learn and grow, in mind, body, and spirit.

Ideally, we hold the highest possible intentions for them, that they'll have opportunities that evoke and engage their innate gifts, that they have innate gifts, that they can and will and should be guided in developing their inner resources and skills in a way that best serves them, their gifts, and callings.

We send kids to high school and generally, if they are well supported and maybe not in need to a different situation, high-school diplomas are assumed inevitable.

We're excited for children and young adults. They're so full of potential. The world is their oyster. They have so much to look forward to. They are excited by the possibilities and embark on these experiences, oftentimes with robust feelings that it's inevitable.

And heck, I am still kind of dumbfounded how much inevitability was assumed when I went to law school. As we know now, it turns out the possibility of being a lawyer forever was one inevitability that I decided was not actually for me. But it was that experience, in part that experience, of going to law school and feeling, once in, that that made it nearly inevitable that I'd be a lawyer.

It was that experience, even though it felt counter to my inner knowing of my destiny, that was so powerful in my current formation. It made me wonder, how can we create more paradigms in which the possibilities that awaken and nourish the human spirit, that evoke and cultivate innate genius, the highest potential of humanity are what is inevitable.

How can we know, deeply and truly throughout the course of our entire lives, that there is so much within us yet to be discovered, cultivated, expressed? That there is so much in the world and our lives that is possible? That there's so much to truly look forward to?

It's fascinating to me, the paradox that much of my law school experience, which at the time seemed to cut me off from possibility, including in such a way that I became depressed, that this is actually what led me to know deeply what I must have in my life in order to be truly alive.

Possibility, yes, and more than that, true possibility. Not just what I can get, not just what society tells me is possible or realistic, but possibility that is not limited by society, history, including my own, including not limited by my small self and identity.

It must be a possibility that serves the soul. And this possibility is found, in part, through the deliberate acknowledgment, honoring, and cultivating of a fertile, healthy, nourished imagination.

And we all have this. We all have imaginations. We are all creative as humans. We need imagination and this connection to it, not in spite of the world we live in, but because of the world we live in, and because of the world we want to create from our imagination, which is what allows us to connect to our vision of what's possible, even if it currently looks impossible.

I'm very aware that we live in a society that edits out possibility as we age. And this is happening even so at a younger and younger age. Even children's imaginations are often harshly squeezed out, eclipsed way too early and, really, everything is too early, by the quote unquote real world.

I want to change this for imaginations of all ages. Aging out of possibility is not inevitable and it serves no one. Not us. Not society. Not humanity. Not our descendants. Not our ancestors. Not the Earth. Not our divinity.

Having a human imagination, this ultimate creative ability is a gift, an innate human capacity that deserves so much more attention and energy. Part of being a creative human being is about deliberately cultivating our true connection to possibility every day, in all situations, in ourselves and in our families and in our communities, workplaces, relationships, societal structures.

As we age and have even more life experience, this becomes even more important. Failures, disappointment, loss, heartbreak, grief, the more life we live, the more likely you'll experience this range of humanity.

But what if this experience can actually truly be a way to expand your capacity for what's possible, not limit it? What if a bankruptcy or years of business in the red could actually be used to build your multi-million-dollar dream venture and legacy?

What if devastating heartbreak and loneliness is precisely the cracking open your heart needs in order to call in your soulmate? The love of your life.

What if loss and grief is precisely what gives you a greater glimpse of the power of love? The impossible to fathom value and miracle of life, not to mention your own capacity for even greater love, living, and full aliveness? What if years feeling you're like a blind sculptor hacking away at your art is the experience of your genius artist soul within you, madly, blindly, passionately digging and digging and chipping and chipping away, chipping, digging away, its way to freedom, before breaking through and flowering or exploding onto the scene in full, free, and powerful expression?

Like literal rockstar, poet, author, painter Patti Smith described in her experience of her creative process. She described herself feeling like a blind sculptor hacking away, right up to the point she became a quote unquote overnight success.

The energy of possibility fuels not only extraordinary creativity, but an extraordinary living. 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. Let's expand the possibilities in your life. I'm going to offer you a few prompts to work with here today, and I also would love to have you join me for the free workshop, the free possibility workshop on the 27th.

We'll do even more of these things together and I will also be available to answer any questions. And if you're interested, to offer any coaching. So, first, I want you to think back to that question I offered from the beginning of my email. When was the last time that you felt like anything was possible? That the world was your oyster, if ever? And if you haven't yet, that's totally okay too, but maybe start there. Start with your remembering of a time.

And then explore what was happening then. What was supportive of possibility and what diminished it? What was unsupportive or destructive or stifling for possibility?

In your life right now, you can answer, ask yourself that same question. What in my life now supports the expansion of possibilities and what diminishes it? And then, ask yourself, if I want to increase the possibilities in my life, what can I do today? What one step can I take today?

And in addition to that one step, I want to offer you another one that you can do today. So, there's the one that you come up with and then an additional one that I will offer is to look out onto the horizon, the landscape of your life, inner and outer and ask yourself, "What can I do to start carving pathways of possibility in my life? How can I set myself up for success in those ways? Are there conversations I can have? Are there environments I can place myself in, books I can read?"

Is it taking time away from doing things like reading or podcasts or conversations as a way to expand your possibility to have a regular practice of stillness, of meditation, of being in nature, of doing more of something that brings you joy because you know, whenever it's that kind of state of mind for you, that's when the best ideas come, or you see opportunities that maybe weren't there.

This is such a fun question to really spend some time with, and there are no wrong answers. Trust whatever comes up and lean into yourself closely to hear nudges and whispers and hints of things that you might dismiss as irrational, such as, "Well, I'd feel like more possibility was available to me if I got my hair cut." I'm not going to lie, I have heard that one a number of times and I have seen it pan out for people.

So, there is nothing, quote unquote too superficial. I don't believe that, as in changing a wardrobe, changing hair. There is nothing too abstract or esoteric, like sitting in meditation. I don't think those things are abstract or esoteric actually at all, rather very pragmatic. But just to give you some examples of the ways the mind really quickly shuts down new ideas.

So, don't edit. Don't censor. Trust whatever you can get and make a list and then look at the ways you can start following through on that. We're going to play with this so much more in the workshop, but that's plenty to get you started.

The other part that I wanted to offer you was around disappointment because our disappointment, also our heartbreak, those places where we're longing for something and haven't maybe been able to create it yet can really greatly inform where we want to explore more possibility. It's telling us we want to make something - well, it is a priority to us.

And then, if there's still disappointment, sadness, and grief around it, it's a great place to go down to the root of that emotion and let it speak to you.

Perhaps if you're disappointed you haven't enrolled in a painting course yet, it's time to make that a priority. It's time to make becoming a painter, no matter the age, becoming an artist no matter the age, it's time to make that possibility a reality in your life. And you do so by making it a priority.

You do so by taking action, putting it on your calendar, signing up. Maybe the first class is a dud, you don't like it, but then you find out there was something you gained from it and then you keep exploring for the right teachers, the right methods.

So, go into the places where you feel heartache. That heartache is there for you. That's your heart speaking to you. What's it telling you? What does it want you to still explore and own as a possibility in your life? And how can you follow through on that?

Befriend your disappointments. Explore your failures. Listen to the ways your heart is speaking when it is broken. That will tell you so much. All of those things are absolutely portals to expansive possibility.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. Thank you, everyone, for listening. Thank you for subscribing, sharing, leaving a review, shouting out on social media, for writing in.

And this week, I want to say a special thank you and a shoutout to Erin Grover. Erin sent such a beautiful letter, email, congratulating me on 200 episodes and also sharing her story, sharing what has been going on in her life since she's been listening to the podcast.

I cannot tell you what that means to me. I cannot tell you how much I love hearing your story. I am always honored when someone shares their story and even though I always intend for it to be true, I want it to be true, I believe it can be true and is a possibility, it still blows my mind. It's hard to wrap my mind around when I hear that the podcast actually made it into someone's life and was helpful, meaningful, brought beauty, brought something that served them.

So, thank you so very much, Erin. I was also so touched by this line. And I wanted to share because I think this is helpful for anyone out there creating something who sometimes, you will sometimes feel maybe this doesn't happen to some people.

From my vantage point and my work with other creatives, there are times when you are putting your work into the world, and we were just having this conversation this week in the mastermind, one of the hardest things to experience can be nothing. When there is no response, when there is silence, it can be really easy to interpret that as indifference.

And we don't really know, but that is an understandable interpretation of silence. And I have definitely had those times. And it has been so important for me in those times when that feels really hard to dig down deep and remember why I'm doing this and what I am in control over, what my intention is, to remind myself that this is my work.

That Julia Cameron quote, "I am a channel for God, the universe is life's creativity. And my work comes to good." And to let it go.

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And there are times when that's hard. So, when Erin wrote, "I know that sometimes you must feel like you're speaking into the void, but I want you to know that I am listening, thankful for the goodness and beauty you record every week."

Thank you, Erin. And it's such a beautiful, generous line that I wanted to offer it for anyone listening. Take this in as this is what you are meant to hear. That even though I know sometimes you must feel like you're speaking or creating or working, offering into the void, I want you to know that I'm listening.

For anyone listening, know that someday you are going to hear those words. You're going to hear that someone was listening, someone was watching, someone was receiving, and they are thankful. They are glad. They are better off. Their lives are better off because you kept flowing what was yours to flow. You were true to you and did what was yours to do.

So, stay with it. And again, thank you so much, Erin. You know how Blake wrote, "All the world in a grain of sand?" well, I'm kind of feeling like all the world in a single podcast listener. So, thank you.

To close today, I thought, since we are dwelling on possibility, it would be perfect to end with Emily Dickinson's poem, the full poem, I Dwell in Possibility.

"I dwell in possibility. A fairer house than prose. More numerous of windows. Superior for doors. Of chambers as the cedars. Impregnable of eye. And for an everlasting roof. The gambrels of the sky. Of visitors the fairest. For occupation this. The spreading wide my narrow hands to gather paradise."

And how is that for summing up a cosmic expanse of possibility and a paradox? Thank you, Emily, "The spreading wide my narrow hands to gather paradise."

I hope you all have such a wonderful week exploring, expanding possibilities, gathering paradise, and I look forward to talking with you next time.