

## Ep #203: Digging Up Your Treasure



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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“The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure that you seek,” Joseph Campbell. In this latest episode, which forms a part of a collection of episodes all centered around the theme of possibility, I really wanted to focus on the things that keep us from exploring our possibilities and actualizing our potential.

And I hope the way that I frame this, in this episode, you will come to see your fear not as something that has gone wrong, not as something that you should also just run roughshod over and blindly try to charge by, but instead to see it as a sign and as a gift, and as oftentimes as it absolutely manifests an X marks the spot to where your treasure is buried and where it behooves you to dig.

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 returning to you fresh off a magical writing retreat just off the coast of Connecticut, in the Thimble Islands. I can close my eyes and see the sea glittering like diamonds, hear the gulls, feel that energy of being surrounded by water on all sides, and being on this island with a legend of buried treasure.

So, what a perfect metaphor, what a perfect place to dig, to excavate, to explore, plumb the depths of the psyche, of the imagination with the pen. And also, it got me thinking about reasons treasure is buried, that there are marauding pirates and this thing that was so valuable had to be put far beneath the earth to protect it.

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And it made me think of how that happens so often in the lives of creatives. You know there's something within you. You maybe though feel like it's a myth, like it's a legend, it's just a fairytale that there's this treasure buried deep within.

But think of it. Why would that have been? What have been the forces in your life and also before your life, going on for generations, for millennia? What have been those forces of the marauding pirates which forces us to bury our treasure so deep that we even forget the tale of it. But something about it vibrates. Something about it calls us.

And then we find, like me, it calls us to a place like an island where we can explore, where we're like, "Okay, what is here that is ours to unearth?" And if you're like me, maybe you feel like it's more than yours. Maybe you are unearthing something that feels, yes, important to your life, and then also important in the role it plays in a story of which you are a part, a lineage of which you are a part, but also the legacy that you will create.

So, this all sounds wonderful, right? Where's the rub? Well, the rub is why I chose that particular quote to open this episode, "The cave we fear to enter holds the treasure we most seek." Because when I talk with anyone, if they have trusted me enough to share the dream, the gift that they believe is trying to come through them, that lives within them, even if it's buried deep beneath decades or years of misuse, the fear is, "Maybe this is a pipe dream. Maybe this is delusional. Maybe I will do all this work to excavate and to dig and work years to refine my craft and I will find there's no treasure there at all, that it is simply fool's gold and that I have been on a fool's errand."

And so, people often, when they are in the grips of this fear, do nothing. And so, that possibility still looms large, that possibility of, "Well there's probably no treasure there anyway. Why waste my time? Why risk?"

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So, they don't sign up for that watercolor workshop. They don't sit down to type out the stories that have lived in them for years. They don't take the stories they've had hidden on their hard drive and send them off to agents and editors. They don't create their podcast. They don't ask for the bank loan. They don't go look at the brick-and-mortar space, they don't apply for the MFA program, the master's program. They don't venture out into the dating scene. They don't get on that app. They don't explore adoption. They don't think about fertilizing their eggs from a surrogate donor.

There are all sorts of ways that we try to protect ourselves from the possibility that our possibility could break our hearts, that risking believing in ourselves and in the possibility for creative greatness in our life, for fulfilment, for adventure, for success, for love, for a life that we are really in love with. We are so afraid that somewhere in there, we are going to find out, when we dig down deep, that we are disappointing and will be disappointed.

And I so get that. And you are not wrong. There is nothing wrong with you. There is nothing to be ashamed about for feeling fear, for looking at that dragon that seems to be guarding the entrance to your cave and thinking, "Oh yeah, I don't know. Maybe it's not worth it. Maybe there's not even anything in there. I don't need to go slaying dragons and losing the good that I have in my life.

Also, I want to say this is not about just plunging always ahead, blindly, sword drawn, running head-first into danger. Not at all. Not at all. There is so much to be said for the process of our gifts gestating within us.

And oftentimes, that gestation, for many of us, takes longer than nine months. Sometimes, it takes decades. Sometimes, it doesn't. Sometimes, we wake up and we are ready to move.

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But what I want to do here is draw out from the dark, out from that cave, and into the light, this fear, common to so many of us, that we are going to bear our creative heart and soul. We are going to be vulnerable with what's most precious to us, our most cherished dream for our life, and we're going to find somehow that we're not equal to it or we're inadequate, that we're not good enough.

And I just want to normalize that these are not core flaws to any one of us, but aspects of – I don't know if it's a virus in the collective consciousness or if it's something that makes us sit down and think, "Yeah, in this area, I am probably not the best whatever, vocalist, draftsman, I'm not the best musician."

And sitting with those things, not from a condemning place, not from a harsh judgment or a critique, but then seeing what does rise within us. I'm thinking of the story of Chris Martin, the lead vocalist of the band Coldplay. In an interview I saw with him years ago on 60 Minutes, and he was saying, "You know what, I am not the best vocalist in the world. I'm not the best musician. I am certainly not the best dancer. But when I get out on that stage, what I am is full of enthusiasm."

And I love that story. That, for many reasons, that right there would be enough, and the root of the word enthusiasm, from the Greek *entheos*, in the spirit of God.

So, we can make all of the assessments about our inadequacies in our craft, or what we perceive as inadequacies in our intelligence or our training, our natural gifts, and yet we all have the opportunity of find ourselves in the places in life where we're called to and we have the opportunity to open ourselves up and channel that enthusiasm, that spirit of the universe, that spirit of life, that spirit of God.

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And I think if you can give yourself permission to live a life enthusiastically, enthusiasm will carry you so many places and through the necessary places where you want to acquire new skills or you want to refine your craft.

I often feel as if I am fumbling in my life. And I've realized though that one of the reasons it feels like that is because I try so many new things and that fumbling, yes, and also it requires a lot of courage and it requires knowing that your ego is going to get burned up fast when you put your heart on the line, if you're going to keep putting yourself in scenarios where you're digging, digging, digging, trying to liberate that which is within you, trying to liberate the largeness of life that's trying to come through you, clearing out the channel, making ways.

There are so many times in life when I feel like I am stumbling, I am fumbling, and I'm feeling like, "God, I sure wish, at my age now and after this experience that I felt more confident and secure in this area." But at the same time, I've seen places where I remind myself, I can see the places where I'm deliberately choosing to live in a way that feels authentic and real to me and that I could feel really secure in a lot of areas, if I just stuck to that one thing and just did only that.

But I feel like my soul would suffer. A part of me would wither and die. And I am just not down with soul death in this lifetime. And so, if fumbling, stumbling, self-consciousness sometimes is the price I pay, then okay because fumbling can be a completely legitimate way to move through life, to create in life.

And actually, there's an art to fumbling. The more you allow yourself to put yourself in these scenarios and let your ego get burned up and let the love of what you want to create and let enthusiasm carry the day, you do feel a shift in your life and things start to accumulate and they start to add up and come out in your favor.

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And at the same time, you've developed this sort of fortitude because you're also, you don't need it to come out in your favor. You've realized your treasure lies elsewhere.

And so, I realize that some of you listening, coaches might be saying, "Oh, fumbling, shouldn't you reframe that? Isn't that a harsh way of looking at yourself?"

And so, what I'm doing here though is allowing my actual experience of it to rise. Because if I were to sugarcoat it and say, "Oh yeah, it's just courage. It's just courage all the way," that's not actually how the first order of things feels to me and it would feel like a lie, frankly. It would feel like spiritual bypassing.

And allowing myself to own the experience of feeling like I'm fumbling and also not shame myself around that experience can help me see the beauty that is there in the fumbling way. And then, can actually help me truly access and appreciate that that is also a way that I experience my courage, that is also my own particular path for encountering my creativity and my next levels of creativity at this point in my life.

I'm not rehashing things that I know or that other people have known and that therefore I can just practice and master. I am, yeah, like the Patti Smith quote, "Sometimes feeling like a blind sculptor hacking away in the darkness."

And yes, I also am trusting that homing sense I have that something is calling for me and following the golden threads that say dig here, dig over here, come to this retreat on an island where you don't know anybody and you don't actually know what's going to happen there.

And yet, what did happen there in my own digging yielded such a beautiful discovery for me and an even more solid sense of my creative self, a solid

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gold sense and experience of my creative self, and also the solid gold experience of being in the company of other beautiful creatives, diverse company, and also kindreds.

So, in this episode, I really wanted you to allow the possibility that will be an inevitability that there is a treasure within you. And I know many of you have already started to unearth that and have channeled it into the world. And if you have a sense too that there is more, trust that and trust the ways that life is calling you to dig over here, to try this, to go here, to speak this into existence, to listen to the echoes of a legend in your mind, the story that says, “There’s a treasure within. There’s so much more within you to discover.” And follow that. Follow those instincts.

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. Today, let’s play with this story of a buried treasure and the marauding pirates.

Has anything ever called to you in your life that you’ve dismissed as, “Oh, that can’t be so, that’s fanciful thinking, that’s just delusional, that’s a pipedream.” This here is your safe island and sanctuary of an opportunity to unearth that. This is a sacred place to dig. This is a sacred place to sit with your eyes closed and call forth, call upon the spirit of that treasure within you, call upon the spirit of the creativity that wants to come through you and allow, on this island, again, complete and utter sanctuary for yourself, an oasis of trust, and what do you hear?

What would you love to be true? What stories of your own potential and your own possibility are you longing to ignite your life and make you feel fully alive again? And expand out to understand, what have been the other parts of this personal myth for you. And myth I mean as in mythic, as in a great story, as in an epic story.



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What, perhaps, have been the pirates that would have forced this treasure to be buried deep underground? If you were a woman and it hasn't been safe for millennia to be someone with access to original thought, with access to God, for many of us, it hasn't been safe for a long time to have your own direct access to knowing.

There's thinking. We can think, sure. But what about leaps of knowing? What about leaps of insight? What have been those pirates, whether in your present-day life, consisting of your own personal life span, but also in your lineage, also your ancestors, also any of the sort of spiritual lineage of which you feel you belong?

Maybe it's musicians. Maybe it's mystics. Maybe they're see-ers, maybe they're inventors, people who saw that the Earth wasn't the center of the universe, truth-see-ers. In what ways have you buried your instincts towards truth and beauty and meaning and original knowing deep within.

Understanding your own story and raising it to this level of the archetype of the mythic, elevating your story to the epic level that it deserves, honoring the dignity of your life and evolution in this way can change everything.

And if you have been on a quest or considering a quest to unearth a treasure that's within you, to clear yourself out to be a vessel for that which wants to happen through you, honoring your life as more than, "I keep wanting to do this but I just don't. I just get in my way," moving beyond these ways we make ourselves small and the ways we pathologize ourselves and make ourselves small, instead really getting to know and understand yourself by honoring you and your story and your hero's journey can absolutely then embolden you to have the enthusiasm, to have the energy necessary to bring that treasure to the surface and restore it to the world.

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Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have enjoyed this podcast, if these episodes have been meaningful, useful to you, helped you to gather your thoughts and maybe move the needle in meaningful ways in your life, I am so grateful.

You are the reason I do any of this. I believe in the possibilities for a greater world, in our individual lives and for the entire planet and for humanity. And I believe that Creativity with a capital C and a rise of creativity plays a central role in that. People reclaiming the creativity within, really reclaiming that treasure within and then it being safe for them to bring it to light and share it with the world.

I know that this is part of what we are called to as creative humans. And all humans are creative. So, this act of knowing there is treasure within each and every one of us, regardless of color of skin, of gender, of upbringing, everyone has a treasure. Everyone has this ability to live into a life that is satisfying and full and beautiful and meaningful to them, and then also to fill that space, that void where the world has been missing these voices and missing these treasures and gifts.

So, if you want to help me with this movement – and I do feel it’s a movement arising from deep within – the best way to do that is to share the podcast. You can do that by subscribing, by going to iTunes, leaving a review, by sending an email to like 10 friends with an episode you like saying, “Here, check this out.” I so appreciate that.

Oh, social media, I forgot that one. That’s another great place. And I really love being able to connect, especially on Instagram. It’s so easy to direct message. You can tag me, @leahcb1, you can #theartschoolpodcast.

I really like seeing where you’re listening, what resonates with you, how you are applying it in your life, and along those lines, I wanted to give a shoutout this week to Allison. Allison, I grew up with Allison and she sent

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me a message a week ago saying, “Where was your podcast all this time? How come I didn’t know about this?”

And she has listened to the first 20 episodes in about a week’s time. So, that absolutely made my day and floored me. So, I just wanted to thank her and hopefully she’ll hear this, because she said she was starting at the beginning and going to work her way through.

And thank you to all of you who share, who reach out to me. Again, just that human connection is everything. It's just everything.

And while virtual isn’t quite in person, I will take it and also look forward to opportunities to connect with you more personally, whether that’s through a free virtual workshop, whether that’s through the Art School Mastermind, upcoming Art School opportunities, retreats, talks that I’m giving various places, just knowing that, again, there are other people out there in the world who are experiencing this rising desire of a longing, a longing for their lives and a sense that there is something great within them, there’s a potential that wants to be expressed, there’s a dream that wants to be realized, meeting more and more people who are like, “Yes, I feel that and here’s what’s happening in my life and here’s how I’ve been following the golden threads.”

The more we can share that and normalize that, the more we can amplify the impact that our own creativity has and the more it makes solid for us this inner knowing, this way creativity speaks for us, and the more we feel solid, then the more emboldened we feel, and the more traction we get.

Trust creates traction. And again, the more we can connect, I think that traction and that sense that we are not alone and that this is real is just underscored and edified.

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So, thank you for connecting and, if you ever want to reach out with any questions, you can always email us, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com) or learn more about the work at [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com).

So, in closing, a little fun personal story that just dawned on me as I was thinking about recording this episode for you. The metaphor of the buried treasure and just how, like any amazing metaphor, you turn it this way and that, and it's prismatic.

So, I realized that I have buried a treasure in the not-so-distant past, several years ago, when I first met Dr. Tererai Trent, when I was emceeding for an event that my friend, Dr. Mollie Marti was hosting through her institute, the National Resilience Institute, which is now Worldmaker International.

Dr. Trent was the keynote speaker and afterwards, Mollie invited her to stay the weekend at her place and come out to their countryside, their farm. They have an apple orchard, just as a respite from the very taxing and demanding travels that Dr. Trent had just returned from before the speaking event. She had been to Rwanda and she was feeling depleted and exhausted, understandably, on many levels.

And so, what then happened, I stayed the weekend too and it was the most mystical, magical of slumber parties. And so much transpired, including that we each buried new sets of dreams that weekend in the magical, mystical soil of Iowa.

And I took mine home. I headed north with mine to my parents' farm to bury my dreams in a tea can in a very special place for me, a place that was significant to me as a child and remains so, a place I think where I first started to dream some pretty big dreams.

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So, I was thinking of that as I was on this island with the buried treasure, writing my heart out this last week. I was thinking that me being at that island and everything I was doing there and why I was there and the things that I was writing towards and unearthing were very much tied to that buried treasure in Iowa.

And that knowing just electrified me, just infused me with such, again, enthusiasm. There was a spirit to it. So, I wanted to share that in case any of you are inspired to do the same, are inspired to take the treasured dreams lying deep in your heart and soul and inspired to bury them deep in the earth and then follow all the golden threads of the ways that life leads you to their unfolding, to their realization above ground in this world.

I kept thinking of that phrase, “As below, so above, as within, so without,” and so, taking that into the physical realm by actually physically burying your dreams and then seeing the ways in which you are called to live into them can be such a grand majestic adventure.

Wishing you so much beauty this week and treasures untold, my friends. I can't wait to talk with you next time.