

Ep #204: The Secret to Surrender and Flow



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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If you have ever struggled in your life to discern your place between control and intuition, between structure and flow, between having a plan and trusting and surrendering, then this episode is 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.

Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. It is the end of September. As I'm recording this for you, we are moving into fall. I'm getting my front porch and window boxes all changed out to mums and picking out pumpkins with the kids. It's cross-country and soccer season and crisp mornings make for great runs and sweaters along the sidelines. And not yet fires in the fireplace, but looking forward to that soon.

Also, looking forward to next week, I get to see my masterminders, the Art School Mastermind retreat is next week. We're meeting on the shores of Lake Michigan. So, I'm having a lot of fun brewing some very special things for that occasion. And it feels like yeah, the magic is already underway.

And earlier this week, I got to spend time with many of you who attended the free workshop. So, thank you to everyone that was there. I've had so many one-on-one calls lately. That's been awesome. I've been working with many new people and a lot of former clients coming back and former Art Schoolers, writing, painting. Life is good.

And I also have this feeling – I get this often. Not just this time of year, but particularly this time of year – like I need to get back to Iowa. I need to get back home to my parents' farm. It just feels like I should be getting off the school bus and there are apples to be picked in the orchard and then

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making apple sauce and Danish apple bars with my mom, riding in the combine with my dad.

It just is a very nostalgic time of year. The smell too of the crop corn drying in the corn bins and the sound of corn bins, such a great time-travel mechanism, just the air this time of year. And this fall too, I'm trying some new things, some different things. Well, in all places, actually, in my writing, in my art, and also in the creative coaching aspect of my business.

And it's related to today's podcast, which is short and sweet. One theme that comes up again and again in conversations with clients and members of this audience is how to trust your intuition, how to trust the creative process. And it's this struggle to relinquish control enough to let flow happen.

And so, what I want to offer you today is a phrase that is a go-to for me when my left brain and my ego side and my smaller side really wants to hang on and create so much structure, to create this illusion of security, when I know what actually works for me, again and again, is to surrender to intuition, to follow the golden threads, to lift my feet up and not resist the creative current that wants to take me.

Now, this is not for everyone. And I am never going to issue dictums about, "This is the way you should live your life." Not at all. I just want to offer this phrase in case it is liberating and guiding to you the way it was for me.

I know there are people who thrive, who are meant and built to thrive on plan and research and structure. And they should do that. Like truly. And then, there are those like me who try to do things that way, that thought my way was flakey or less than or too soft or not trustworthy or illegitimate. And it really took decades to understand what a gift it is.

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And again, offering this particular episode, in case you are also someone built more in this way and you are on this path of trusting yourself and finding ways to edify your own knowing of your gift, your own knowing of how you work and how life works for you.

Because I don't know how many times I would try to do things in a very analytical, structured, streamlined way and throw myself into it. And then, it just didn't work and I just had so little energy as a result. I literally could feel my energy running away from me, like a huge hole in the bottom of my boat.

Whereas, when I look at when things do work, when I'm most alive, when I'm most lit up, it's when I let myself operate in this manner of which I'm about to speak.

So, most of you are probably familiar with the story of water being turned to wine, of Jesus performing the miracle at the wedding, turning the water to wine.

Well, water to wine, that is a very well-known story, even outside of and beyond Christianity, water to wine, as a story, as a mythology, as a metaphor. And a lesser-known but incredibly significant aspect of that story is what I want to share with you today. And that is that the water doesn't turn to wine until it's poured.

You are probably already piecing this together, but just for clarity's sake and to celebrate the beauty of that, if you are someone who has struggled or found yourself bottlenecking your own creative flow with trying to conform to templates, to plans, to learning the quote unquote right way of doing things, if you keep getting degrees, getting certifications, getting trainings in order to be ready to create that thing.

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And again, I'm not ever going to disparage ongoing education or trainings or learning. I love all of those things so much myself. And also, if you're finding they're not helping you create the kind of traction you feel you should be getting, the kind of traction that helps liberate your gift and express your gift and really start to build something in the world so that you can create this feedback loop between what you're creating, how it's doing out in the world, and then how it's coming back to inform you and wisen you and deepen you and build you, and then you create again.

If you find it's not doing that but instead you feel you're in a spin, you feel you're getting burnt out, that you're expending so much energy and you're not regenerating, the energy is not coming back, you may be the kind of person who needs to look for more opportunities to pour, to not wait and cast spells over the water, to not wait for the right time, the place, to not study the miracle process of how to turn water to wine. You just need to start to go out and pour.

And that can be scary. I get that. I get that as an owner of a business where it's been my own evolution that the more I relinquish other people's way of doing things and the more I allow myself to show up in my own way and in integrity with how I work and how things work through me, then the more magic happens.

And there are certain things that I give up in that process, certain securities, certain promises of certainties or absolute outcomes or black-and-white scenarios. But in truth, I have found for myself, again, just speaking for myself and from experience with clients who seem to be built like me and then are therefore attracted to this work, giving up those things, once you do it, realize is not a tremendous sacrifice at all, but instead is like cutting a lot of unnecessary baggage, dead weight, and like cutting a tether and unkinking where you're constricted in your flow. It is liberating.

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So, the structure that I do love and appreciate having is all of the craft I've studied, all of the things I've learned, all of the experiences I've been through. And also, in the moment, I never want to sacrifice presence or what's actually trying to come through for having a stronghold on these tools, these tools that are instead meant to serve what's coming through.

But if I'm gripping too tightly, that can't happen. If I'm clinging for dear life to what I think should happen needs to happen, then I may very well choke out and miss that which wants to happen.

And so, when I was at the writing retreat in Thimble Island last week, I was listening to a beautiful story someone was sharing with me, a piece of their writing. And one of the pieces of feedback that I offered her, that the theme that I felt her beautiful story told was this: that that which is mysterious and meant for us is so much more profound and divinely perfect than that which we have thought we wanted or think we need to have.

And bringing it back to this podcast, how do we know any of that? Well, we have to live. We have to actually pour the water. And there are so many beautiful ways you can look at this Are you the vessel? Are you the pitcher, the vase? Are you the water? Are you the being who is pouring, the person who is then receiving, on the receiving end of that water turned to wine? Or are we all simultaneously all aspects of this?

I think you could look at it from that angle. And you could also look at creativity being the water that turns to wine. Is it ours, or is it something that we are a channel for?

So many, again, nuanced, multidimensional ways to look at this that don't say, "Completely throw structure out." We still have the structure of the vessel there.

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This is not saying, “Throw everything, complete abandon to the wind.” Because, as any artist of any medium knows, we are here in these clay bodies, these earthen bodies from stardust, and we have these physical constraints, and we’re a channel for something else.

And so, it’s playing with that. But again, for those of you who feel yourself maybe on a hamster wheel of struggle, of trying to get it right, trying to figure out the right thing, holding back, telling yourself you’re not ready, maybe it’s just time to pour.

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.

To begin with, I’ll repeat that phrase, “The water doesn’t turn to wine until it’s poured.” Are there places in your life that are inviting you to think less and pour more? If so, what does that pouring look like?

Cast your net far and wide. Think abstractly and then think very concretely, think grand gesture and then think also small, mundane, and immediate. Give yourself concrete examples of ways you can give yourself more opportunity to embody that kind of miracle, water to wine.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you for sharing, for subscribing, for reaching out to me. Honestly, that always makes my day, makes my week. It is such a treat and makes everything more concrete for me.

It feels like a water-to-wine moment when I’m over here pouring away, pouring away, and you’re not really sure. It’s like a delayed reaction. And then, I hear back, I see a clip of you walking your dog, I see a post on Instagram of the episode you’re listening to, I get a message from you. I hear that you’ve shared it with a cousin or a friend.

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So, thank you so very much for being a part of that miraculous creative process for me. And I hope too that it inspires you to pour more of yourself into the world in whatever way you are inspired to.

There's no such thing as something too small or insignificant and there's no such thing as something that is beyond your reach. Maybe you just want to start sending handwritten letters again. That is calling to you. That feeds your soul.

Maybe you want to start writing screenplays in the morning before anyone gets up. Anything that occurs to you, again don't let other people's ideas of what success looks like or what a dream or goal should look like or what dreams or goals you should have or where it's going or what you're going to do with it or how you're going to monetize it.

Don't let any of that noise interfere with what's trying to move through you. Find ways to be faithful to what's trying to move through you and to pour it. And you will reap the benefit of that miracle. It will come back to you in so many ways.

To close today, I wanted to share a way that I – one way – I've been practicing this in a lot of ways, this how can I embrace the fact that I'm the kind of creative being for whom, yes, oftentimes the water doesn't turn to wine until it's poured?

And one of those ways has been with this idea I've introduced before, of like a secret Art School, like a back door. I'm thinking of it as like Art School Alchemy Sessions. I'm thinking of it as pouring the water sessions. No promise that it's going to be grand wine every time because that kind of promise is the exact kind of control that I don't want to have on the process because I don't want to suffocate it.

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And at the same time, I have discovered again and again, when I can put my own ego and agenda aside and invite those of you who are desiring expansiveness, spaciousness, aliveness, creativity in your life, you have a holy curiosity, you have a desire for life to feel like life again, for there to be an infusion of something. You can't name it. You just feel like maybe it's missing.

That when all of you are called into this space, when we're called into this space collectively, something out of the ordinary, something extraordinary always happens. And I built this trust first in sessions with one-on-one clients. And then, it felt like a big leap to move it into group settings. I was like, "What if it doesn't happen there?"

And it does happen there. And it took me a while too to kind of get my sea legs with that, to learn to let go of even more control and what's the right amount of structural integrity that needs to happen so that you have a tight energetic container that is safe for everyone, that is sacred for everyone, and then also, how can I remove, again, ego from it and let something rich and deep, and most times, surprisingly, delightfully huge and unexpectedly profound and powerful rise up and come through?

So, the experiment I'm trying, these water to wine sessions, alchemy sessions, whatever we decide to call them, they're going to just be three sets. I'm going to do one, October, November, December, a subscription model.

You can subscribe to all three. You can do one. It will be your choice. Those details will be on the website. But that's just one way that I am embodying this approach myself, and inviting those of you who listen to the podcast and want even more of the behind-the-scenes.

Because again, I take kind of a fraction of what's going on and I try to make it a very useful, transformative, valuable fraction for you. And then, I also

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am exploring ways to have more people come to these places where the water is flowing and this current, this incredible, extraordinary creative current that runs through the mastermind, that runs through the Art School is happening.

So, that's one of my examples of my own answer to my coach with me, you know, looking for the ways where I can practice pouring. And so, I'd invite you, again, to consider, the water doesn't turn to wine until it's poured, and in what ways can you create those kinds of experiences more and more in your own life?

Have a beautiful week, everyone and I'll look forward to talking with you next time.