

## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

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“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. In order to know the light, we must first experience the darkness,” Carl Jung.

Today’s episode is the second in our collection, our capsule collection for the season called The Glittering Darkness. So, if you missed the first episode, make sure you go back and listen to the previous week. And then join us again because today, I’m sharing two stories to help anchor in the profound transformation that can occur when we have a sacred orientation to the darkness in our life, whether that is literal, the darkness of nature, of the seasons, or metaphorical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and creative.

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*. So, I have been working a lot in my studio lately, playing a lot. I’ve been painting a lot, more than ever this last year, writing more than ever.

And there are then plenty of times, as all of you creative souls will know, where you feel lost. I just feel I am wandering in the wilderness. And actually, the vision, the way that this occurs to my imagination often is sometimes feeling like a blind rat in a maze. Not a pretty description, but well-suited for these episodes.

Because that blindness also signifies darkness and lostness, and so when I contemplated that for myself, particularly earlier last year when it was really coming up a lot – because as I move into a next era, a next level for me as an artist and as a writer, I knew there would be this lostness. I knew there

## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure

was a death and rebirth process, a letting go of certain things, moving into the unknown, a surrender.

And also, yes, this feeling of wandering, lost, and to me, for whatever reason, that image of a blind rat in a maze. And I say, "For whatever," that image. But really, I know, taking my own medicine, viewing that as a sacred orientation, as a portal is the way to go.

So, I began to contemplate it that way, looking for the gift in that metaphor, feeling it in my body, really exploring what that experience is like for me, all of the different poetic ways of looking at that experience and that metaphor.

And then, surprisingly, not surprisingly, there was this very interesting synchronicity, not long after I was really engaging with this actively in my work and in my journaling and meditation. I just coincidentally, synchronistically came upon writings from Joseph Campbell that I hadn't read before.

And in them was this line where he said, "A labyrinth is a scrambled mandala." And I immediately could make the connection between labyrinth and maze and it helped me further define that that was really what my experience was like, more labyrinth-like. And there's a difference between labyrinth and maze. And then, that led me to learning more and exploring mandalas.

So, I won't go into that, but just a short, brief story to say, whatever experience it is that just has you bound up in knots, that too can be a portal. Whatever has you feeling lost, like in that lostness, it's the paradox. There is the key.

And it's that orientation that I wanted to share and expand that opportunity, to have that conversation with yourself in your creative pursuit and the living of your life with these episodes, The Glittering Darkness.

## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure

I wasn't able to transcend or just move beyond. That was a very frustrating, sad, despairing lost feeling, that blind rat in a maze feeling. I wasn't able just to bypass that by, as Jung said, imagining me – I don't know, what would the opposite of a blind rat in a labyrinth be?

I couldn't get there. But it was by entering into that image, by taking that shadow, that darkness and making it more conscious and engaging with it, that something was transformed within me and my work really began to flow and I can see that it's changed, and in ways, it's continued to change that I am mindful to not interfere with intellectually too much at this point, but just to keep the flow going.

And so, again, that same opportunity for engagement is what I want to set the table for with these episodes. So, what I wanted to do was share two other stories of people engaging with things that, oftentimes in life, we would rather not engage with. We'd rather just get on our merry way and be successful and have things all tied up.

But life just really seems like it wants to fall apart, no matter what we do. So, story number one, I was at the Joe Dispenza week-long meditation retreat some of you have heard me talk about, two summers ago now, summer of 2021, I believe.

And you might have already heard then too – I mean, I was kind of falling apart too. I had a major water-borne illness incident. At the end of the week, in my small-group breakout, which was led by a woman who happens to be Dr. Joe's right-hand person, and she was sharing a story of a time in her life where she was desiring growth and evolution and great change.

And she meditated about it, she asked for it, she prayed for it. And she said she could feel it. She could feel this greatness, that there was more for life that wanted to come through for her.

## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure

And she said she really had clicked into this place where she just knew it and she knew it was going to happen. And then, her life imploded and it just fell apart every turn and she was falling apart too.

And she said Dr. Joe called her in to talk to her, as he knew what was going on. And what he said next, and the way he said it, was so very important and she'll never forget it. And the way she told this story, I know I'll never forget it.

He said that he sat her down, looked her straight in the eye, and said, "Don't you dare go trying to pick any of that up and putting it back together. Don't you dare."

And so, how many times, when life just continues – maybe just a piece of it continues to fall apart on us, do we just keep trying to pick up the pieces? And no shame, no judgment. I've done that so many times. And I've seen clients and friends do it so many times.

It's almost like the transformation was happening, the metamorphosis was happening, the melting away of our caterpillar selves into goo is happening, and it's going to happen anyway. But then another part of us is like, "No, not yet. I want to go back." And we try.

So, that was story number one, letting things fall apart and then trusting yourself to know the difference when it's the kind of death and rebirth where things are meant to fall apart and die in order that something else can be reborn and that, if you get quiet, if you give yourself the space and allow yourself to trust your deep, deep knowing, you know you can discern the difference between when something just needs to be repaired and healed, and when it's time to let your very selves and all of the other atoms of your life be completely rearranged so something new can be born.

## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure

The last story I want to share today is one that I think many of you may be able to relate to, because who throughout their lifetime has not heard this phrase or felt this? “I have to dig myself out of this hole.”

And so, while it’s a pretty common universal phrase, I also pay very close attention to the words, the imagery, the intonation, the phrases that my clients use when they’re relaying something to me.

And so, when one client was sharing with me, while she was going through a difficult time, when a lot of things in her life were coming to an end, felt like they were falling apart and there was nothing she could do about it and it was after years of hard work, something stood out to me when she used the phrase, “Dig myself out of this hole.”

It struck me not as just a common throw-away usage of it, but it was also the energy with which she said it that I knew that that hole was actually a portal and that there was a sacred opportunity there.

And that is so counter-cultural though. If I was just listening while based squarely in today’s culture, I’d say, “Oh no, can we think differently about that?”

You don’t have a hole to dig yourself out of. Instead of changing her thoughts about it or trying to correct her, I believed her. I believed that those weren’t just happenstance words, but that those words really meant something, that it was also her deep, unconscious genius rising up to tell her what was actually going on and to say, “Come this way. Here is the gift.”

That that contradictory, ironic maybe as it might sound, that that feeling for her of being in a deep, dark hole was actually the place where her North Star would be found.

## **Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure**

And so, we explored this. And as we explored it further, it was clear that this was a death-rebirth experience and that the hole was an invitation to that kind of initiation.

I mean, think about it, the passageway, the canal aspect of it, that the hole also represents a tomb, the hole also represents the womb being held and tucked in and gestated by Mother Earth.

But understandably, her cultural conditioning was to fight and struggle against that, that it's wrong, that it's shameful to surrender to that, and that instead her mind was wanting to race to, "Let me research and work hard and decide how I'm going to dig myself out of this hole and make up for this and overcome this, what am I going to do next?"

When if we moved into what wanted to happen for her, when we allowed ourself to be enlightened by making the darkness conscious, then that North Star could appear. Then these other meanings could appear and she could experience a giving up that wasn't a giving up of her soul, of her dream, of her life is not a giving up of any of those things, but is a release of old patterns, of old conditionings and habits in order to enter into a transformational process, in order to be bakes in that deep clay oven of the Earth and the alchemical process of surrendering and letting go, letting herself rest and be deeply held.

Yes, by both surrendering to everything that had happened, we talked about everything that had happened for how long, for how many years had those things been the worst-case scenario for her? And she realized how much energy had been spent in running, running, running away from those, trying to make sure that they didn't happen, and how deeply exhausted she was, and how important it was then to, again, surrender this process and allow herself to be held, surrender in the tomb, in the womb, in this passageway.

## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure

So, not only to be reborn, but to first rest deeply and realize just how much energy that had taken. Because, as I mentioned in last week's episode, if we don't have that – and here was their profound realization about this dark hole language – rock bottom.

If she was not laying down there and really, instead of denying rock bottom, instead of denying failure, let the gift of it transform her, let it wizen her, let it move into her, to let herself grieve it and fully feel it, to integrate it so that it could shape and change her in ways that are incredibly gift-like.

If not for that, if we're just back to the scramble, to dig ourselves out of the hole, then we never get to move into a different level of consciousness, then this paradigm of trying to avoid the hole and then dig ourselves out of the hole, avoid the hole, dig ourselves out of the hole.

And at the end of the day, isn't that's o meta? Because all of us, we came from a hole like that, the womb, the Earth, and then we will return to that. The other thing that arose through meditating on this experience of surrendering to the image of the hole rather than digging one's self out of it was the archetypal theme of the treasure hunt and all the places where we work so hard to seek treasure, to hunt for treasure, and to dig for treasure, and that it's deep in the Earth.

And yet, so many times, we avoid these holes that we've dug because we're like, "Surely it can't be there. Surely it can't be in loss and heartbreak and difficulty, and failure, and things falling apart, surely my treasure can't be there."

And then, surrendering again to the experience, to what is, is then what allows that transformation, that alchemy to happen when you're engaged with it. And then, what is the result of alchemy? Pure gold.



## Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure

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. So, start to be a vigilant eavesdropper on your own language, particularly when it comes to maybe habitual patterns of frustration or you find yourself entangled with debating something within yourself again and again.

Maybe it's an outer enemy or maybe it's something that you battle with within. What is the language, the phrase, the exact words, the energy with which you use them? Are there any images that come to mind?

Treat these all as sacred and profound messages from your deep, unconscious, sage genius. Treat these as the very North Stars that you can use to enter into the darkness, to illuminate these aspects, these patterns, these behaviors, these unprocessed emotions, these old wounds so they can also be transformed. And you will likely discover that the light, the gold, the treasure was in the last place you ever thought to look.

Thank you for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. Hey, if today's episode piques your curiosity and you are eager to interface with the genius that is your unconscious in this way and you're just wanting a little bit more guidance, structure, or support around doing it, and also you just want a really fun, nourishing, mind, heart, life-expanding place in which to play with it, make sure you're signed up for my newsletter because you can come to any of the free calls that I offer and ask me about this.

Come with your own language. Come with your own habit that you want to change, your own imagery. And together, we can explore and listen deeply for that wisdom that's wanting to come up from the darkness, from the unconscious.

I absolutely love working with clients in this way. To me, it is a place, the best intersection between the poetic, the neuroscience, your own deep genius, and us together following intuition, deep listening, feeling in your

## **Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure**

body, tuning into that somatic intelligence. And it is mind-blowing to experience what is within you, the part of you that knows these things, the ancient part, the eternal, the infinite part.

You won't be able to see yourself in the same way again. And it's that kind of opening that can usher in an entirely new era of epic change and transformation in your life.

So, if that sounds groovy to you, it really is. It's so much fun and I would love to have you join us. And if you want to take this work to transform your life in all areas, whether that's a business, family, relationship, creativity, then I highly encourage you to check out the Art School.

Our next session starts in February, but it actually starts right now because anyone who enrolls early, I'm going to begin working with and supporting immediately. And if you have a core creative project that you want to bring to life, into the world, and at the same time you're deeply desiring to usher yourself into the next era and evolution, that next level of you as an artist, then I highly encourage you to apply for the Art School Mastermind. We kick off in January.

You can find more information about this at my website, [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com). As always, send us any questions, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com). And connect with me on Instagram, [@leahcb1](https://www.instagram.com/leahcb1).

To close today, I want to remind you of a Joseph Campbell quote that I've shared many times in the Art School and this podcast before. And that is, "It's the cave we fear to enter that holds the treasure that we seek."

I thought that particularly fitting for this capsule collection, The Glittering Darkness, and it is so worth exploring what darkness means to you.

## **Ep #214: Letting The Glittering Darkness Illuminate Your Treasure**

Darkness, for you, could mean going into a place where you are allowed to be seen as you really are. You allow yourself to come as you are, as wholly imperfect, as unprepared, as unpolished, as unprofessional, whatever that is for you.

So, a lot of times, it doesn't have to manifest as an entire falling apart of your life. But it could be very fruitful to explore places where you feel it's just a universal law, a truth that you have to hold this, that, or the other together and explore it, play with it.

And as always, if you have an experience of trauma, treated or untreated, please give yourself so much support, professional support here. And never, ever feel like you have to push it farther than feels safe to you. Stay with what feels deeply safe for you and trust yourself to discern the difference.

I think one of the greatest gifts that can be the fruit of any of this work is to move into deeper and deeper trust of yourself, into trust of your own deep knowing, and to live and create from that place.

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