

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Leah Badertscher**

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

“In a dark time, the eye begins to see,” poet Theodore Roethke. In today’s episode, this is the third in our installment of a special capsule collection for this season, this month of December 2022. This collection is entitled The Glittering Darkness.

And I created it because I wanted to both normalize conversations around darkness, and normalize having wise, expansive, profound places in which we can collectively learn to navigate the darkness and also deepen our own resilience and harvest the wisdom that is to be gained there, that we can seek the treasures, the lights, the gifts that await for us in our darkest times, in our difficulty.

When we do this too, we are allowing an interface with the darkness, the subconscious within ourselves and those places where perhaps our deep genius has been locked away.

So, as I said in last week’s episode when I quoted Jung, it is not by imagining only light that we are enlightened. It is by making the darkness unconscious.

And so, listen to the very first episode in this series, and then the second, and then come back for today because today I am sharing with you a story from some recent coaching I offered to a client, while of course maintaining her privacy.

The themes are very universal and I wanted to usher in this particular example because I think it’s a helpful example of also tapping into the archetypes that can be at play in the ways that we either resist and run away from the initiation that darkness offers us, and the ways in which instead we can turn towards it and say yes and surrender and move through it with sovereignty, with wisdom, with power, and then also with an absence of needing to control.

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

That's very counter-cultural, that instance there of being powerful and also not needing to control. And I hope that's also an element that comes through in today's episode.

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 am just having a podcast-making day. I am batching a bunch of these because I'm looking forward to a very full December full of a lot of coaching, a lot of fun festivities, and then also full of a lot of nothing.

I have built in so much spaciousness and downtime and I want it to also be a time where my mind is completely freed up and not part of it is occupied with composing and crafting podcasts, which I sometimes think I do even in my sleep, sometimes I'm still thinking about it.

I also have created a lot of big space for creative writing, a creative writing project that I'm focusing on, and also a lot of painting. So, that being said, if you want to make sure you stay abreast of any Art School experiences, opportunities, I'm even playing with the idea of doing an in-person event at my house sometime or something like that, maybe a pop-up retreat or something.

That's the sort of thing I'm playing with and might just come up and only be announced in the newsletter, so make sure you are signed up for that, which is at my website, [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com), and usually Instagram is very current too. So, you can find out more about Art School happenings there, working with me, @leahcb1.

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

So, why I am sharing what I'm sharing in today's episode. This is because those places where we tend to shut ourselves down and eclipse our possibility for reaching the fulfillment of our dreams, actualizing our potential, those blocks are often ones we are consciously or unconsciously choosing because we are rejecting an aspect of ourselves.

There is a shadow at play, activated in our lives. And you can usually recognize it because your response will be, "I hate that. I don't like that. I am not that. I will not be that. I cannot be that." Or, "I am that and I am so ashamed and there is something wrong with me that I am that."

And then, it is through shadow work, which as I mentioned in the prior episode, it's through this work of making the darkness conscious that enlightenment actually occurs.

It's by reintegrating these aspects of ourselves that we've cut off and rejected and called the shadow that we are then again made whole. So, in this conversation about darkness, I wanted to bring forward an example that illustrates darkness isn't just outside of us, but it's those places inside of us that we call dark and then therefore likely reject. Again, it's by entering into relationship with that that the transformation, the alchemy occurs and something new can be born and created.

So, in this particular instance, this client was totally killing it, had actually just experienced a very important milestone on a very big dream. I don't want to give away any of the particulars, but you could safely qualify it as a dream of a lifetime, a dream that to many people would seem an impossible dream, a dream that to her at one time just seemed like a fantasy and an impossible dream.

And here she was, it's real. It's here. And so, she had posted earlier in the day on our forum celebrating it. And then, later in the day, this tremendous

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

sadness, this deep grief hit and she described it as a feeling of, yes, moving ahead, but also leaving so much behind.

And these fluctuations between being so high and exciting and also then something else coming on that felt like a purging and also a grief, and also mixed in there were also fear and guilt, fear and guilt that this was just ger dream and that it was selfish and stupid and shouldn't she be supporting someone else's big dream, someone who has a higher probability of it coming true?

And she had stated how she hated these demons and they were wrecking her celebration. And I thought, well, my first thought was, yes, holding this space for her because that's a lot to experience. And then also, I thought, how profound that in this container of a particular microcosm of this experience for her, she's experiencing this full range of what's coming to the surface or all of these unconscious ways we never let ourselves realize the dream of a lifetime.

What was coming to fruition in that moment, as the dream became real, were all of the unconscious ways so many of us will not let ourselves dream an impossible dream, much less go for it.

So, it was so profound and so beautiful and so courageous of her to have this opportunity to bring that darkness, make it conscious, and then move through it, listening and examining with a sacred orientation to everything that she had said and to explore the glittering gifts waiting there in the darkness.

So, I'm going to read to you what I wrote to her. And some of it might not make complete sense because there's probably some context missing, but I think you will get the gist. I trust you will get the gist.

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

She had also said that it feels like a kind of graduation, that sense of sadness but also leaving so much behind, where maybe nothing has changed but maybe everything has changed.

So, I responded, “I think you hit the nail on the head with this. It kind of feels like a graduation. You are experiencing a death and rebirth. And a part of you, Jung would say the ego, is resisting the greater evolution and progress of the self, which makes sense.

The ego is resisting the rebirth because understandably it knows deeply that this is also a death. This part of you, let’s just call it the ego for now, wants to stay attached to the old ways, wants you to not change. The ego wants stasis and it has a tactical advantage when it comes to you and your brain.

It knows exactly which buttons to push to stop you dead in your tracks. It is throwing a last ditch effort, launching an attack because it knows the rebirth is there, and also knows deeply the conversation we had the other day about this new self you are birthing, not having the space for guilt and shame, to this new future you are creating where you do not allow that guilt and shame to be the dominant experience.

It was listening to that whole conversation about habits of guilt and shame and it heard everything we said about breaking those habits and liberating yourself from that suffocating oppression. And then, the next day after that conversation, you close on this deal. Boom, huge threshold crossed. A very real, physical claim laid down in the universe.

We’ve been talking, all of us, about staking our claim and you have literally done that on many levels and now physically as well. That’s huge. And so, of course, the old habit-pattern paradigm that knows this means it’s on the way out and it raises its head furiously.

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

And yes, there is also grief. It's important though to explore your experience with nuance. Experiencing grief can be hard enough. But when guilt and shame have found a way to sneak in and comingle, pretending hard that they are necessary, arguing for their truth and place at the table, that can feel crushing and keep you from allowing the full death-rebirth process to be complete.

There can be such clean purging, purifying pain with grief and letting go. That is a beautiful, hard, and powerful thing, albeit a difficult thing oftentimes too. And I also know you can feel that. You can give yourself the space to grieve to the depths of all you're letting go. You can let yourself release it with love, honor, respect, and gratitude.

And you can trust yourself to know the difference between grief and the suffering inflicted by guilt and shame. Explore that difference within yourself give yourself this opportunity when things are so heightened and therefore in sharp relief to explore your inner terrain.

Where and how am I grieving? What is this experience for me? Where are the borders that separate grief from guilt and shame? How are they different? What kind of animal, beast, creature are those inside of me?"

So, there is all of that. And then, there are also these demons, these charming monsters that arise. How can you, like a martial-arts master, like a jedi master be present to the energy that they contain and transmute it, integrate it, elevate it, a powerful kind of alchemy?

To the voice that says, "This is my dream alone," I would answer, "Yes, my beautiful, beautiful dream from my beautiful, beautiful self. And look, here I am, having grown to a point in the world where I am ready to love myself and the precious, precious gift of my life to create my dream? Who better to do it?"

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

And also, what does my dream mean here? If I'm the divine incarnate, then isn't it true not only that God dreams through me but that I am God dreaming? I am God dreaming, dreaming a dream that God could only dream through the utterly unique cosmic creation that is me.

So, who am I, the ego, to question what God dreams or question God, my divine self, fulfilling that dream? To the voice that says, "This is selfish," I would answer, "Oh my God, yes, gloriously so. I am so full of self, so full of life. I am literally fulfilling God then, the divine. It is my sacred responsibility to feed the soul, to feed this self that has desires, needs, dreams.

I am the steward, the guardian of this precious life and it is my job to nurture it radically, to fill that self so full that it overflows. So, the self is deeply nourished, and that deeply nourished God within will then be able to be the conduit for life it is capable of becoming.

Am I selfish? By God, yes, gloriously so. As for stupid, oh right on again, I am so very, very stupid. I have lost my mind. The mind that was conditioned by the world to say, see here, this is what's smart, this is how the world works, this is how to be a good girl. This is who you are. This is how to live a good life. If you're smart, this is what you'll do.

I have lost those smarts, that learning, that mind on purpose. I resisted when they first tried to put that mind on me, but I was a child. It was hard to resist those in authority, those who you assumed were wise because they were big and they had power.

But now I'm remembering, that was never my mind. And I began to take leaves of absence from that mind. I began to estrange myself from that strange logic that promised a good life but didn't actually feel good at all. It actually felt oftentimes like death while living, and for sure not the good I sensed in a deep, wise, buried part of me is really available.



## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

So, yes, I am very, very stupid. I return again and again against all logic and odds to a belief that my life can be magnificent. I return again and again, although the world tells me how stupid it is, to the knowing that I was made for more.

I return again and again, despite so many telling me reality works a different way. It's imposed on you, handed down, so just play by the rules. I return again and again to the path of the explorer, the true scientist, the lover of wisdom, the path of the artist, the mystic, the creator.

I tap with mastery into the archetypal energies of the fool, the trickster, the coyote in order to return to beginner's mind in order to renew my mind, heart, and spirit, in order to really, fully live.

In a world that tells me that's not possible, yes, I choose to unknow that. I choose to own stupidity, to walk in stupid truth in a world that says you will make mistakes, you don't get to make mistakes, I choose to take my entire life back.

I choose what, to the world, is a stupid choice, but to me is wisdom, wholeness, holiness. I choose my entire life. I choose a life that is alive, vast, growing, deep, wise, loving, rich, beautiful, meaningful, magical enough to make choices that leave ample, ample room for all my devastating mistakes.

And therefore, for also my devastating rise, again and again, I choose to go surfing and be crushed by the waves. And oh my God, do I ever feel so alive. They say that is stupid. And if so, yes, then I am enraptured with stupidity.

In a world that says, "This is who you are and the life you get to have and those are the facts," yes, I choose to throw off the intellect that says I am

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

who they say I am, and I declare with full stupidly in love voice and soul, no, I am who I am.

I am who I say I am. And that s stupid to the world. And I love that that is me. So, yes, I am gloriously, fantastically, madly in love with my stupid self. So, you see, bring those demons on. They are bringing so much life and profound, sublime elements to this death rebirth party.

You are a queen. You are sovereign. You have dominion over your kingdom. You can allow whatever beasts, creatures, persons, activities you want there.

So, perhaps at times you want guilt and shame. Perhaps at other times, you banish them, you exile them. But at all times, you rule. You have dominion over them.

They are your subjects, if you choose. And you can also demote them to low, low ranks. Also, in most major myths, fairytales, including imagery of, there is always a fool, a jester, right next to the sovereign, the kind or queen. That is because wisdom traditions know what modern society has largely forgotten, that the fool's mind, energy is a wise right balance to power.

The fool is able to see truth, to return people to that beginner's mind, right seeing and action place. The way it's a child who finally calls out, "The emperor has no clothes," a wise queen will always keep her fool nearby.

Given your work and calling, I think this is very important to remember. Much of the modern world is very afraid of appearing foolish, stupid, wrong. As we've discussed, true scientists don't have this orientation. They are more committed to discovery than to being right.

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

So, I think where the demons are trying to banish your fool and selfishness, which to me also signifies that you are becoming more and more oriented to an internal locus of control rather than external, I want to offer that it'd be powerful to explore how to befriend and integrate your fool and selfishness as guides, as offering the highest form of guidance for your highest good and the highest good of all.

And you can thank the demons for bringing this to your attention. Good little monsters. End of story.

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, maybe the demons that come up for you, maybe they are foolishness, stupidity, selfishness. Maybe it's something else.

But exploring them through the lens of the sacred, through the assumption that they have deep wisdom to offer you can absolutely transform your entire experience and, in the moment too, you can feel this energy coming back to you.

You can feel a wholeness and it's almost like being tapped into – it's suddenly seeing a world that has always been there but perhaps your eyes were closed to it. And so, again, all those places where doors seem continually closed to you, listen to your own narrative, your own internal narrative and explore that, explore the shadows, explore the darkness.

Lean into how your life is actually connected to something so much greater. And that's why I love playing too with myth and fairytale and the poetics of language and archetypes and intuition and listening deeply and holding spaces to explore this, particularly communally.

Because something different happens in the sharing of stories, a third wisdom emerges, something that's greater than the parts. So, I would invite

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

you to, I think actually trying on even just the fool, the stupidity, and selfishness, those seem to be common enough in the human experience that you'll gain a lot of headway there.

And then, perhaps using that and what I've shared here as a platform for seeing how you can transform your relationship with the deeming demons and shadows, the monsters under the bed in your darkness and see if there is space to befriend them, to learn from them, and either at the end of the day, you can exile them, or you might decide that they are good companions and guides and they are not actually keeping you from your dream. But it's only with them, with your whole self that you will reach the dream. Because the dream is God dreaming of the whole and actualized self.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have an impossible dream to bring to life, if you have a precious dream to bring to life and the vision you have for your future, you'd love to be in a space where you are not burdened with guilt or shame but you're free and your flow of creativity is uninhibited and you are able to enjoy your work and then also engage with the challenge in a meaningful way, then I invite you to explore all of the ways to work with the Art School or with me one on one, either through the mastermind or through the Art School or privately.

You can explore all the options on my website, [www.leahcb.com](http://www.leahcb.com), or you can come and see what it's like to work with me by joining one of our free workshop calls.

All of this information will be available in our show notes and, as always, you can email us with questions, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com). Or reach out to me and connect and share this episode. I so appreciate that. My Instagram handle is @leahcb1.

## Ep #215: Working in the Shadows

To close, I wanted to revisit one particular passage because a first order way I see way too many people dismissing their dreams and their gifts and the preciousness of their life is by saying, “But this is my dream. Who am I? Isn’t this just small?”

So, let me just reread this little part of my bedtime story that you can tell your own little monsters, your little sweet monsters if this is what they say to you.

Yes, my beautiful, beautiful dream, yes, my dream alone from my beautiful, beautiful self. And look, here I am, having grown to a point in the world where I am ready to love myself and the precious, precious gift of my life to create my dream. Who better to do it? And also, what does my dream mean here?

If I am the divine incarnate, then isn’t it true not only that God dreams through me, but that I am God dreaming. I am God dreaming, dreaming a dream that God could only dream through the utterly unique cosmic creation that is me. So, who am I, the ego self, to question what God dreams to question God, my divine self, fulfilling that dream?

And to that end too, I would also add what I’ve said in so many other episodes. That if you have the dream, it is not pointless. It is not random. It is sacred. And if you have the dream, then you have everything you need within you to fulfill that dream.

And if you get stuck thinking about something you don’t have, then you don’t need it because you do have everything within you to fulfill the dream, and it’s having the dream that is going to activate that within you, and in this place where you can interface wisely, creatively, imaginatively, soulfully, spiritually, artfully with the shadow, with the monsters, with the darkness, then that gift is even more illuminated and brought to life.

## **Ep #215: Working in the Shadows**

Have a beautiful week and a beautiful Holiday season. I am so grateful for the gift of all of you and I will be thinking about this community as we celebrate the Holidays and I'm wishing you all so much joy, peace, and love, now and in the coming New Year.

I love you. Have a beautiful week, everyone, and I will talk with you next time.