

**Ep #217: Awakening:  
The Transformation Available to All of Us**



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Leah Badertscher**

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“I feel like I have the most fun and amazing life. When we met a year ago, when we started working together a year ago, I was a walking zombie. And now I’m like, whose life is this? This is my life. I love this. I have so much fun. I have all of these stories. I’ve done all of these things. I just have the best life.”

Those words, my friends, were ones I just heard from a client. I just hopped off a call with her. And that was at the end of the call. What preceded the call I really wish I could share with you too. It was some epic coaching and she had some epic stories.

And I found myself thinking, as I always often do, that I wish I could just bring you in, to experience the coaching. The coaching that happens in private sessions, the coaching that happens in the mastermind, and in the Art School.

Because if this kind of work that is coaching, that is the Art School, were a drug, it would be a billion-dollar industry. This is what’s available to all of us, and it doesn’t have to be my coaching, but if you’re called to work with me, if you’re called to have the kind of transformation where, in 12 months, you can feel like you’ve moved from being a walking zombie – it doesn’t even have to be at that far end of this spectrum – but just to know that that kind of shift and change is possible, why wait? Why hold out?

So, I want to talk with you more about what actually is possible for you in today’s episode, as well as share with you a lot of fascinating things I’ve been working on in my own best life myself, and some news about upcoming events.

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

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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. Happy New Year. Happy 2023, and welcome to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. So, taking a break for a while was so helpful for me. It gave me a lot of clarity about things going forward, new things, old things, what I'm laying down, what I want to do differently, what I want to keep and grow, where I want to deepen and grow down, send roots down, and nurture, where I so need and deeply value quiet and depth.

And then also, where I want my energy and want to allow for an energy that is big and enthusiastic, but on my terms. So, it was interesting then today because I was feeling this quiet, deep energy. And then, also reminded in the call I just had with this client, how important it is to acknowledge all aspects of you and acknowledge the celebration and acknowledge the part of us that when we do something phenomenal, the part of us that craves a, "Yes," that craves that physical satisfaction of a whole-body celebration.

So, I don't want to go too far down that road because I really feel like this conversation I just had with my client, similar to conversations I get to have all of the time. And I've noticed, in this period of quiet, of going dark that I gave myself over The Holidays, that one of my own patterns that I have become starkly aware of, acutely aware of, is minimizing.

I minimize what I do. I minimize pain. I minimize my own celebrations, my own accomplishments. And that for sure would never be what I would want to model for any of you. And it's also one of those things where I didn't know I was doing it until it was brought to my attention.

And one of the things that brought it to my attention was actually – well, I should say it wasn't just physical pain that brought it to my attention. It was an MRI.

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So, I had an MRI done before The Holidays because my back has been giving me such problems. Then, I went home, I went to my grandfather's funeral in Dyersville, Iowa and gathered with our large and wonderful family there to celebrate him and to also mourn the loss of him.

And then, I headed north to Northern Iowa to be with my parents, my siblings, and then my family came over, my husband Brad, and he brought the kids from Michigan so we could all get together and quickly, before the blizzard set in.

So, we were all tucked into – my childhood home, this 125-year-old farmhouse on the northern plains of Iowa where the wind has nothing to stop it and it got down to negative 40 with the windchill.

And it was so funny because there were a few days where it was below minus 10 degrees without the windchill, and so when we got up to four degrees, the weather lady said, without any irony or humor, totally serious, she's like, "Well, it looks like we have a warming trend. Today it will be four as the high, and tomorrow we're looking at nine." No irony whatsoever. And it's one of the things I love about hardy Midwesterners.

So, there was that and we had a wonderful Christmas. And then, we came home back to Michigan and did our family Christmas. Santa came a little later to Christmas in Michigan.

And so, that's a little bit of a tangent. Where am I going with this though? The MRI. So, I had the follow up, the results from my MRI after we came home and were in Michigan again. And I almost wept when I saw the MRI. And I kind of held it together until I got out to my car.

And then I got it because what I could see on the MRI was this huge protrusion from my spine. Not just one bulging disc, but there was another

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where there was a little bit, but this one was just egregious, pushing this big, angry, black blob, pushing into my spinal cord.

And it was a moment of reckoning, of acknowledging how I had been minimizing the pain and just walking and moving through the world having tolerated it and tolerating the impairment and the growing impairment, and also particularly how that weighs on me since I love to move so much.

I haven't been able to do that. I just haven't felt like myself for a long time. And it was, again, very eye-opening. And this is not rose-colored glasses because I seriously took it quite hard that I would have to have surgery and also it's just not fun to be in that much pain.

So, it's not rose-colored glasses and I also didn't want the experience to be wasted on me. And it made me think, of course, of the work that I do, that sometimes it takes an external witness for us to both see our gifts and not minimize our gifts, to see our potential, and not minimize our potential.

It also can take an external witness to our pain, so that we can see that clearly, see clearly what's going on, and from there, what load we can really bear.

It can take an external witness to show us where something is out of alignment in our life, and not from a shaming place. This is not about shame. That's a subject for another time. Oh, my gosh, that makes me so angry. And that's something that I can, yes, get so angry about in the self-development, spiritual circles, some idea that pain and illness is some sort of karmic consequence. That is such a shaming paradigm.

So, instead, to take off the shaming lens and to also see for me, where is the divine message and invitation in this, embracing the reality of it, and then asking, "Okay, what am I being invited to hear?"

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And really, if I can pull out a takeaway for you here, it is the power in having an external witness, a way of seeing places where you may be minimizing your gifts, minimizing your gifts, minimizing the body, the soul, the psyche, the spirit's need for celebration, where you might be minimizing where life is out of alignment for you, but you're like me, kind of an endurance athlete sometimes, and getting along, or tolerating and not even realizing you're doing it, where you're minimizing pain, even like actual pain.

And perhaps then, it becomes so much in your blind spot that it feels just feels like the way life has to be. And so then my second takeaway for you today would be the energy that I hope I extended with the intro in sharing the words, the energy of my client, this immense energy of what it can feel like to be like, "Oh my God," and truly in a, "Thank God praise be," sort of way.

I love my life. Can you believe – this is something we sat back and forth for a good 10 minutes and just enjoyed on this call, was, "Can you believe that we get to have this kind of conversation on a Thursday afternoon? That this sort of profound conversation is available on a Thursday afternoon? That this kind of profound transformation can happen in a year?"

Where life can feel like life again, where instead of feeling like – we have that internalized ageism that sets in, midlife crisis. A midlife crisis can absolutely be an invitation towards spiritual initiation, awakening. It can be a portal into the best years of your life.

Years where you find yourself in conversations saying, "My God, can you believe this is me? This is my life. This is also life." This is what's available for all of us. And that, to me, is what the Art School is all about.

The dreams of creating bodies of work, of reaching your goals and dreams are really just the icing on the cake or the cherry on top. Because it's what those dreams are inviting you to, the initiation, the awakening into the

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fullness of you, the fullness of life, the actual experience of you in so many layers of your mystery. Also, inviting you into so many layers of the mystery of life.

I have had so many experiences in just the last year, intense experiences of deep frustration and grief even, and anger, and despair, and loss, truly darkness, just dark nights of the soul.

And what I have found in those places where it seemed empty and dark is a longing into depth, a longing to grow. I have found, in those still places, that dark and frustration and anger and despair and being at the end of your rope can do for you, is at the end of your rope you're like, "Well, what else can I try here? Maybe I let go and see what happens. Maybe this is where I grow wings."

When you run out of the ability to continue doing what you have been doing, like my back showed me, then you're required to ask, what else? And where do I need to surrender control?

And for me, one of the invitations has been to move even more deeply into my own spiritual evolution and connection with the divine, to embody, what does it mean for me to surrender? What can I control? And where am I being asked to learn to dance with chaos and uncertainty?

Other places I have found was really a calling to search out how better I can serve my art and craft. And it's led me to meet incredible mentors, it's led me to enroll in mind-blowing, heart-expanding, wisdom-enriching courses with incredible teachers, some of it from my creative writing, some of it for my painting, all of which informs, I know then, my work as a mentor and as a change worker for others, and some of it expressly in the field of change work and coaching and creative coaching, and working with the psyche.

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So, I have enrolled in – I won't even go into all of the now, but it's also meeting a deep need of mine. I love to learn. But a learning that has now, more than ever in my life, I know specifically the places where clients get stuck or frustrated or I feel that I have wanted to be able to do more with them and for them than I could, and I feel like that frustration was a call from my soul that was answered by the right teachers at the right time.

When the student is ready, the teacher appears. And so, deepening my training in working with the body, with the somatic wisdom, with working with the unconscious, the subconscious, and already I feel this gratifying expansion and deepening of my skills and also my enthusiasm, my love for the work and the craft.

And another important takeaway as I've been reflecting on all of this change and transformation for myself has been that it's only been possible because I have been willing to let other things go.

I have been willing to burn boats in some areas that seemed to promise the success or this is the way you do it. But I just knew that wasn't it any longer for me.

I didn't necessarily know if anything would take its place or what would. So, completion and closure have been huge, knowing what to lay down, when to create space, so that I could hear more clearly, feel more acutely, sense more acutely what's coming next and what wants to happen next.

And all of these things then informing my work going forward, informing the Art School, informing work with private clients. And so, this next cohort of the Art School will be the Art School, the soul of it as it has always been, and then also enriched, deeply enriched and expanded, not only by what I've been learning, but because of it.



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So, I wanted to share that too because it's actually been through the difficulty that the expansion and the enrichment has happened. And I wanted to share that expressly because I think, too much, we live in a culture that, on one side of its mouth will say, "Yes, of course we embrace failure, you must fail to learn."

And yet there's really just such a stigma about it and such a shame around it. But it truly has been in those places where I feel I've experienced falling short or I have experienced deep disappointment.

And I don't know that I could call it failure so much now, but other people would, as I would call it learning and an invitation. But I definitely did and have experienced it as despair and heartbreak and the willingness to stay in that, the willingness to un-shame that experience has then yielded a wisdom that has benefitted not only my life and my family's lives, but then also those of my clients and the Art School community.

And I do feel like it's this kind of un-shaming of the entire aspect of our learning experience, our growing experience, which is how communally we heal and grow.

And what's so wild is that, this morning after my family headed off to school and work, I was in my office studio. I had a candle lit. It's raining, it's a rainy January day outside. I had set up bird feeders outside my office, so I had a couple visitors from there.

And I was just reflecting on what I have been learning and what I wanted to do today. I did my art supplies. I had actually already started painting earlier this morning, which feels amazing. I've been painting so much. That's incredible. Another story, another time.

And I felt this deep contentment in my heart as I looked and thought about my day. The clients I'll be talking with, my time that was for painting, my

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time for writing, and even honestly, I have a pre-op appointment later and I was feeling content and held by that.

And this organic opening in my heart, this place of deep contentment that just - if it had words, it would say, "I'm so grateful for this." I am so grateful for these small specific things, the rain falling outside my window, that sort of gloominess outside but the warmth and cheer I feel, subtle, soft, delightful anticipation of painting, and then talking with people I adore working with later. I love this.

And I recently, as I was reading *The Color Purple*, it struck me more so this time than when I encountered that book years ago, that one of the messages, the many incredible messages in that masterpiece is gratitude as a core, not just spiritual practice, but way of being.

And that line that's famous that I thank God if you don't notice *The Color Purple* when you walk by a field, can't remember the exact lines of it, hurts God. But that, that beauty and noticing these moments of beauty in a way that we experience as gratitude, we're awake to appreciate our own lives, all of it. That that is a way of being.

And that that is available again to all of you, whether it manifests in these quiet but beautiful, profound moments, like it did for me, and it does many mornings when I'm in my studio like that, or whether it manifests like it did for my client today who was like, "Holy shit, I can't believe how much my life has changed in a year." And she has done some epic things in a year, including buying real estate for a retreat property in a foreign country.

Items on the impossible dreams list that now are just part of her - that's what she does, and that's just one of several things. She's incredible. But to be a channel embodying that kind of authentic energy too where, "I've got the best life, I have the best life." And in a way that wholly comes from this place of knowing that doesn't mean better than anyone else. That just

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means it's the kind of best where you're so grateful. You're so grateful. And that that is something available to all of us.

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. What for you does it feel like to embody, "I've got the best life, I can't believe this is my life?" Is it that energy? Or can you connect more today with these quiet profound moments like, "I love this. I love the rain falling outside, I love that I'm writing, I love this pencil."

Side note, I get some really awesome pencils. I get some really awesome art supplies, including pencils at the art store when I was in Iowa City over Christmas. But anyway, I love that. I love a sharpened pencil.

What is it for you? And what combination of things? Because truly, I get off a call like the one I had with this client and I am like, holy, holy. And I just stop there. I get to do this, to have this kind of connection with people, to be a witness, to bear witness and to support them in living lives like this, to have these kinds of conversations that mean something, and to be able to celebrate with them after having been with them as they came face to face with the challenges and with the difficulty, so that it feels real.

This all - it's in her. It is in her. It's been gritty, and this knowing, it's not flimsy, it's not hopeful. It's in her. For me, that gets to be my life. So for you, can you access that? Is there a 1% chance you could think that? If I could wave a magic wand, what would change in your life so that you would feel like that?

And then here's my second question. I kind of alluded to this earlier. What do you need to put down in order to get there? Are you minimizing your ability? Are you minimizing your strength? Are you minimizing your gifts? Do you need to put down that kind of minimizing? Are you minimizing how

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much you're tolerating settling? Are you minimizing the fact that you've been tolerating mediocre, good enough?

Have you been minimizing pain because you've got a high pain threshold? Is it that kind of minimizing that you can put down? Either way, it's these things, these places where we minimize that allow us to enter the fullness of life and ourselves.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have loved these episodes, well, then I have news for you. What you hear in the podcast is just a reflection, a fragment of the depth and the profundity, the power, the joy, the transformation that happens in the actual Art School.

And I've also heard from so many of you, what you've been able to do using these podcasts to coach yourself, that many of you have reached out and said, "Actually, did you know you've been coaching me the last few years?" And I love that.

And if you are called to the kind of year that I just shared that my client had, if you're like, this is the time, this is the year, I want to be right up in it, I want to be worked with one on one, I want to be immersed in it, then I would highly encourage you to join February's cohort of the Art School.

We begin February 14th and the information is available on my website. You can find a link in the show notes, you can email us, [support@leahcb.com](mailto:support@leahcb.com). One of the many benefits of the Art School is the community. It's the extraordinary people within that community.

And I wanted to share with you some of the work that one of our community members, one of our mastermind members is offering shortly. So Dr. Em Wong I have had the blessing, the good fortune, the gift of working with for

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the last year. And Em is a medical doctor, she is a brain health coach, and she is also an artist.

And even those extraordinary descriptions do not capture the essence of Em. She is absolutely brilliant. She is a force of nature, and I feel like such a gift that now she is called to bring her decades of experience in medicine, her own experience with brain health, and also this exquisite artistic rapport she has with people and ability to be at the intersection of a lot of complex information, scientific information, and also being a vehicle for delivering it to people.

Truly, a channel for medicine and healing. Delivering this information in a way that transforms people's lives and that can allow us to have some of the best years of our life still ahead of us because there's so much we can do when we learn about what is possible for us in terms of brain health and caring for our brains.

So she is on a mission to de-stigmatize brain disease, mental health, and aging, embrace our power to create an active, vibrant, purposeful life, and allowing our wisdom and creativity to guide us in this process. She has a free masterclass coming up, I believe the date is February 2nd.

So it's Brain Health 101 and I would highly recommend, highly encourage you to sign up for this class, to share this information with friends and family and colleagues, and in the meantime, before that class, you can find out more about your own brain health by doing her brain health index quiz.

It's totally free and something that she developed, this brain health index, in order to access and evaluate current brain function, lifestyle, and personal risk factors for dementia. This is the kind of information that I'm going to be sending out to all of my family, my friends, and my loved ones. People I cherish.

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Because I know how important brain health is. And after having the privilege of knowing Em, it's increased my awareness in ways I didn't realize I was limited about the importance of brain health and what we can actually do to increase our chances for not only longevity. Longevity, yes, but also vibrant, purposeful longevity.

There's so much - I thought I was educated around this and now I know how little I knew, and I think that's also a sign of the times. So this is something I am sending to all of my loved ones and highly encouraging them to sign up, do the index, take the free masterclass.

So I wanted to share it, naturally, with this community too. Again, not only is the information incredible and awareness-enhancing and empowering, there's also the fact that I have had the privilege of knowing Em. And really, she is extraordinary.

So when you have someone like a doctor or a preferred service provider who you just love and trust, and you're like, oh, then this is the only person that I want to provide this for my loved ones, that's how I feel about Em. And she is also an incredible wealth of knowledge, expertise, experience, so I will also be having her on the podcast.

But don't wait for that, don't miss this opportunity to work with her and really, again, empower yourself to have the healthiest, most beautiful brain possible because it truly is important in enabling yourself to have the healthiest, most beautiful life possible.

To close, I have a bonus coach with me. I want to invite you to meditate on this, reflect on this, journal, imagine, daydream. Give yourself some spaciousness. Don't rush to an answer, but really feel into it and see if you can embody it more and more.

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How would it feel a year from now to be saying, to be owning, embodying that energy of, “I can’t believe this is my life?” See yourself in the back of your mind smiling a year from now. See yourself smiling and owning it. Maybe it’s a fist pump, maybe it’s a quiet deep gratitude morning reflection, where you, with 100% earnestness are so grateful and also saying, “I can’t believe it. I can’t believe that this gets to be my life. I love my life. I have the best life.”

I hope you all have the best week ahead, my friends. So great to be with you. I’m wishing you the best 2023, the best year yet, and I look forward to talking with you next time.