



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

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The Power of Self-Image

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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The Power of Self-Image

Who are you? Pay attention to that answer because it's creating your entire life. When you look into the mirror, who do you see? What are your thoughts about your face, your body, your clothes? What do you think about what's possible for you, your capabilities?

All of these things are creating this mental portrait in your mind called your self-image. And if you want to upgrade your life, you must upgrade how you see yourself. And that's what this episode is all about.

Bonjour, and welcome to *The French Kiss Life Podcast*, where personal development meets style. I'm Tonya Leigh, certified master life coach and the hostess of this party, where we explore how to live artfully and well. Each week, I'll be sharing inspiring stories, practical tips, and timeless wisdom on how to elevate the quality of your everyday and celebrate along the way. Let's dive into today's episode.

Hey. My friends. I am so excited about today's episode. In case you've been hiding under a rock, you have probably seen that I just unveiled my latest project. It is called the School of Self-Image. And a little bit of back story around how this came to be.

It was during the beginning of COVID and I was spending a lot of time by myself, as I'm sure many of you were as well. And I saw that time as an opportunity to really just think on my life, to think on my business.

So often, we can be so inundated with the day to day that we don't spend enough time really asking the bigger questions and looking at ourselves from a meta view. And so, I began to ask myself questions such as, what am I ready to let go of? What am I ready to step into? What am I being called towards? What feels complete?

And then, I took my answers to that and I started to go through the testimonials that we've received over the years. I thought about things that my friends are always asking me for, they're always thanking me for, they're always telling me. And I really sat with what my work has always been about.

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It's what my life has been an example of. And that is transforming a woman's self-image. And so, I spent hours upon hours upon hours just brain-dumping. It was almost as if things were just coming through me; all of the things that I have done in my own life, the things that I've coached women around, the things that I'm good at. And the School of Self-Image was born.

I have taken the best of my life's work, plus what I'm being drawn to step into even more, and created something that, honestly. You guys, does not exist. I've looked far and low and high and wide. There is nothing else out there like what I've created. I am so excited.

And it comes down to three areas of a woman's life; her mindset, her style, and her surroundings, i.e. her environment. These three things are constantly shaping our own self-image.

And I even went back and I read through some of my old blog posts about how buying a bouquet of flowers changed my life, buying a handbag changed my life, investing in my personal growth changed my life, how an outfit completely transformed how I felt one day.

And it became so super-clear. This is my work in the world. This is my jam. This is what comes easily to me because it was so hard for me. Like, I know what it takes to change. I know all of the self-doubt and all of the insecurities and all of the not-enoughness that comes up whenever you decide, "You know what, I want more. I want to be more. I want to be extraordinary."

And yet, you look in the mirror and you're staring at a very ordinary woman. And because I have walked that path and I continue to, I have so many tools and so many new things that I cannot wait to teach within the school of self-image. This is a coaching membership. So, you join for the month, and if you don't like it, you can leave.

But I suspect you're going to want to stick around for a long time, especially when you start to experience the changes that are going to happen when you elevate your self-image. We are going to have guest teachers that I am bringing in who I consider to be the best in the world at what they do.

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There is going to be coaching and Q&As and mini workshops. It is, like, so much value for what you pay, which makes me even more excited. It really is a no-brainer for the woman who wants to elevate her self-image. For \$97 a month, you will not find a coaching program out there like this one, that gives you the value that we're going to provide you within the School of Self-Image, to help you elevate how you see yourself. If you want to read more of the details, you can head over to schoolofselfimage.com/join.

But I want to talk with you about self-image and the power of it. Because I don't even know that many people understand what self-image is and that they have one and how it's impacting their lives.

So, one of the most powerful personal development books that I've read ever is a book called Psycho-Cybernetics by Dr. Maxwell Maltz. He wrote this book back in the 50s. He was a plastic surgeon. And he would go in and perform surgery on people who had major deformities on their face and on their bodies.

And he noticed something fascinating. Even though he would literally transform them physically, there would be two types of responses. One group would have a radical life transformation. They would finally look in the mirror and see themselves as beautiful or handsome and it would just have this domino effect in their lives and they would go on to create extraordinary lives.

But then there was another group that, even though he had performed similar surgeries and they'd had astounding results, they would look in the mirror and they would still think that they were ugly. They had a poor self-image. No matter what he did on them, they still saw themselves in the old familiar ways.

So, in order to understand self-image, I want to talk about cybernetics. His book was called Psycho-Cybernetics. Cybernetics is the science of communication and automatic control systems in machines and living things. So, I'm going to give you some examples of cybernetic machines.

So, in planes, they have what they call autopilot. You plug in your destination and the autopilot, or the regulatory system within that aircraft keeps you on a certain trajectory. Now, you may veer off some degrees, but you will keep coming back to the programming that has been placed within that cybernetic system.

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The thermostat in your house is another cybernetic system. You set it at 70 degrees. And let's say it's a hot day outside and you open the door. Well, the room temperature is going to go up and it's going to send an impulse to that thermostat to say, "Bring the temperature back down to 70," and the AC is going to kick on. Equally, if it's a cold day and you open up the door and the temperature drops to 60 or 50, it's going to get the signal to kick on the heat to get the temperature back up to 70 degrees.

Well, that's what your self-image is doing. Your self-image is that cybernetic system that is creating your entire life. I just taught a course to some of my clients called the Wealthy Woman, which by the way, you will have an opportunity to get when you join the school of self-image. But we talked about this cybernetic system when it comes to money.

If you see yourself as someone who is only able to make \$75,000 a year, that is what you will make. You will guarantee that because that is your regulatory system. That's what you have been accustomed to. That's what you think is possible. Equally, there are people out there that they think they'll never make less than 10 million. And because that's what they believe, that's what they end up creating for themselves.

We see this in relationships. There are people whose cybernetic system tells them that they're not lovable. So, when the room gets too hot, quite literally, with potential love, the signal kicks on and it tells your thermostat to cool down. You will push love away.

Your self-image is creating your entire life. And yet, most people don't even know what their self-image is. Or they think it can't be changed. But let me tell you all, as someone who has completely transformed my self-image, I am proof that it can be done. And it's not just me. There are thousands upon thousands of people who had the courage to decide who they wanted to be, and then they became that person.

So, what is self-image? Self-image is how you see yourself, your thoughts about your appearance, your personality, your capabilities. It's your thoughts about what you think is possible. It's your thoughts about love and who you can be and what

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you can receive in relationships. It's how you see the world. It's like a mental portrait that you've painted subconsciously of who you are and how the world works for you.

And this explains so much as to why change can be so hard. Many people, myself included in the past, would go about change by trying to create a result in the outside world. So, for example, let's say the result that you want to create is weight loss.

Let's say you want to lose 50 pounds. And so, you go on your plan. You start exercising. And you start to create some results. But then, you find yourself slipping back into the familiar patterns, slipping back into your old identity, slipping back to the familiar, slipping back into your self-image.

You see, you probably still see yourself as someone who struggles with weight. And because you have a cybernetic system within your subconscious, you will always seek to prove that true. It's why lottery winners amass this big sum of money and, within no time, they go bankrupt. They have a poor self-image. They don't see themselves as a person with money. And so, subconsciously, they sabotage themselves and get back to their self-image.

If you look around your life, you'll see it everywhere. Your life is reflecting back to you who you think you are. So, if you want to live an extraordinary life – and I feel like everyone listening to this podcast does – extraordinary means out of the ordinary, something unusual, something remarkable. And if that's the kind of life you want to live, then you have to become an extraordinary woman. Which means you have to create an extraordinary self-image.

And because I know this now and I have so much evidence for it, whenever there's something that I want to create in my outside world, a result that I'm seeking, I know that the change starts within me. I have to start thinking like her and feeling like her and dressing like her and putting myself in environments like her in order to birth her. And when I do that, the result is then reflected back to me.

When it comes to your current self-image, most likely it is based on the past, past experiences that you had that sparked a thought that you kept thinking that then became a belief and now you think that's who you are.

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I remember when I was a little girl, I was probably nine or 10. Some of you may know this. It's a Southern thing. But I was in beauty pageants. And I remember loving being on the stage and talking and I would sing. That was my talent. It was so much fun for me. I really did enjoy it.

But I remember one day, a group of girls at school bullied me, they pushed me, and they said some really horrible things to me. And that experience helped me form a self-image of it's not safe to be seen.

Now, fast forward, how did that impact my life? Well, I put on 75 pounds. That's one way to psyche ourselves out into thinking no one will see us, even though obviously they still do. But I also didn't take chances. I played very small.

And even when I first started my business, I still had that feeling of, "It's not safe to be seen. Someone is going to attack me. I'm going to get hurt." I had to create a new self-image, an image of a woman who's willing to be attacked. Because here's the thing, you can create a new self-image; that can't dictate how other people act.

And so, I had to birth a self-image of confidence, of someone who has her own back, of someone who's willing to be seen and willing to be attacked and to know that I have my own back and I keep me safe. And that's allowed me to do this podcast. It's allowed me to do videos. It's allowed me to teach to thousands of women who come to my webinars.

But had I tried to do that from the self-image of, "It's not safe to be seen," I would still be hiding in a little corner somewhere. That's the power of changing your self-image.

The other big way in which I changed my self-image was around weight. For years, I tried to lose weight by thinking like an overweight person. I love to call it an overweight mind. Thoughts like, "You're always going to struggle with this. This is always going to be hard. You have no control around food. Food tastes so good. You can't stop eating it. You're never going to lose the weight. You can start tomorrow." That was all a self-image of someone who's overweight.

And so, I literally had to birth the self-image of a naturally slim woman who eats when she's hungry, she stops when she's elegantly satisfied, and I practice that

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self-image over and over and over until I finally birthed a body at its happy weight. And I don't even think about food, other than I enjoy it when it's in front of me. But it's not something that I'm obsessed over like I used to be. And the reason I've been able to lose the weight and keep it off is because I changed my self-image.

Another negative image that I had of myself was as the CEO of my company. I had thoughts like, "You don't know what you're doing. You've never led a team. You're not a good leader. You are a nurse, for Christ's sakes. Who do you think you are trying to run a company?"

And as long as that was my self-image, I look back now and there were so many ways that I was sabotaging my own company. I was afraid to hire people. I was afraid to fire people. I was afraid to look at a P&L statement. And so, the last few years, I've been really adopting a vibrant image around my being a CEO.

And now, I'm seeing the results of that being reflected back to me. And I'm still on that journey, y'all. I don't know how long I'm going to be on this one, but it's fun and exciting. It's so fun to be creative with who you are versus being who you are on default.

Another big example is around money. I think growing up poor in a trailer in the deep south, I saw myself as a woman who would always struggle with money, who would never be able to make more than \$50,000 to \$75,000 as a nurse. And as long as I saw myself that way with money, guess what my reality was? My cybernetic system kicked in and that's what I created for myself.

But over the last decade or more, I've been evolving my self-image when it comes to money, as a wealthy woman, a woman who knows how to manage her money, who knows how to earn money, who knows how to invest money. And a lot of you may think, "Well, okay, when I start getting money, then I can do that."

But you have to understand, I was doing this when I was working as a nurse. This was the work I started way before I started to see the results of it being reflected back to me.

Another area that just popped into my head where I've completely transformed my self-image is around social interactions. I used to have a self-image of not being

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good with people, being anxious around people. And as long as that's how I saw myself, you all, guess how I showed up in a room? Like a crazy woman.

It was that energy of, "Like me. Like me. Like me. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry." It was just ridiculous. But I've transformed my self-image to a woman who is completely at home with strangers, who has no problem talking with someone, who's a good conversationalist, who has a good sense of humor, who is relaxed around people.

And because I've created these many different shifts in my self-image, my life now is completely different. I could have never gotten to where I am today with the old self-image. I would have constantly been fighting with myself because that cybernetic system would have turned on and said, "Get the temperature back to 70."

But when I raise my temperature to 85, that's where I started to go. And then I raised it even more and I raised it even more. And I continue to raise it because I personally want to constantly evolve my self-image. Because why not?

Now, some of you may be thinking, "Well, is there something wrong with me?" And the answer is no. You thinking there's something wrong with you is part of your negative self-image. I feel like really stepping into and upgrading your self-image is getting back to who you truly are. It's letting go of all of that baggage.

And for me personally, now I want to evolve, not because I think I'm not good enough. But because I am. Because I have this one life and I want to see what's possible. I want to see who I can become.

I want to be very clear that this isn't about fixing yourself, because you're not broken. It's about creating yourself. And that leads me to my next point. As I was saying earlier, most people's self-image is based on the past. An experience happened in the past that caused them to see themselves in a certain way.

Maybe when you were growing up, your mom told you that the family has a slow metabolism and you believed her and you've been struggling with your weight ever since. Maybe your parents told you, you weren't smart enough or you weren't good at math, and so you started proving that true.

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But here's the thing. To upgrade your self-image, you're going to have to look into something other than your past in order to get there. And that's where you look into your future and you use your imagination and your creativity to dream up who you want to be and to really do a case study of that woman.

Like, how does she think? How does she dress? Where does she go? Where does she eat? How does she eat? What does her home look like? What does her car look like? What does her purse look like? When she looks in the mirror, what does she see? What does her perfume smell like? What books does she read? What kinds of people does she hang out with?

And you begin to live in that image of yourself. And you'll know when you've stepped into that new image and it's just who you are. It feels like home. And in the meantime, it's awkward. I talk about this in a previous podcast called the Awkward In Between. But are you willing to feel a little awkward to get to where you want to go and to become who you want to be?

Like, right now in my life, I am feeling so at home. It's like finally the outside world has caught up to who I've been practicing being for a long time. But surely, I have another big goal that I'm working towards. And so, while I'm feeling at home, I'm starting to feel a little uncomfortable because it's going to require that I let go of parts of myself and that I evolve and that I step into the next level of my self-image.

But that's okay. It's what I signed up for. It's what I'm here for. I want to constantly be a little hungry and a little uncomfortable because I know that's where the best stuff of life is hanging out.

Here's what I want you to know. You can only create to the edge of your self-image; how you see and think about yourself. And so, if there's something you want to create that you've been finding it very hard to create, you can't ever seem to get there, it's always a struggle, you need to go inside and let the change happen there first.

Because when you do that, it becomes so much easier. And if you want support around this, I would love to have you within the School of Self-Image. I am literally over-the-moon excited. Because we're going to be talking about all the

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things; mindset, style, and your surroundings. Because those three things are impacting how you see yourself.

And I'm sure I'll go into more detail in future episodes about each of those individual categories. But for now, ask yourself, is it time for me to upgrade my self-image? And if the answer is yes, head over to schoolofselfimage.com/join and I cannot wait to see you on the inside. Because, listen, I think elevating our self-image should be fun. And I want you, in a year from now, to look back and realize that this was the best decision you ever made.

I am committed to you, my friend. Are you committed to you? If so, come join me I cannot wait to see you there.

It is time for a J'adore, the part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you. Recently, I was on a road trip and, like most road trips, it started out early in the morning. I was wanting a cup of coffee. And I found this cute little coffee shop in Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

And you know, it's the kind of coffee shop that's very hipster and it's got all these cool gifts and gadgets inside. And I saw the most beautiful journals that I think I bought like five of and gave some to my friends and my daughter.

And I've been using this notebook, or journal – it's got notebook on the front, but I've been using it for the past months. It's been what I have journaled my dreams in. It's what I have journaled the entire School of Self-Image in. It's so symbolic to me now. I'm looking at it and I'm like, "Wow." I'm looking at this journal and I'm thinking how much of my life this journal holds.

And one of the things I want you to know, if you decide to join me within the School of Self-Image is that I'm going to really encourage you to journal. Because your self-image is formed by words. Words carry energy. They'll either raise our energy, or they will lower it. They will either raise our self-image or they will lower it.

And part of the school of self-image when you join, you get access to some videos that I've done. And part of this process of elevating your self-image, I've put into what I call the Daily 3. And you'll learn about it inside. But it's a simple daily

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practice that will help you to elevate your self-image to extraordinary, and therefore create an extraordinary life.

And I'm going to encourage everyone that joins to get a journal because you're going to be answering tough questions. You're going to be discovering more about you, the true you. You're going to know what you love and what you want and what lights you up and we're going to begin to build your life around that because you're going to create a self-image that leaves room for all of that.

And so, I want you all to go check out this notebook. You can head over to frenchkisslife.com/fringe. This is the company that makes the notebooks. And even if you don't join us, get yourself a journal. I am telling you, my life has changed because of journaling.

I wrote it down on paper. And then I became it and I created it. And I also write down everything that's stopping me. I get it out of my head and onto paper so that it doesn't become an obstacle. And if you're someone that struggles with journaling, I've done some podcasts in the past on it. Go and search Tonya Leigh, *French Kiss Life*, Journaling. They should pop up.

But I'm also going to be talking about the new ways that I'm journaling within the school of self-image that allows me to continue to elevate my own image and how I see myself. But go check it out, frenchkisslife.com/fringe.

Thanks, you all. I'm so excited and I cannot wait to see you in the next episode.

If you enjoyed this episode and you want to dive even deeper into the French Kiss Lifestyle, let's start with a makeover; a mindset makeover. You can download my free training, *The Three Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs*, by visiting frenchkisslife.com/mindset. Because, after all, mindset is the new black.