



EPISODE NO. 367

# Finding Best-Case Scenarios

Most people spend a lot of time playing devil's advocate, but in this episode, I want to challenge you that it's time to play a different role. I call it your angel's advocate. This is the role of looking for, finding, and focusing on best-case scenarios. So let's dive in.

Welcome to the School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here's your hostess, Master Life Coach, Tonya Leigh.

Hello, friends. I'm recording this at 6:00 PM and it feels like it's like 11:00 PM. It feels like I should be in my PJs getting ready for bed. I am so confused as to why we fall back this time of year with our clocks. I don't like it. Anybody with me? I do not like these early dark days. I like having my sunshine, my sunlight, but nevertheless, I'm not complaining, or maybe I am a little bit, but I can't change it, so instead I'm just recording a podcast. I usually do these podcasts earlier, so I might be a little loopy because that's what happens later in the day for me. But I have had such a full week. When I say full, if you were to look at my calendar, it is meeting after meeting after meeting, which is unlike most of my weeks. Usually, I'm creating and I am coaching, and I'm in the membership, but I have decided to make some really big changes within

the business. And if you're in the membership, I will be sharing what those changes are.

But it's been exciting and also challenging in a good way, and also scary. And so today's episode is just as much for me as it is for you because I want to talk about best-case scenarios. How much of your time would you say that you spend thinking about the best possible scenarios, and the best possible outcomes? The majority of people that I ask that question to when they really think about it - it's very little time. Without managing our minds, we automatically go to the worst possible thing that could happen. My brain wants to do this too, but what I know to be true is that if I didn't manage that part of my brain, I wouldn't do anything outside of the known. That's the thing with the brain. It doesn't want to change.

And so it is going to try to scare you from making changes, taking risks, going out there, and doing things you've never done before because doing so is going to require that the brain works in a new way and the brain is afraid of the unknown. And so it's going to always project that worst-case scenario out there to hopefully keep you in place, to keep you tamed. But we didn't come here to be tamed. We came here to live an extraordinary life. And the more that I focus on best-case scenarios, the better my life has become. And that doesn't mean that I don't also consider worst-case scenarios, because one of the most powerful things that I personally do to ease my brain is to allow myself to go to worst-case scenarios and figure out if that were to happen, what would be the worst thing about it?

And usually, the worst thing is feelings that I would have to feel and deal with, but I allow myself to go there and figure out if that were to happen, how would I deal with it? What would I do? What is my backup plan? It allows me to do a little risk mitigation. It allows me to be flexible in my approach, and it gives me peace on many different levels. Because a lot of times what happens is we have this worst-case scenario in our brain and we're so afraid of it, we don't even allow ourselves to entertain that that could happen and figure out if it were to happen, what would we do? And oftentimes the worst case scenario, so many times when I've actually coached people around, it

isn't as bad as their brain's trying to convince them it will be. And once they begin to allow themselves to go there and to make peace with it, they get the courage to go after the best-case scenario.

And so I'm not over here saying you shouldn't entertain the worst-case scenario. I do it all of the time. I just don't live in that place. I visit it, I look around, I figure out if I end up here, what am I going to do? And then I drive right out toward the best-case scenario, and that's where I love to spend my time. That's where I love to live. So how do you begin to train your mind to focus on best-case scenarios versus the catastrophic thinking that our brains want to go to? And one of the best principles that I know that you can leverage for your benefit is the pain-pleasure principle, which basically says that you will do things to avoid pain and to pursue pleasure.

Now, let's think about it. If you are at a point in your life where you are thinking about making a big change in your future, there's a big goal that you want to go after, there's a risk that you want to take. If you only paint pain in the future with catastrophic thinking, you are going to subconsciously work to avoid that, which means you will probably be frozen into place. You won't take the necessary action. Equally, if you paint where you are as content and known, and comfy and pleasurable because it is familiar, you're going to want to say, "Stay right where you are." I've learned to play with this principle to my benefit. The way I do that is I spend a lot of time visualizing and thinking about best-case scenarios in the present, and I also think about the pain that I am going to continue to feel or create for myself if I stay where I am. And those two things, pain where I am and pleasure visualized in the future gives me the courage to go after my best-case scenario.

Sometimes I do this process very quickly, and then sometimes it takes me a while. If there's a lot of deep-seated fear, a lot of insecurity, a lot of emotion that I'm having to process, this process may take me a little bit longer, but the more I do it, the better I get at it. One of the best examples that I can give you around this is back in 2020 when I left a long-term relationship and I moved to a new city. Now, had I not managed my brain around that, I would still be sitting there because what my brain wanted to do

was offer me the worst possible case scenario. "You are going to be alone for the rest of your life. You are going to lose your business. Nothing is going to work out. You're going to have no friends," literally every worst possible outcome, that is what my brain immediately wanted to offer me. Can you all relate to this?

You'll get a great idea. You'll get something you're excited to go out there and create. Maybe you want to start a business, maybe you want to start dating, and the moment you think about it, your brain's like, "Oh, yeah? Well, let me tell you what this is going to look like," and you imagine the very worst thing. And so you take that and pair it with maybe looking around at where you are and thinking, "Well, this isn't so bad. This isn't terrible. I mean, at least I know this, at least it's known. It's working, it's good, it's okay, it's fine." And so you tie a little bit of pleasure with where you are in so much pain with where you want to be, it makes sense why you're not really moving. You're staying in place, and so what I did is I just reversed that. I started to imagine the most magnificent future.

I started to play around with different best-case scenarios because there's not only one, there are many possible best-case scenarios. And so I started to think about what those could be. I started to put myself there, visualize it, feel it, and think about how I would be thinking, and how I would be showing up differently. I literally imagined myself throwing dinner parties in an apartment. I knew I was going to move into an apartment because I've never lived in an apartment, and I thought that was really cool to try at least once in my life, and so I knew I wanted to be in an apartment. And so I imagined having dinner parties at my apartment and meeting my neighbors who live right next door. And I started to get so excited about a future, not yet realized, not yet created. At the same time, I started to tie a lot of pain with where I was.

I started to think about, "If you stay here, this is what your life is going to look like. If you stay here, here's what you're giving up. If you stay here, this is where you're going to be five years, 10 years from now. If you stay here, here's how you're going to feel about yourself." And I started to tie a lot of pain with staying and a lot of pleasure with the future that I was imagining in my head. Now, why does this work? Well, research

has shown that we get, most often, what we expect. You don't get what you want, my friends. Your expectations shape your future. In fact, there's one research study where two teachers were given students with average cognitive abilities, and one teacher was told that all of her students were gifted and talented. And then the other teacher was told that her students had below-average cognitive ability.

Now, here's where it's crazy. After one year, the test scores reflected each of the teacher's expectations. So the teacher who was expecting high-achieving students created them. The teacher who thought her students were low achievers, she created that result with her students. This is so crazy and powerful, and I do believe it's why the people that are around me, whether it's members of the School of Self-Image or my friends, why they're able to create at such a level because I hold that expectation. They'll come to me and they'll be afraid. And I'm like, "Listen, you've got this. Let's just go to your brain. You're going to be a hundred percent okay. I expect you to succeed." And they start believing in my belief of them. It's so powerful. We get to do that for ourselves. What are you expecting in your future? Because it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Have you ever had an experience where you, let's say you're going out one night and you expect it to be boring, and lo and behold, you go to the dinner party and you are bored out of your mind? Guess what? You created that not the people around you, you did. That expectation, that worst-case scenario, you created it. And what I have seen over and over and over again is that people look at how things have happened in their past, and then they just project that into their future. So let's say something happened in the past. Maybe you did have a terrible relationship. Maybe you did fail miserably at doing something. Maybe your business didn't do well last year. Be careful not to project that into the future because that's over and done, but if you are expecting that because it happened before, you're going to show up differently, you're going to feel differently and you will create some version of that result for yourself, and that is why it's so important, my friends, that we give time to our best case scenarios.

Now, some people will say to me, "But Tonya, what if it doesn't happen? What if the worst thing happens?" And here's what I have to say to that, because there are no guarantees, and I'm not going to sit around and say, "Oh, if you just sit around and think about best outcomes, there'll always happen." No, but what I do know to be true is that you sitting around thinking about worst-case scenarios all the time is not going to make your life any better. And I always think about how I feel in this moment. If we just made feeling empowered, confident, excited, determined, whatever the emotion is in this moment a priority, then no matter if you are encountering a worst-case scenario, you're in it, from that worst-case scenario you can still project the best thing from that place, and that's the way I think about it.

I'm like, "Okay, let's say I just think about and visualize, and expect the best-case scenario and it doesn't happen. I know that I have the tools even if I'm in the worst-case scenario to do this work again and expect it to get better, expect something amazing in the future." And when I'm in those places and I have been, I've thought about best-case scenarios and they didn't work out, and I find myself in a situation, I'm like, "Ugh, this isn't what I expected," but I just tell myself, "Oh, this isn't the end then. This is just part of the journey. That best-case scenario is still out there. This is just the road that I'm taking to get there." And so it's very important that we are mindful about what we tell ourselves no matter what situation we're in.

And of all of the things that you could imagine, what future scenario is going to create the emotion, whether it's confidence, security, excitement, love, passion, whatever it is, what scenarios, what best case scenarios can you begin to visualize that will help you create that emotion that'll drive you to show up in the ways that you're going to need to show up in order to create it? Because if you're sitting around thinking about doom and gloom, fortune-telling the worst possible future, you're going to be so afraid. You're going to feel very insecure. You're not going to have the confidence that you're going to need to go out there and do what needs to be done to create what you want to create, and this all comes back to self-image. It always does. All roads lead back to self-image.

Because if you see yourself as someone who expects the best, that expects things to work out, that expects yourself to show up for what it is that you want, then you're going to show up in ways to create that for yourself. If you see yourself as someone where bad things are always happening, things never work out for you, you don't have what it takes, and you don't have the courage, you will equally create emotions that keep you from living the extraordinary life that you're here to live. It's so crazy for me to think about how I am now sitting it literally in a best-case scenario. When I think about my business, for example, this was a business that I visualized and I thought about the best possible outcomes and now I am in it.

I remember when I first started my business, gosh, 15 years ago, imagining... Where I am today was a far stretch from where I was then. I just imagined having 10 clients. That was my best-case scenario, and I practice believing in it. One of the things that we're doing this month within the membership is focusing on how to make belief, how to make it, and live into it because you literally will create what you believe. That's just how it works. And so this month has been so powerful. I've had so many of you say, "Oh my God, this is one of my favorite classes because we're doing a whole challenge around it. It's super fun." But I threw that best-case scenario into my future, and then I practiced believing in it because my brain wanted to tell me, "Oh, that will never happen. You're just getting started. You don't know what you're doing," all of the things. But I just kept thinking about visualizing and believing in best-case scenarios.

And so I think about where I am today and I'm blown away. I'm like, "I am literally living in the biggest, best-case scenario ever." I have the most incredible community of women within the School of Self-Image. I go into the Facebook group and I'm like, "You've got to be kidding me. I attracted these fabulous women that I get to guide and mentor and watch their own growth as they're watching mine." It's like the most amazing thing. I think about my team. I'm like, "What just happened?" I have the most incredible team. I think about all of the people in my personal life. I remember always feeling like I was on the outside looking in. I was not in the cool club. I was not a popular girl, and so when I look around at the friends I have now, I just feel so blessed. I feel so lucky. I feel so fortunate.

And I also know that I imagined and I visualized having a community around me like I do right now. Even in Charlotte, we just moved here in January and we have met the most beautiful souls here. And I'm just like, "What, is this really happening?" I'm just looking around, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this work really does work." Because I know because of who I've become, I now can allow people into my life at this level. I think before when you have insecurity and you don't feel like you're enough or you're afraid of people really seeing who you are, you can push a lot of people away. You create the experience, you become the one on the outside looking in, you're creating that.

And so I think just doing all of this work around my self-image has just opened me up to a whole new world of friendships and community. And then I look at my relationship with Fons, literally the love of my life. I'm like, "Gosh, I've waited forever to find you, and now you're finally here." And the fact that he has the most extraordinary daughter, and I never thought I would want to be a stepmom. I never saw that in the cards. In fact, if you would've asked me, I'm like, "That might be a deal breaker." But she's the coolest girl ever. I feel so honored to be able to be a part of her life. This was the best-case scenario that I didn't even think about. I was thinking of friendships, and I didn't even really think about romantic relationships because that wasn't where my brain was, but it's always this or something better. This or more. And so when I would think about my future and practice best-case scenarios, I was open to it unfolding in ways that would be delightful.

And so I look around and I'm like, "Oh my goodness, I'm so glad that I didn't give in to my brain's desire to scare me really with worst-case scenarios," because that's what worst-case scenarios are for. They're just to scare you in place. And so I want you to know that this is a skill that you can learn. It's not going to be natural. It's not where your brain's just automatically going to go, "Oh, let's go to best-case scenarios." No, the brain will give you lots of ideas and thoughts about what could be, but with intention, with practice, with focus, you can begin to give a lot of time and energy toward best-case scenarios. This is one of the practices that we do within the School of Self-Image. It's within our daily journal practice really thinking about how you want to think and show up on purpose.



And the secret is not only imagining your best-case scenarios, that's step one. Step two is taking action to confirm that this is what you're choosing to believe. Taking action to confirm that this is who you are becoming, taking action to confirm, "This is the future that I'm choosing to focus on creating." And when you do all of those things, my friends, magic. So you need to ask yourself, are you ready to be your angel's advocate? Because we spend a lot of time being the devil's advocate, but what would happen if you started to really focus on visualizing, feeling and showing up for the best-case scenarios?

All right, my friends, have a beautiful week, and I will see you on next week's episode. Cheers. Hey, have you grabbed your free copy of the School of Self-Image Manifesto? If not, what in the world? Head over to [schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto](https://schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto) and get a copy that teaches you how to think and show up in the areas of mindset, style and surroundings so that you can transform your self-image.