



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 126

The Joy Diet

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The Joy Diet

In 1964, a man by the name of Norman Cousins, who was an American political journalist, author, professor, and world peace advocate was given six months to live. He recognized that worry, anger, and depression had contributed to and maybe even caused his illness, so he began to wonder, if illness can be caused by negativity, can wellness be created by positivity?

He decided to put himself on a laughter diet, as an experiment, since laughter was one of the most positive states he knew. He asked his friends to call him any time they heard a funny story. He rented funny films, he read funny stories. And even though his pain was so great that he could not sleep, he noticed that belly laughing for 10 minutes did more for him than morphine.

Norman Cousins eventually healed and went on to live a healthy 20 more years and he credits visualization, focusing on the love of his family and friends, and daily doses of laughter for his miraculous recovery, leaving us all with a question, could joy be the cure for most of life's problems?

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.

We're going to kick off the show with a community spotlight. This is the part of the podcast where I highlight someone in the community who has benefited from the French Kiss lifestyle, and today's spotlight is on Deni. She wrote a five-star iTunes review and here's what she said.

"Finally, the tools to become your own best friend. Everywhere we turn today, we're told that the secret to happiness is that you must love yourself. I walk through my life thinking it made sense, but how do I actually achieve that? Just

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thinking positive thoughts wasn't getting me there. Tonya, her courses, and her podcast taught me.

I no longer have the negative self-talk playing over and over in my mind. I have a kind and gentle voice that encourages me to do all the things I want to achieve throughout my day and in my life for the years to come. I finally understand how to be my own greatest friend. If this has alluded you as it has me, you have to add Tonya's French Kiss Life community to your life. It is elegant and fun, and one of the most special gifts I have given myself."

Deni, your review just gave me the tingles, as my daughter would say. I think about my favorite Oscar Wilde quote, and you'll hear me say this over and over again on the podcast, but he said, "To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance." And if you think about it, we have to be with us all of the time. Why not make that the most amazing relationship you will ever have?

And I'm so happy for you, Deni, that you are doing it, that you are your own best friend because life is so much more fun when we walk through the world being our own best friend. Now, if you want to be featured in an upcoming community spotlight, all you need to do is head over to iTunes and leave me a five-star review.

And did you know that next week I'm going to be announcing the winner of the Hermès scarf? So if you want to know how to be eligible to win, just go to frenchkisslife.com/itunes. We walk you through the whole process of how to leave a review and how to enter into the giveaway and quite frankly, I would love, love, love to give you an Hermès scarf so stay tuned for the winner in next week's episode.

Hello my beautiful friends. Welcome to the podcast, where we're going to be talking about dieting. Exciting, right? Actually, notice what happens in your body when I talk about dieting. Do you get excited? Do you feel turned on? Do you feel joyful? Or do you feel contracted? Do you feel like here we go again?

But today's diet that I'm going to talk about is a different kind of diet. It's actually the only diet that I recommend to women. I'm often asked, "Tonya, how did you

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lose the weight? Give us the goods. Tell us exactly what you eat in a day, tell us how you work out, give us all of the secrets.”

And I don't do this for two reasons. Number one, diets aren't the answer. They're the Band-Aid, and I also know as a former nurse and someone who has studied health and nutrition for two decades, there's no one diet that works for everyone except for one, and I call it the joy diet.

Yes, this is the only diet that I will recommend 100% because again, I know we are all so biologically and physiologically different. What I eat may not work for you. How I move my body may not be the answer for you. My role as a coach is to help you figure out your answers, but I will 100% support the joy diet because when I really dig deep into how I've not only lost 75 pounds and kept it off for years, but also how I've built a company, how I've created financial security, how I've built an amazing community and great relationships and how I have a sense of overall wellbeing, it comes down to joy.

Really generating and caring for my joy. You see, before I discovered this way of thinking and being and living, I didn't have a lot of joy in my life. So naturally, I turned to food like so many women. It was the one source of joy. And then I would watch the scale go up and I would be like, no more joy for you, so then I would try to resist my one source of joy.

So you can see how that's not sustainable, right? Because I feel like our natural navigation in life is to follow joy, so if you frame food as joyful, and that's your only source of joy or one of your few sources of joy, it makes sense why you would then overeat. But what if you learned how to create deep true inner joy where you don't need food, you're just overflowing with joy?

It changes everything. And so in this podcast, I want to share with you - I have many, many joy practices every day, too many for one podcast, but I did want to give you some that I use every single day that really has dramatically changed my life.

Again, these are the practices that have helped me lose weight because I no longer need food to comfort me. Again, it's also how I've attracted the most

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amazing relationships into my life because I finally realized joyful people want to be around joyful people.

So as long as I was miserable, I was attracting more miserable people into my life, and when I started to really bloom my own joy - I don't know if that made sense but we're going to go with it anyway - I started to bloom my own joy, grow my joy, I started to attract other joyful people.

I've also come to discover that joy loves money and money loves joy. Really think about that. Joy has helped me create more financial security, more abundance in my life because number one, like food, I'm no longer spending to feel good. So I actually save more money, but then also, when I create from joy, not from fear, not from lack, I attract more abundance into my life.

Joy has also helped me create the most amazing experiences. Just last year I was invited to go to the apartment of Coco Chanel as well as the family home of Louis Vuitton, and I don't know exactly why I got the invite, but I have to believe it had something to do with joy. Showing up in the world joyful attracts more joy into your life.

You know, life is like a boomerang. Whatever you put out comes back to you. And for that reason alone, I want nothing more than to inject you with massive doses of joie de vivre. I feel like that is my true mission on this planet. Whenever I'm in a group of people, what I want is for them to leave feeling overjoyed, feeling like the world is their playground, feeling like they can do anything because I know when you think that and you believe that, you will go out there and just blow your own mind.

So I want to share with you five practices that I have for my own joy diet, which by the way, total side note, did you know that the Latin word for diet actually means way of life. So I want you to think about making joy your way of life.

Okay, so let me start with practice number one, and I'm just going to call this non-resistance. This has been huge for me. I believe that the main source of our suffering and our pain in this lifetime is because of us resisting not only what is happening, but our thoughts around what's happening and our feelings around what's happening.

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Because what is happening out there in the world is actually neutral. It only means the meaning that we give to it. So what we often do is we give things meaning that feel painful, that feel negative, and so we feel a negative emotion and then we resist that negative emotion, only making it grow, because what we resist persists.

So when I talk about non-resistance, I'm talking about my emotional life. I used to think that if I was feeling a negative emotion, something terrible had gone wrong. Can you relate? Like I'm feeling worry or I'm feeling anxiety or I'm feeling sadness, and it's like wow, something bad is happening, I need to get rid of this emotion.

And so I would turn to food as a way to escape that emotion, only making my situation more and more stressful, more and more undesirable. So when I say non-resistance, it's allowing yourself, number one, just to be human. It's normal to feel anger, sadness, anxiety, worry, all of those things are normal, it's part of the experience of being a human on this planet.

But let me tell you what's not normal. It's not normal to resist the emotions and it's not normal to stay in those emotions. So at the core of my coaching and my belief system is that our feelings are created by the thoughts in our head. It's never about anything that's happening outside of you.

So if you're resisting your emotions, you're not allowing yourself to feel them. Number one, you're making them stronger, and number two, you're not getting down to the core reason of why am I feeling this way, which will always be a thought in your head.

And so for me, I've become so much more happy by allowing myself to feel terrible. I know this sounds crazy, but there are days that I wake up and I have anxiety and I used to think, "Oh my gosh, something terrible has gone wrong, I need to get rid of this immediately." It was like, all of this drama around having anxiety.

Now I wake up, I have anxiety, I'm like oh hey, guess I'm a human being having anxiety today. And you all, suddenly, it just starts to dissipate because I'm not

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resisting it. I'm not painting this terrible story about having an emotion. I'm simply allowing myself to feel it and then I look into my head and I'm like, well of course, this is why I'm feeling this way. Look at all the craziness in your head right now, and then I can change it.

So non-resistance has helped me become so much more joyful. It's crazy. By not trying to be happy all of the time, I've become happier. By accepting that part of being human is feeling all the things, from the highlights to the lowlights, feeling it all, and then understanding why I'm feeling it is the secret to everything.

In my signature program, Slim, Chic, and Savvy, we do a lot of work around this because what I tell my ladies, I'm like listen, when you are a woman who is willing to feel all of the emotions, there is nothing that you cannot go out there and do and create and become because the reason why we often don't show up in our own lives is because we're afraid of feeling disappointment or humiliation or sadness or whatever you're afraid of feeling.

But when you're the kind of woman who you allow yourself to feel it and you don't let that stop you, you understand it, you manage your own mind, we call it being the CEOs of our mind, you begin to create mind-blowing results in your life, and you become so much more joyful because you know that you are the creator of all of it.

And so for me, not resisting the negative emotions, again, has helped me become so, so, so much more joyful. It's part of my joy diet. The second practice for my joy diet is celebration. Here's the thing; in life and every single moment, you could be focused on what's going well or what you think is going wrong.

You can be focused on what is abundant or what you think is lacking. You can be focused on problems or you can be focused on possibility. And your focus is important because what you focus on expands. This is why it's so important for you to learn how to manage your own mind.

So for me, celebration is a huge part of that practice. I celebrate all of the time. There's always something to celebrate. In fact, I've told my Slim, Chic, and Savvy ladies about Winston, my beautiful dog when I first got him, of course, like any

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puppy, he was just pooping all in the house, and I would train him, take him outside, and of course, he would come back in and he'd poop again.

And instead of being upset about it, I was like, oh my god, I celebrated it. I'm like, I have this amazing dog that I get to be the mother to, that I get to have in my life. He makes me laugh, he makes me smile, I get to clean up his poop, how lucky am I? Whereas some people would get upset about it. They would get frustrated, they would get angry, they would have anxiety around it.

And not that there's anything wrong with all of those things, but again, the reason why you're feeling that is because of what you're making it mean. I choose to look at most things through the eyes of joy and through the eyes of celebration.

Now, notice I said most things. There are things in this world that do upset me, and I realize that I'm creating my own upset. There are things in this life that worry me, although I don't worry nearly as much as I used to, but still, I'm human.

But at the core of my daily practice is looking for things to celebrate because I am a big believer in that when you celebrate life, life celebrates you. So what are you looking for? As Rumi says, "What you seek is seeking you." Are you seeking problems? Are you seeking lack? Are you seeking things to worry about?

Or are you training your mind, like I had to train Winston, to look for what's beautiful, for what's abundant, for what's going well, for the possibilities of this moment? Are you looking for things to celebrate? This is one of the first things I have clients do and at first they're like, "Really, Tonya? We're going to celebrate?" And I'm like yes, just watch what happens.

And it's crazy. They get job promotions, they start losing weight, their relationships become better, they have unexpected money show up. It's like, celebrating your life is an amazingly powerful practice and you know what, the last time I checked, we only get one go round on this lifetime.

And I want to be the kind of person who does not take that for granted, who every day I'm like, oh my gosh, this is amazing, the most amazing day ever, even if it's just me in my little chalet up in the mountains, I don't want to be one of those people who are constantly complaining, who are constantly looking for what's

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going wrong and therefore, finding things everywhere that's going wrong and things to complain about.

I can equally look for things every moment to celebrate. And by doing so, I will tell you, my life has become so much more joyful and yes, I've been able to create all of these things in the outside world, but I want to be one of those people that even if that were all taken away, I know that my joy comes from within. It comes from how I view the world, how I view myself, how is how up daily. And that is why I celebrate, my friend.

Okay, let's look at my third practice, and this will not be a shocker to any of who you have known me for a while. But my third joy diet practice is laughter. I laugh all of the time. I try not to laugh when it's inappropriate, but I did laugh at my grandmother's funeral, only because she lived an amazing life and the funeral was hilarious.

Me and my cousins were like, belly laughing during her funeral, and I know it made her so happy. But I laugh and I laugh a lot. I giggle a lot and I have no shame whatsoever about it. There is a Japanese proverb that says time spent laughing is time spent with the gods. I want to hang out with the gods, you all.

And I believe my god is laughing all of the time, and so therefore I want to honor my god by laughing along with him or her. So laughter is one of the things that I believe full-heartedly in. In fact, going back to the beginning of the podcast, I talked about Norman Cousins who believes that his healing, after he was given six months to live was because of his daily doses of laughter.

Why have we become so serious? Why do we spend more time indulging in anxiety and worry than we do looking for things to laugh about and to celebrate? So instead of counting calories, I want you all to be counting how many times you laugh a day.

I've read different statistics on this but the latest one I read says that children laugh on average 400 times a day. Adults, four. Four times a day. How sad is that? We are living in this playground and we're treating it like a warzone. Now granted, I know bad things are happening in the world. I'm not living under some illusion that there are things that are happening that I'm not happy about, that

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cause me great sadness, great pain, but I also know that every single day, there are amazing things happening in the world.

Unfortunately, our media doesn't love to cover that, which is why you will rarely find me watching the news. It just doesn't add any value to my life, but still, where are you focused? What are you looking for? And we don't heal the world by constantly walking around feeling bad. I feel like we heal the world by embodying joy, by - as my mentor Martha Beck says, "Stay on the mountain top, Tonya, and inspire people to meet you up there."

And so one of the ways I do that is I laugh a lot and for some people, it annoys them and I feel bad for them because it's so much more fun on the mountain top. And I'm not saying again, that I don't have bad days. They're more like bad moments now. I don't stay in bad days that often anymore only because I coach myself all of the time.

But even in some of the hardest circumstances, you can find things to at least smile about and hopefully work your way up to laughter. And we don't need to save our laughter until when we think life is going amazingly well. I feel like we need laughter on our hardest days.

I think about my daughter. Some of you know this but she has been sick for going on three years now and thank god she's healing, but we were in Mexico, she was getting treatment for a month and we were - she was hooked up to IVs and she was like, "Mom, we're in Mexico and the sun is out. Why are we not laying out?" And I was like, why not?

So we went and talked to the staff and they set up chairs outside and she went out in her bathing suit, hooked up to IVs, and we laughed so hard. I have pictures that are hilarious of her, hooked up to IVs, sunning like she was on the best holiday ever.

But even when life is handing you lemons, you can make Limoncello, right? Be creative. Look for things to feel joyful about. And again, I think when we need this the most is when life feels the hardest. So if you're someone who hasn't laughed a lot in a long time, you got to work your way up to it. Come hang out with me, I promise you, you'll be laughing.

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But seriously, do like Norman Cousins. Go rent funny movies, stop watching war documentaries. Find things that feel light and YouTube is the best place ever to find funny videos. In fact, there's this one video, and I'll make sure we link to it in the show notes, but it's called Jesus Christ in Richmond Park and every time I watch this video literally, I just start belly laughing.

You have to go see it for yourself, but there are always things out there to induce laughter, and again, I believe, as Norman Cousins believed and what he experienced, it has the power to heal not only our bodies, but our soul. I love what Audrey Hepburn said. She said, "I love people who make me laugh. I honestly think it's the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills. It's probably the most important thing in a person."

Are you tending to your own laughter? Every day are you looking for things to smile about, to laugh about? This is a huge part of my joy diet. Okay, practice number four of my joy diet is true pleasure. And I say true pleasure because a lot of times I've noticed in coaching women, we confuse false pleasure with true pleasure.

Women in my Slim, Chic, and Savvy program will say things like, "But Tonya, eating that whole bag of chips was so pleasurable," and what I teach in that program is learning to differentiate between true pleasure and false pleasure. So for me, true pleasure are things like unplugging from the virtual world and getting outside, reading books, having lunch with my girlfriends, taking my dogs for a walk.

It's those things that oftentimes we're so busy trying to get to the next thing that we don't really stop and enjoy this moment. We don't embrace the pleasures that await us each and every day that add value to our lives. And so for me, my joy diet consists of a lot of pleasure. True pleasure. Because like a lot of women, I used to think that one day when I get there, then I'll be able to enjoy life, and I realized that was an illusion.

As my friend says, when you're done, you're dead. And so I was always delaying my one pleasure, my own joy until one day when, and so part of my daily practice is making sure I'm getting enough pleasure. And the crazy thing is pleasure

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increases my productivity. I get more things done when I'm taking time out to rejuvenate and reenergize and just enjoy my life.

So what brings you true pleasure? And if you cannot answer that question, I'm going to challenge you to begin to discover what that looks like for you. Okay, so moving onto my final joy practice of this podcast. Maybe I'll do another one later where I list more because I have many, many practices within my joy diet, but this one's really big, and that is being of service.

If you are suffering, if you are not feeling joy, I want you to ask yourself, how much of your time do you spend helping others and adding value to the world? The big shift that I made many years ago was getting out of my own head all of the time because it seemed like I was obsessed with how I looked, how I was coming across. It was like a me, me, me show, and in a really bad way.

But I started to notice like wow, when I just go out there and I do nice things for people, when I add value to the world, when I am of service and I'm not thinking about myself and all the negativity that was in my mind at the time, I felt better. One of the greatest ways to help yourself and to generate joy is to help other people.

I was actually talking to a friend recently and I told her, it just came out of nowhere, but I said, "You know what, I want to be so busy helping other people and adding value to the world that I don't even have time to think about my own so-called problems." One of the things I've noticed from studying truly joyful people is that they all have this of service mentality.

Because I think if we don't serve humanity, if we don't serve the world, if we're not putting value out into the world, there is some internal dissatisfaction with our lives. I remember when I was little, one of the things that we would do as we would go to the nursing home all of the time, and I remember even back then just feeling so good about bringing a smile to someone's face, sitting down and talking with people who maybe had not had anyone to talk to in months.

And even today, I love doing random acts of kindness just because it makes me feel good. It's actually selfish when I think about it, but I feel joyful by knowing that I'm of service, that I'm doing something to support my fellow humans. And

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so part of my joy diet is being of service, and it doesn't have to be that complicated.

You don't have to travel to Africa and go on a mission trip, even though that would be amazing, but it could be something as simple as opening the door for someone or giving someone a compliment. How can you add value to your days? How can you add value to the world? How can you be of service in your daily life?

So those are five of my many practices of my joy diet. I highly recommend that you try one, if not all of them and just notice how you begin to feel different. Notice then how you show up differently. Notice how your life begins to shift and change. There is magic always happening in our lives and I believe the way to discover that magic is through the road of joy. So this, my friend, will be the only diet that I ever recommend to you. The joy diet is the best diet in the world.

It is time for j'adore. This is the part of the show where I share something that I adore. And today's particular subject is a documentary. I don't know about you, but I love documentaries and this one is actually an older one. It was produced in 2012 but to this day, it's one of my favorite, favorite documentaries and it fits so well into today's topic about the joy diet because this documentary brings me so much joy but also the main character of the documentary is a joyous fella.

So it is called Searching for Sugar Man, and this actually has a very special place in my heart because - I don't know, maybe five years ago I went to Detroit and I was invited to go hear this gentleman named Rodriguez perform. And I had no idea who he was. I just remember he performed with his back to the audience and it was really, really good music.

But it was only years later when I met Glen that I understood what I was feeling that night. Searching for Sugar Man is the story of Rodriguez who was the 70s rock icon who never was, except he was huge in South Africa, which is where Glen comes into the picture. So Glen is my guy and he's from South Africa.

And when he showed me this documentary, I was like, how did this ever happen? It's such a bizarre story of someone who was absolutely famous and didn't know it. So quick synopsis is that his album that was produced here in the US was bootlegged into South Africa during the time of the apartheid.

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So censorship over there was crazy at the time, Glen talked about this whole phenomena of Rodriguez. But as Glen said, growing up in South Africa, it was the soundtrack to our lives. Every home in South Africa had this album, but Rodriguez never knew he was famous in South Africa until years later when two journalists found him and brought him over to South Africa.

It is an amazing story and if you have not seen this documentary, I highly, highly recommend that you go check it out. You can find it on Amazon, Netflix, and iTunes, and you're welcome. Thanks for tuning in, I will see you in the next podcast.

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 3 Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs by visiting FrenchKissLife.com/mindset – because after all, mindset is the new black.