



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 129

3 Moments

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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How in the world did you get started? This is a question that I'm often asked when people hear that I have a company called *French Kiss Life*. And what I always tell them is that I didn't find *French Kiss Life*, it actually found me. But there were three moments that really changed the trajectory of my life.

These were moments that shook me to the core, that made me question many of the things that I thought to be true, that challenged me to let go of the past so that I could create a new future, that requested that I step into the mystery of life, that has led me to this very moment.

In today's podcast, I'm going to journey back into time with you to share these three moments and, more importantly, the questions that these moments sparked that completely changed my life. And I believe that they can change yours too.

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.

Tell Me Something Good. Do you remember that song? Such a good song. This a question – it's not even a question, it's actually a command that when my daughter calls me or Glen calls me or my friends call me, one of the first things I'll say is, "Tell me something good," because there's always something good to tell. And I have something good to tell you.

Did you sign up for the *French Kiss Life Soirée* that I'm hosting this week? It is a four-part soirée where you are going to have a date with your future self. We already have two down and two more to go. But no worries, if you did not sign up and you missed the first two, when you join, you actually get access to all of the replays. So you can head over to frenchkisslife.com/party – because it's a party. I believe personal development should be fun.

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So please get yourself registered. This is such a powerful concept and tool that I love to teach that helps you create your life on purpose. It's getting to know and trust your future self and then use her as your most amazing guide and mentor. So again, come join us; super fun, frenchkisslife.com/party.

Now it is time for a Community Spotlight. This is the part of the show where I highlight somebody in the community that has benefitted from the *French Kiss Lifestyle*. And today, I am highlighting a Slim, Chic, and Savvy sister. Slim, Chic, and Savvy is my signature program and full of the most amazing women you could ever imagine meeting and being a part of.

So this Community Spotlight is on Lisa Bear. She says, "I joined Slim, Chic, and Savvy three years ago after a devastating heartbreak. I was feeling like a victim and even though others said I was a strong woman, I didn't feel like it. I was able to file for divorce that I had been stuck in for four years in indecision, recover from that heartbreak, and begin to create the life I wanted using the Slim, Chic, and Savvy principles and the wisdom of Tonya Leigh. In addition, I have an invaluable group of support through what I call my Slim, Chic, and Savvy sisters. They are women who are likeminded and this has been so wonderful to me because as I change, my friends change in response to that. This is an investment so worthwhile in myself. It's just invaluable and I can't say enough good things about the Slim, Chic, and Savvy program and Tonya Leigh as our coach. Thank you, Tonya, looking forward to round number four for me and see what adventure awaits me on this journey of loving myself."

Lisa, you are so welcome. I love my Slim, Chic, and Savvy ladies and when I hear stories of this, it just reminds me of the power of investing in ourselves, number one, the power of learning how to use our minds on purpose to create what we want, and also the power of community.

You know, they say you are the sum of the five people you spend the most time around. Well, in Slim, Chic, and Savvy, we have I think over 2000 women that have gone through the program, but in our private group on Facebook, we have, what, 1300, I think.

And there's something about logging in every day and hearing women celebrate their lives and even hearing women bring challenges to the table, but having the tools to navigate them and just supporting each other. And then we all rise

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together. That's why I'm such a huge advocate of community and surrounding yourself with likeminded people and people that will challenge you and support you and love you through this journey of life.

So, Lisa, thank you for sharing with us how *French Kiss Life* and the Slim, Chic, and Savvy program and community has impacted your life. You definitely deserve to be in the spotlight this week, my friend. Now, if you want to be featured in an upcoming Community Spotlight, there are many ways to do so. You can either leave me a five-star review on iTunes or you can even screenshot this episode and share it on your Instagram stories or on Facebook and just let me know how *French Kiss Life* has impacted your life.

Okay, my friends, it's time to go down memory lane. And this is actually funny because my friends joke that I don't spend a lot of time in the past, which is true, but I do know that there are lessons that I can excavate from my past and share them with you. So this is actually fun for me to stroll down memory lane and think about the three moments that changed my life and the questions that they sparked that can change yours too.

Okay, we're going to start with moment number one, which was a night in the intensive care unit. Now, if you're new to me, you may not know this, but I was a critical care nurse for many years. So, on this particular night, it was one of those rare quiet nights in an ICU.

So we were sitting around the nurses' station and there was a doctor that was visiting. He was a locum doctor. And so as we were sitting there, he turns to me and he says, "Tonya, who do you want to be?" Now, I don't know about you all, but I'd never really been asked this question.

We're often asked, "What do you want to do?" But who do you want to be is a very rare question. And I remember saying to him, "Well, I want to be a good mom, and a good wife, and a good nurse." And he said, "No, I'm not talking about the roles you play in life. Like, who do you want to be as a woman?" And I had no answer for him.

And honestly, y'all, I thought it was just predetermined. I didn't really understand that I had a choice. I thought who I was being was predetermined and a fixed-state. So on the way home that next morning, because it was a 12-hour shift, so

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around 7:30, I'm driving and the question will not leave my head, "Tonya, who do you want to be?"

And the first word that came to mind, I rejected immediately. I was like, "No, that is not who you are." But the answer would not leave me alone. It just kept hanging out there. And so to give you a little bit of back story, I grew up in the Deep South in a trailer. I grew up Pentecostal Holiness, so I was raised in a very strict religion. And so the answer that came up really rejected all that I thought to be true about myself and what was possible for me.

So the answer was worldly. I wanted to be a worldly woman. But at the time, I think back to who I was, and I love who I was. I truly cherish it now. But to give you all some context, so you know the thing that you keep in your bedroom that houses your clothes, it's called chest of drawers. But, for years, I called it Chester Drawers because that's how everyone pronounced it where I lived. And I literally thought it was named after a man named Chester.

I thought he must have invented this thing that I put my panties and bras in. Later, I found it was called chest of drawers. I had an accent so thick that when I traveled to Colorado when I was about 17 or 18, I had a man look at me on this bus and say, "What planet are you from?" So you have to understand, when the word worldly came up for me, I just thought there was no way.

But I started to think, what if I just started to practice with this word? What if I just allowed it to lead me and guide me, and let's just see what happens? And so, one of the first things that I did was I actually signed up for sommelier school. Now, I don't know if you all know about the Pentecostal Holiness religion, but alcohol is a big no-no.

So there was a lot of fear, there was a lot of shame, there was a lot of guilt. I couldn't even tell my parents for the longest time what I was doing. But all my early adulthood, I was really curious about the world of wine. I wanted to know all the things about wine. And I don't even know how that desire was planted in me because I was never around it as a kid growing up.

So I signed up for sommelier school and, on the very first night of my class – I'm a very eager student, you should know that, and so I sit in the front row and the sommelier instructor said, "So why don't you all share your favorite wine?" And, of course, my hand raises and I'm like, "Me, me, me, pick me." And so he picks me

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and I said, “I love rose wine.” And everyone in the room like just looked at me like I was an alien, probably like that man on the bus looked at me when I started talking.

And the sommelier instructor was like, “Do you mean rosé?” I couldn’t even pronounce rosé. But you know what, I did not let that stop me. I kept showing up. I kept studying and learning and following the answer to the question, who do I want to be?

It also led to me going back to school to get a liberal arts degree. You see, when I imagine a worldly woman, she could talk about the arts. She could have conversations around philosophy. She knew things that a lot of people maybe don’t know.

So, I was like, “Well, I need to go get an education if I’m going to be a worldly woman.” Plus, I had this deep curiosity about life. I always have been. I have always been a student. I have always loved learning and so I went to Boston University to get my liberal arts degree.

Now, another funny story is that when I was nearing graduation, I get a letter from the registrar’s office telling me that I’m graduating with honors. So I call up my mom and dad and I say, “Mom, dad, guess what, I’m graduating summa cum laude.” Oh, my goodness. And they didn’t know any better. They were like, “Great, don’t know what that means but sounds very fancy.”

But that’s the thing; it doesn’t matter. What matters is that you keep showing up and that is – when people want to know the secret to my success, I’m like, I don’t worry about being perfect. I just show up and I keep showing up and I keep showing up. I mispronounce things, I misspell things. But I keep following the answer to the question, who do I want to be?

And what I can tell you all is that by following that answer, it has led me to the most mind-blowing experiences. I am talking about parties on private cruise ships. I am talking about being a part of the Monaco Luxury Network. I mean, little girl from the south who couldn’t even pronounce chest of drawers, but she had the courage to decide who she wanted to be and to let go of every belief that said it was not possible for her.

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And I will tell you all, it hasn't been easy, but it has been so much fun. You know, as I was changing, I remember people in my community saying, "Well who do you think you are?" And I remember thinking, I am whoever I choose to be. And that is the truth of it, my friend. You get to decide who you want to be and you get to live out that answer every single day. And you will blow your mind with what is possible for you.

If you have the courage and the grit and the grace to just show up and just to keep showing up, life will surprise you around every corner. So that is the question that that moment in that ICU on that quiet night sparked; who do you want to be?

Okay, moment number two, a call in my closet. So, at this part of my journey, understand that I was still working as a nurse. I had also gone to sommelier school and I had earned my Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree. And so within that process, I knew I wanted something more. And on top of that, I had women asking me, how are you making all of these changes?

Like, I was showing up differently and people noticed. But I didn't know what to do with it all. I knew I loved writing, I knew I enjoyed the world of food and wine, and I also knew I loved being of service, I loved helping people and supporting people. And so I remember hearing about life coaches. And I knew that I wanted a focus for the future and not just spend a lot of time talking about my past, which there is a time and place for that, and that's when therapy is great.

We do need to heal wounds. We need to have an understanding of trauma and how to work and move through it, but I think my mind has always just been geared, like it's done, let's just move ahead.

And so I started researching and Googling life coaches and I found one that I really enjoyed and resonated with, and I hired her. And I'll never forget taking the call in my closet. I was in my closet because I had had a little bit of a breakdown. I was still overwhelmed. I was still confused. I was still just unsure of life and everything. It just felt so overwhelming.

And I'll never forget her asking me, what do you want? Such a simple question, and yet, I told her, I'm like, "I don't know, that's why I'm on the call with you. I don't know what I want." And she said, "What if you did know?" And when she asked me that, I couldn't hide any longer.

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I had to get really, really honest with myself about what I wanted. And that is so hard for so many of us to do. And what our brain tries to do is to keep us in confusion and I-don't-know. But I want you to ask yourself, what if you did know?

What if you did know what to do? What if you did know what you wanted? What would you have to admit to yourself? I know many of you listening to this right now are saying to yourself that you don't know, I and I know that because I coach you, I listen to you, I get your emails and I have been you and I know also that this is just, again, the brain's attempt to keep you where you are.

What if you had the courage to admit your answer, to decide. It is the way to get the momentum of your life moving in the direction that you choose. As long as you're in the I-don't-knows of life, you don't have to do anything different. You don't have to make the hard decisions. You don't have to feel uncomfortable.

You can keep pretending to yourself that you don't know the answer, and therefore stay where you are. But the moment that you admit that you do know, as scary as it is, it's just like the answer to my question, who do I want to be? As scary as it was to start living out the question, I can tell you also, it was way more fun than staying stuck in a world that didn't feel like a good fit for me.

So I admitted to myself that I wanted to leave nursing. And, you all, that was scary because, number one, nursing is an amazing profession and I love my nurses so much. I love all the people in the medical field because I know what it's like and it takes gifted people to be in the field. But I knew that I was ready to move on.

And I will never forget telling my mom that I was leaving nursing. And she was like, "What, what are you going to do about medical insurance? What are you going to do with your license?" Like, there was so much fear, just because she loves me so much. But I had to practice believing in myself and believing in my dream.

I also had to admit to myself that I wanted to get involved in the world of food and wine. Now, of course, my brain was saying, "Tonya, you're not an expert in this. How dare you? You are not ready." But you know what, our brains will always tell us we're not ready.

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So what I did is I started positioning myself as a food and wine expert and I got several jobs. One was doing restaurant reviews for a local magazine. And then I was asked to curate a wine program for a country club. And I had to just believe in myself. When I walked in those meetings with all these elite men in blazers, I just had to own that I belonged there and that I had something to offer.

And it opened up this most amazing world that led me to invites to food and wine festivals, and then next thing you know, I am writing more articles and I'm getting invites to go to Europe.

And voila, that leads to moment number three; a fateful day in a garden. Yes, this is the moment of Paris. So, by this point, I had been working with my life coach and I started to realize that we have this thing called a brain that we can actually use for us. Now, this seems so simple now I realize, because I feel like the world of personal development is more mainstream, there's so many self-help books.

But back then, especially considering where I was raised, we didn't talk about personal development. You just were who you were. But I had started to slowly work my way out of that mentality, so to speak. So I had been working with my life coach. I'm starting to realize that I can actually style my mind to create what I want. And still, I had a lot of limiting beliefs. Even though I had changed quite a bit, I still felt this sense of overwhelm. I still felt this sense of always trying to prove myself.

It was like I had to earn my worth, if that makes sense to you. And looking back, I understand why, because I had this story in my head that I wasn't smart enough. | I feel like we all have that one belief that really holds us back in life, and that was a big one for me. I'm not pretty enough, I'm not smart enough. So, with the I'm not smart enough, I was always trying to prove to other people how smart I was. And it's crazy to think about.

I mean, I was in the beta club in school, I graduated nursing school with honors at a very young age. I worked as a critical care nurse, right, that takes some amount of intellect. And then I graduated with honors from Boston University. I had so much proof that I was smart enough, and yet it was never enough. I was always trying to prove. And so, as a result, I was exhausted. I was overwhelmed. I was trying to create my life from not-enoughness, which no matter what you create, if

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it's built off of a belief of it's not enough, it will never be enough, trust me, I've tried.

On top of that, I was still struggling with my body image, with my weight, even though I had lost weight at this time, I still wasn't at my ideal weight. And it always felt like I job to take care of myself. And weight was something that I had just come to the conclusion that I would always struggle with.

So, moment number three was on my last day in Paris while I was walking through the Luxembourg Gardens. Now, this was my very first trip to Paris. And, you know, country girl goes to Paris, I was just mesmerized. I'd never experienced anything like this city.

And I just remember taking it all in over the course of a week. I would study how French women ate. I studied how the French people take care of the details of their lives and how they just soak it up. And so on that last day, I was walking through the Luxembourg Gardens and I just looked around and I took it all in.

And I saw things like old well-dressed men playing bocce ball, I saw lovers kissing. I saw moms having picnics with their kids. I saw women just sitting by a fountain reading a real book. And I said out loud, "These people are French kissing life."

And in that moment, my friend, it was like this light bulb went off and this layer that I had been holding onto just started to fall away. It was the layer that really said, "One day when." One day when you're more successful. One day when you're richer, skinnier or you have a better home or you live in a different place or fill in the blank.

That layer that always had me putting off my life until one day when, it's like it started to fall away and I started to ask myself, what if the real secret to life is enjoying and savoring every single day as if it were your last? I started to ask myself, what if there's nothing to prove? What if this is all just a game and we get to decide how we play it?

What if the real secret is to celebrate your life every single day, to take moments out to read a book, or to have a picnic with your kid, or to do whatever it takes to feel truly, truly good? Now, I say that the layer started to shed, but this was not an overnight transformation.

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It was just that wakeup call that I could tell I was starting to feel lighter. So the question that that moment sparked for me is how can I start making each day the most fabulous day ever? And, you all, this is a question I still ask myself every single day. How am I going to make today fabulous? How am I going to really enjoy today?

And there are days when I'm stressed and I don't do such a great job at this, and that's okay. We are human beings. Life is about contrast. You're not supposed to be blissed-out 24/7. But what I can tell you, that this question has changed everything for me. And I know that if you start waking up every single morning asking yourself, who do I want to be today, what if I did know, and how am I going to make today fabulous, your life would start to change in dramatic ways that you can't even fathom right now.

Here's the thing; the quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your questions. And so when I dig deep into these three moments, what actually happened is that it sparked new questions that required my brain to come up with new answers. And I think these are three fabulous questions that I want you to start practicing.

Who do you want to be? Do you want to be more powerful, joyful, sexy, loving, kind, abundant, wealthy, sensual, calm? Admit to yourself who you want to be and have the courage to shape your thoughts and your actions around that answer.

The second question is, what if you did know? Refuse to stay stuck in the I-don't-knows. That's just an excuse to stay where you are. Again, have the courage to admit to yourself what it is that you want. Imagine, and god forbid, I don't want this to happen to anyone, but if someone held a gun to your head right now and said, "You need to tell me what you want right now in this moment and you have to be honest..." what would you have the courage to admit to yourself that you want?

Now, I did not go into detail about this in this episode, but I just want to make a very important distinction. The only thing that you must like is your reason for wanting it. And a lot of times, we're wanting things from scarcity and not enough. I want you to pretend that you're already enough, you have nothing to prove, and

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then answer that question, what do you want, from that place. What if you did know what you wanted? What if you did know the answer?

And then question number three is, how can you make today fabulous? Stop putting your life on hold until one day when, because if being a critical care nurse taught me anything, it's that we are not guaranteed tomorrow. So don't wait to wear the beautiful dress. Dress the body you have right now. Give yourself the permission to feel good today.

If you've been wanting to write a book, write one page today. If you've been wanting to go on a trip then get on Google and start planning it. How can you make today fabulous? And one of the ways I know you can make today more fabulous is to be grateful for this day, to celebrate it, to look for all of the things that are good and right and are going well.

What you focus on expands. And I know the habit of staying focused on what you don't want, but if you want to really change your life, if you want to feel better, if you want life to feel like a playground, then decide who you want to be playing this game of life. Decide what you want and have the courage to go after it and do it from a place of abundance, not from a place of trying to prove yourself, because even if you create what it is that you want, you'll still feel terrible because it was built on not-enoughness. And then finally, how can you make today fabulous?

It is time for a J'adore. This is the part of the show where I get to share something that I adore with you. And I'm so excited to share my J'adore for today. This is a movie that I tell all the people about, and now it's time that I tell you.

A lot of times, women will ask me what my favorite French films are and this one definitely is at the top of my list. This movie was produced in 2012, so perhaps you've seen it. But if you have not, you must put it at the top of your list. You're welcome in advance.

So the movie is called The Intouchables. It's the story of Philippe, who is a very wealthy aristocrat who was paralyzed from the neck down as the result of a hand-gliding accident, and he's lost his love of life. He's become very bitter, very resentful, very angry, and yet he's surrounded by all of the opulence.

And then there's Driss. Driss I love. He's like my favorite character in the movie, but Driss comes in because Philippe is looking for a caretaker, but Driss has no

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intention of getting the job. He simply wants to get a voucher for unemployment. He just wants to show that he actually tried to get a job, but he doesn't actually want the job.

But as all good movies go, he gets the job. And so this story is about the unfolding of a very unusual friendship; people from two different worlds coming together and forming this amazing bond. And what's so beautiful is that Driss gives Philippe back his *joie de vivre*, his love of life.

This movie will have you laughing and crying and just really embracing what life and friendship is all about. And the best part is that it's based on a true story. I don't know about you, but I love movies that are based on true stories. So please, do me a favor, if you love me, and I hope you do, put this movie at the top of your must-see list, the *Intouchables*.

It is in subtitles, but it's super easy to follow. And again, it will just open your heart to really the essence of *French Kiss Life*. So go check it out and thank you again for tuning into this week's episode. If you did not sign up for the *soirée*, head over to frenchkisslife.com/party right now and join us. You will get the replays from the last two days and you can join us today and tomorrow for the last two. Have a beautiful day, my friends, I will see you next week. Cheers.