



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 133

The Choice to Love

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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Let's start this episode out with a pop-quiz. What is the first word that comes to mind when you hear *French Kiss Life*? Now, I know for some of you, it's going to be Paris. For others, maybe it's elegance or joie de vivre. But the word that I want you to associate with *French Kiss Life* more than any other word is my favorite word in the dictionary; and that is love.

When I think about my true mission in life, I know deep down it's to inspire women to love more, to love themselves, to love others, and to love their life. And it's my mission because I know, for years, I withheld love. And I know the suffering that it caused. I know how it separated me from my truth.

I withheld love for myself. I withheld love from other people. I tried to manipulate people to get love. But I'll never ever forget hearing Byron Katie say, "Choose love because only you hurt when you don't." And I started to wake up to the truth that love is a choice and we are always the one creating it. And we are also always the one separating ourselves from it.

I know deep down that love has the power to heal. I know it has the power to bring more connection. It has the power to bring people together where ideas can be born. It has the power to make you healthier and happier and even richer.

Practicing love is my daily practice. And sometimes, it's hard. And sometimes, it's super easy. But the more I have practiced it, the more it's just become who I am. And I think really, what has happened is I've gotten back to my truth because I do believe we come into this world full of love and we're trained out of it. And I deeply and fully believe that I would not be where I am in life today if it were not for this one word; love. And in this episode, I want to convince you that it is always a choice and it is always the better choice.

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.

Hi, my friends. I love you all so much. I hope you're having an amazing, amazing day because I am overjoyed. We started Slim, Chic, and Savvy this week and what an incredible group of women. And in such a short time – we've only been going now for two days – women have reported major shifts, how they can

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already tell that this program is going to be a great investment. And it's such an honor for me to practice alongside them.

I tell clients all of the time, the work that I'm teaching, I'm always practicing with you. And so, a super fun week, we have brought on some incredible new team members to *French Kiss Life*. And I'm just so excited about the energy and the container that I've created because I believe that life is all about energy, my friends. And so, to know that the people who are with *French Kiss Life* are – they embody similar values, they are all about customer care and really leading with integrity, it's just super, super fun.

You know, I chose the word CEO at the beginning of the year and I am practicing it daily. And I realize, being a CEO is so much about just loving people and empowering them and being decisive. And that needs to be a whole new podcast, and I know I will do that at some point this year, just to share with you all that I'm learning about being the CEO. And remember, even if you don't have a business, you are the CEO of your life.

Life is good. Even if life seems hard right now, I want you to look for something good. I want you to practice celebrating your life because I am such a huge believer in that the more you celebrate your life, the more life celebrates you back.

Okay, so, let's dive into the first part of the show which is a Community Spotlight. This is the part of the show where I get to highlight someone in the community that has benefitted from the *French Kiss Lifestyle*. So, what I did for today's community spotlight is I went over to iTunes and I read through all of the reviews. And I just have to say, thank you all so much who have taken the time to write a review.

When you do this, what it does is it helps me get the word of *French Kiss Life* out to more people. And so, if you really enjoy this podcast and you have not left me a review, please do. Can I ask you a favor? And if you don't know how to leave a review, just go to frenchkisslife.com/itunes and we have all of the instructions there. But this community spotlight is on Red Cru Love. That is her name on iTunes. And the title of her review is The Rebuilding of a Broken Mind.

She writes, "Tonya came across my Facebook feed three to four years ago when I was recovering from a head injury. What a blessing. I went from being a positive life-loving very active woman in my community to not recognizing myself in the

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mirror, not to mention the horrible thoughts dismantling my own mind. AT a time when I couldn't produce the positive thoughts needed to rebuild my mind and to just make it through the day, Tonya's beautiful voice and her words of encouragement and phrases of truth were floating in my mind, drowning out the negative self-destructing attacks in my head. Looking back, I absolutely believe Tonya was a godsend to help me to rebuild myself, to get back to the positive person I had always been. While rebuilding my mind, I made some pretty great upgrades, with Tonya's help, of course."

Thank you, Red Cru Love. And if you're listening to this and you can relate to this wonderful woman in the community – maybe you've had a setback or something unexpected has happened and it's just taken your life in a completely different direction than what you had anticipated, here's what I want to offer you; sometimes, those little detours can lead you to the most amazing places.

But when it initially happens, there's a state of grief and shock. And as my mentor used to say, it feels like a death and rebirth. In fact, her mantra for that part of our lives is, "I don't know what the hell is going on, and that's okay." So just know, where you are right now, remind yourself, even though it may seem terrible and you don't know how you're going to get through it, just hold yourself and remind yourself, it's going to be okay.

And every day, reach for a thought that feels a little bit better. Look for something to be grateful for. Look for beauty. Surround yourself with beauty. Do whatever you need to do to feel a little bit better. And day after day of doing that, over time, will create an entire new life for yourself. So just start from where you are. Okay, so let's dive into today's episode.

Today, we are talking about one of my favorite topics; love. Yes, I am such a romantic, you guys. I think love is the most amazing emotion. I think it has the power to heal. I think it has the power to make you richer. I think it has the power to make you happier. It has power to make you healthier. It's just an amazing emotion.

And yet, I see so many off my clients and my friends, and I've certainly done it, withhold love from themselves and from other people. And now that I'm someone who knows the truth, that love is never found outside of you, it is always, always something that you create from within, I'm always wondering why we do this, why we separate ourselves from the most amazing emotion.

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So that's what we're going to be talking about in today's episode. And I was actually inspired to do this episode because I received a text from someone that's very dear to me. And she said, "I am so in love with him." And I said to her, "Isn't it the most amazing feeling?" And of course, she agreed. And then I said, "And I'm glad you have found someone to be your excuse to love."

And this is something that I just want to point out because I've been there. You know what, I don't pretend to be some saint. I've been through two divorces, so this is something that it took me a long time to get. And that's why I can't withhold this from you. It's why I want all the women to know about this, and the men too, if you're a man and you're listening.

But I used to believe that love was something that a person gave me and then, when I didn't feel like it was being given, then I would create this crazy story in my head that would lead to resentment, that would lead to anger, which would end up pushing that person further and further away.

I thought love was something that existed outside of me. And so because of the way my mind was wired and the way I thought about my life and about other people, love was something I was always chasing. I was wanting the world to change in order for me to feel more love. But I will tell you, when I finally got it and I realized, you know what, Tonya, you're the common denominator in all of these relationship issues that I was having, that's when I started working on me.

I really worked on stopping the blame of other people for how I was feeling because no one can separate you from the feeling of love. You are the only one that can separate yourself from that feeling, which I think is great news because then you can do something about it.

You know, I was thinking the other day about how we love our children no matter what. Our children can do the craziest things. They can tell us that they hate us. They can do things that we absolutely don't agree with. They can be absolute terrors and we still love them. But someone else can do something that's not nearly as bad as what our own child may do and we will withhold love from them. Isn't that crazy? And the only person that that hurts is you.

You know, I love loving because it feels good. It's a very selfish thing actually. But I know that when I'm in a state of love, I am happier. I'm more creative. I'm more excited. I am more loving. And then, as a result, I end up attracting more love.

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You know, Glen has told me many, many times that he's never met someone like me, which I am pretty original. Look at me bragging about myself. But he has, in the past, been in relationships with women who were very jealous and very possessive and, you know, he's described some of the things that's happened in relationships. And the crazy thing is, what could have been a great relationship between him and these other people ended up not working out because he started responding to their energy and then it was just one big drama show.

But I came into his life and I'm not a jealous person, I'm not possessive at all, I just love loving Glen. That's it, because it feels good to me. And I love seeing Glen be in a state of love. So I've encouraged him to have a really great relationship with his children, because again, I'm not jealous of him.

I think about how many people are jealous over their partner's relationship with their children, which is sort of crazy. It's almost like we have this idea that love is limited. And so if a person is giving it away to someone else, then they're apparently not giving it to us. But it doesn't work that way. Love is expansive. There's an unlimited amount of love, just like there is with money.

And so I came into Glen's life and even his kids have told me he's become so much softer and kinder because I am in a state of love, and therefore I call more of that out in him. Now, that's not to say we don't have arguments. We do. We are human beings. We argue and I sometimes, now even knowing all of this, catch myself wanting Glen to give me love.

He can't give me love. I have to give that to myself. Glen can only create the feeling of love for himself. I can only create the feeling of love for myself. And yet, even knowing this, occasionally I find myself wanting Glen to be different, wanting him to say certain things, wanting him to buy me something in order for me to feel love, which is crazy.

I get to give that to myself. I get to go out there and buy the things that I want. I get to be who I want to be. I get to do what I want to do and then my practice is just letting Glen be who he is and me just loving him. That's my practice.

Now, where this really gets fun is when you have someone in your life who is difficult to love, based on your history, based on your past. But those are your greatest teachers, my friend. When they come into your life, and they will, welcome them because they have such a gift for you.

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Now, I want to be really clear. This doesn't mean that you just let people run all over you. I'm all about tough love too. I think boundaries are one of the most loving things that you can do for yourself and for other people. And I think sometimes you have to love people from afar. But I just love feeling love.

I know what it's like to withhold that feeling and use another person as an excuse to do so. Someone has done something that didn't agree with me or felt invasive or just felt cruel and then I think, okay, I just won't love this person anymore. That person doesn't feel me not loving them. I feel me not loving them. And I will admit, there are people that I just don't want to be around.

But what I don't want for myself is that when I think of them, I am thinking thoughts that hurt me. So sometimes, it's like, "No, I'm going to love you from afar, but you're not welcome into my life." Because when they're around, I have to work on my mind so much that I just choose to not use my mental energy that way because I know I'm always the one creating how I feel. But I'd rather use that energy to create other things versus having just to work on my mind so much when they're in my close proximity.

So again, I need to be super clear that this is not about letting people run all over you because then that's not love of yourself. But I do want you to consider that withholding love is a decision that you get to make. And equally, feeling love is also a choice. And it's a choice that I practice every single day.

Some days, I'm better at it than others, you know, depending on what's happening in my life. For me, I often get these crazy comments on my Facebook ads. These are women who don't know me, they're just stumbling into my world, and they will say horrific things that I'm just blown away and shocked with. And in that moment, it's triggering, and then I'm like, "No, just choose love."

You know, my dad – I'm so fortunate to have the father that I have because when I was little and I would come home from school and I would say, you know, so and so did this or did that, my dad would always say, "Love them anyway, they don't know any better." And my dad is, like, the most loving person ever. He just loves everyone.

And as a result, he has brought in so many people that just absolutely adore him. And he probably has people that don't and that's okay, but I know that my dad chooses love because it feels good for him. I used to think he was crazy. I'm like, "That person just stole from you." And he's like, "Yeah, he must have needed it

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more than me.” Like, he wouldn’t get angry. He wouldn’t be resentful. And I was like, what is wrong with you?

And now I realize, everything was right with him because my dad really honors how he feels. That is his number one priority. And so my dad didn’t use outside circumstances to shut him off from love, which is crazy to think about because he grew up in a really abusive and just heart-wrenching household.

So he had every excuse to be bitter and to hate the world and to shut himself off from other people. And I don’t know what special gene he has or what clicked within him. I think my dad would probably tell you that it’s his faith, but my dad just escaped all of that and really lives in this beautiful state of love. And he passed that onto me, and yet, I haven’t always practiced it.

And the years that I didn’t were the years that I struggled the most because I didn’t have love of myself. I was withholding love from other people and as a result, I didn’t have a love for life. So what I was doing was trying to manipulate other people and the world. I was trying to make my outside world different in order for me to feel love and that just never worked. I tried for years.

And then I realized, through reading books and just working on myself, that I get to feel love no matter what is happening outside of me. And that became my practice. Every day, I’m looking for things to love. In difficult situations, I’m asking myself, what would love do? And most importantly, I practice love of myself, because again, if I don’t love myself, I can’t love you. I can’t love my life. And so it all starts with you.

But I want you to start thinking about where are you withholding love? Maybe it’s withholding it from yourself. Maybe it’s withholding it from another person. Maybe it’s withholding it from your life in general. Then I want you to ask yourself, how does it serve you?

And your mind’s going to tell you some things, probably, like it protects you, no one can hurt you. That’s not true. You are only ever hurting yourself. And withholding love is not protective. It’s hurting you. But then I want you to think about the future you that’s created what it is that you want and how does she feel?

I hope she feels so much love. I hope she’s so in love with her life, with herself, that she’s just in love with this experience that she’s in, because I know that to

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create something you've never had, you have to embody the woman that has already created it. And so what would it look like and feel like if you started to practice the feeling of love in your everyday life?

And it's going to be challenging because, oftentimes, we practice resentment and anger and fear. So that feels very familiar to us. But what I can tell you is that love can become your familiar emotion. I am living proof. I used to withhold love all of the time and I lived in a constant state of not-enoughness, especially not enough love. I used to live in a state of fear.

But with practice, I've just become really good at being loving. And I'm excited to become even more loving because, again, I think it's the most amazing emotion ever. So if you're looking for love in all the wrong places, as the song would say, which will always be outside of you, know that the right place to look for love is within yourself.

Love is created by the thoughts in your head. And so notice what thoughts separate you from love and begin to reach for more loving thoughts. Begin to practice this emotion. Because the more you practice it, the more you will realize that all along, withholding it from yourself only ever hurt you, and giving it to yourself literally gives you these new wings.

You become like a real-life angel, which you already are. But truly think about it. You radiate differently. You show up differently. You dress like a woman and love. You live in a different realm, right? Everything is energy. Everything is frequency and vibration and people who are in a state of love are vibrating at a very different level than those people that are vibrating in fear and anger and resentment and worry. And you begin to attract the frequency in which you are living.

So you'll start to notice the most loving things start to show up in your life. You will begin to call in different relationships. You may even notice that the people around you start to change because you're no longer resisting them. You're just loving them.

And if there's someone in your life that you're just thinking, "Tonya, there's just no way that I can love them," what I want you to do is just love yourself first. And that is the biggest practice we will ever embark on because we're so trained out of it. But the last thing you need to do is listen to this and then beat yourself up because you can't get to a place of love for this other person.

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The way to get there is just to be kind and gracious to yourself, and over time, you may realize that they are becoming easier and easier to love because you love yourself so much, you don't want to separate yourself from that good feeling. So the takeaway from this episode is that love is always a choice that you get to make for you. Love is created by the thoughts in your head, and then love is always available.

There's not a limited amount of love in the world. And I think it's the most amazing, amazing emotion in the world and I want all of you to feel more of it. And I know that you are the only one that can give it to you. So stop chasing love and just be love instead.

Practice that. It's actually a fun practice. And when you notice that you're trying to get it from outside of you, remind yourself, it doesn't exist outside of you. You are the creator of it, so go out there and be in love, my friends.

Now it is time for a J'adore. This is the part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you. And since we're talking about love, I want to share something that I recently watched, actually on the plane back from Europe. It was a documentary that just touched my heart in such an incredible way. And I'm a little concerned that I won't do this documentary justice, but I definitely want you to check it out.

So, the name of the film is Soufra, which is the Arabic word which means a long table filled with delicious foods. And it's the story of this incredibly brave woman that is so full of grit by the name of Mariam Shaar. Mariam has spent her entire life in a refugee camp just, I think, south of Lebanon.

And based on what I saw in the film and what I've read, when you are in these refugee camps, all the odds are against you. You don't have documentation. You really have no home. You're not allowed to hold jobs. You are contained to these camps and yet these people have dreams and hopes just like we all do.

And I feel like, as a woman, we are all the same. What we want more than anything is for our families to be cared for and to be safe and healthy and to have opportunity. And so Mariam had this desire to offer that to the other women in this refugee camp and so she got them all together and they started to think about what they could do to create business and to make an impact.

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And what they all realized is that they have this love of food and cooking. And so they start this catering company. And you all, the food in this documentary will make you drool. And you can tell it's made with so much love and passion. But then they decide they want to scale it.

And so Mariam decides that she wants to have a food truck. And the film chronicles her journey and what she has to go through to make that a reality. I'm telling you all, you just have to watch this documentary. I'm on the plane balling. Glen is looking at me, like, "What are you watching?" because it was so touching for so many different reasons.

At moments, I was laughing, at other times, I'm crying. At other times, I'm, like, celebrating. It is a story of hope and determination and grit. It is a story of courage and the power of community and just the most mouthwatering images of food and how food can bring us all together. It's like one of the common languages. I feel like food and music has the ability to bring us together.

And it's also a story of love and humanity. Unfortunately, we live in a world that's full of fear and we marginalize people, we place labels on them without even knowing them, without knowing their hearts and their intentions. And as a result, we create more and more separation in the world.

And I hope everyone listening to this will watch this film just to remind you of the power of love. I hope it will also inspire you. To see Mariam go through so many challenges and not give up and to be so dedicated to her vision and to not take no for an answer, it will teach you how to create your dreams. It will give you very key qualities of what it takes to be successful, whatever that looks like for you. And, it may just inspire you, as it did me, to start cooking some delicious Middle Eastern food.

In fact, they have created a cookbook called Soufra, where they share the recipes and all of the proceeds goes to supporting these women in this refugee camp and I just ordered my copy. I'll make sure to include it in the show notes. But I'm so excited about receiving it because again, the food in this documentary is just mouthwatering.

So, go check out the film Soufra. I'll be sure to include the link in the show notes and I hope you have the most amazing, amazing week of your life. I'll see you soon, cheers.

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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.