



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 135

How to Be a Self-Possessed Woman

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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How to Be a Self-Possessed Woman

She was chic. She had this air of confidence, and also a little bit of mystery about her. Who was this woman? I had to know. So I followed her into the Hermes store in Paris. She was wearing a pair of leather pants, a simple white blouse. Her hair was slightly messy and her makeup very natural, but also very flawless.

She definitely had her own unique style and I noticed how she just commanded attention from the salespeople. And then, she meticulously chose this beautiful scarf while taking her precious time. Clearly, she was not a woman who would be rushed or ignored.

There are certain women that can walk down the street or walk into a room and just command admiration and respect, and this woman in the Hermes store was one of them. Now, regardless of what you may think, it wasn't so much her looks or her wardrobe.

Sure, she had a presence about her and what she was wearing was definitely stylish. But there was something deeper and much more alluring going on. You see, everything is about energy. And when you are aligned, people notice. When you are vibrating at a certain level, we feel it. And guess what creates our energy – our thoughts. Our thoughts create that feeling in our body, and then that feeling, again, can be experienced by everyone around us.

Now, the French call this that *je ne se quoi*, that, “I don't know what, but it's something.” But I think I do know what it is. And I like to refer to this as a woman who is self-possessed.

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.

Hello, hello my friends, my loves, my people. A friend told me the other day, she said, “Tonya, I imagine that your giggle either really annoys people or they love it.” And I said to her, “I choose to believe that they love it, and if they don't, they'll just exit my world.” Because one of the things I want to convince you all of is that

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you don't have to change who you are. You just get to be who you are and love those parts about yourself and trust that the right people who love those parts of you as well will show up and everyone else will exit the building, because I laugh a lot.

I can be serious too when need be, but when I think about me at the end of my life looking back, what I see are images of me just laughing, just pure joy on my face, even through the hard times, even through the difficult times. I want to be a woman who really embraced all of it and had a smile on her face most of the time; not a fake smile, but a true, deep inside, loving life kind of smile.

So yeah, I laugh a lot. And after years of trying to morph myself into being someone that I thought people wanted me to be, I'm just done. I just want to be me. I want the freedom to be me and be okay with other people not liking it. I'm telling you, it is liberation, my friends; liberation. And then the best part is you start calling in people who truly like you for who you are, not who you're pretending to be, but who you are at the core.

So, that was a little Tonya tangent that I tend to go on in the beginning of these podcasts, but it needed to be said. Okay, so let's dive into the part of the show where I do a Community Spotlight. I highlight someone in the community who has benefitted from the *French Kiss Lifestyle*. And so today's spotlight comes from FKL-CML.

She left a five-star review on iTunes, and here's what she said, "Two years ago I discovered Tonya and *French Kiss Life* and I'm so grateful that I did. At the time, I had recently retired and moved to North Carolina with my life partner. Although there were a lot of changes in our lives, we can't be happier and our children are so supportive with our decisions. They see the love we have for each other and that we want to spend the rest of our lives enjoying life together.

Every time I listen to Tonya's podcast, I come away with a feeling of enjoying life, being supportive of others, and peace. Tonya's message rings clear with an elegant and graceful life filled with gratitude and love, plus joie de vivre. Thank you so much, Tonya."

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Well, thank you FKL-CML for that five-star review. I really, really appreciate it. And that's how I want you all to feel. When you tune into the *French Kiss Life* podcast, I want you to feel excitement for what is possible. I want you to fall in love with yourself and your life. I want you to stop putting off your life until one day when and start embracing this day because there's so much magic and opportunity and possibility that exists in this moment.

So, if the *French Kiss Life* podcast has had an impact on your life, I would be so grateful for a review on iTunes because, at the end of the day, I want to get this message out to as many women as possible. I have shared with you all that one of my goals is to reach a million women in the next five years – now it's four and a half – and having things like more reviews on iTunes makes that possible. So thank you in advance for that. And when you leave me a review on iTunes, you may be featured on an upcoming Community Spotlight.

Today, I want to explore with you what it means to be a self-possessed woman. It's really interesting, I just noticed, when I said those two words, what happened in my body. Suddenly I'm sitting a little bit taller. I feel more grounded in myself. I feel this sense of boldness and confidence just by saying the two words self-possessed.

Try it, without even knowing the definition, what does it feel like when you think about being a self-possessed woman? Now, in preparing for this episode, I actually looked up the definition, and here's what the dictionary has to say, "Self-possessed is having or showing self-possession; composed in mind or manner, calm."

Then I dug a little deeper and I looked up synonyms for self-possessed. And here are some of the words that came up; calm, collected, composed, coolheaded, equal, confident, peaceful, self-composed, serene, undisturbed, unperturbed, unruffled, unshaken, untroubled, unworried, poised.

And then, I couldn't help but to notice the two words that are the antonyms of self-possessed. And those two words are nervous and unsure. So in preparing for this episode, I really started to think about my definition of what it means to be self-possessed, because I feel like the end result of being self-possessed are all of

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those words that I just said; to be calm, to be confident, to be unworried or untroubled and to have that tranquility.

But when I think about being self-possessed, I think about the word possessed. When you possess something, you own it. So to me, being a self-possessed woman means to own yourself. And so I want to talk about some areas of your life that when you begin to truly own unapologetically, it does lead to that outcome of being calm and having that sense of certainty and that confidence and that untroubled version of yourself.

So the first area of ownership that I want to talk about is owning your past; more specifically owning your story of the past. This is one that I can speak to with a lot of experience because I, like a lot of women, I had a lot of shame around my past. I was very ashamed of how I grew up. I grew up in a trailer. I was very ashamed of my weight issues and having been bulimic at one point. I was ashamed of being divorced.

And so what happened is that I was always hiding parts of myself. I would go out into public and I just couldn't stand in the fullness of my story because my story was so negative. It was so disempowering.

Now, what I teach my clients is you cannot change the facts of your past. It is true that I grew up in a trailer. It is true that I have been divorced. It is true that at one point I weighed over 200 pounds. It is true that I was bulimic at one point. All of those are facts.

But what I do have control over is my story around the facts, my fiction around my facts. And I was telling a terrible story that made me want to hide. But I'll never forget, there was a moment where it really shifted for me. I was at this event with very, very successful people and I sat down with this small group and I was just sharing with them where I came from and what my upbringing was like and they were like, "That's so cool. Like, I've never met anyone that was raised like that and the religion that you were raised in."

And the way they saw my story was through an empowering lens where I had been telling the story through a very disempowering lens. And I had this moment of realization. All of those trials, all of those challenges, all of those things that I

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had so much shame around had actually shaped me into the woman I am today. And I started to change my story around it and I started to own my story around my past, which helped me become more self-possessed.

And so I want you to think about your past and what the story is that you have around it, realizing you can't change the facts but you can absolutely change your story. And I want you to own that story, take 100% responsibility for it and tell your story in a way that empowers you, that excites you, and that sets you up for an incredible future.

And I will tell you that when I started doing this, it changed everything. And I realized the beauty of my upbringing. I realized all of the lessons I had learned that had shaped me and made me who I am today. And I realized that life is so much more fun when you're not hiding from your past.

You can't change, again, what happened in the past. But when you start telling yourself a different story around it, you start to own your past instead of it owning you.

The next area of ownership that I want you to look at is owning your emotional life. What this looks like is taking 100% responsibility for what you feel all of the time. That means no blaming your husband or your children or your boss or where you live, or anything, for how you feel.

Now, at first, this is uncomfortable. It's so much easier to be like, "You made me feel angry. You upset me. You hurt me." But when you do that, you give all of your power away. Like, if the world is making you feel all of these emotions then you have no power over it. But the moment you take 100% responsibility for how you feel, then that's when everything changes. And I get to practice this one a lot.

In fact, just a few days ago, Glen did something and I was so angry and I wanted to blame him. That was my first instinct. But because I know he is never the source of my anger, it is always my own thinking about whatever he does, I took back responsibility.

Now, that does not mean I didn't feel the anger, because I did, and I wanted to feel it. But I also looked into my own mind as to why I was feeling angry. And then, when I was ready to change it, I did.

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So, taking 100% responsibility for your emotional life does not mean that you don't feel anger or sadness or hurt or worry, but it's about you owning that; you realizing that you are the creator of your emotions all of the time. And then, when you decide you're tired of it and you want to feel something else, you can because you own it. You can't change something that you don't own.

It's like renting a house. You rent a house, but you can't really remodel it and do all of the things that you want to do to it because it's not yours. But when you own your own home, then you have the freedom to do whatever you want with it. And the same goes for your emotional life. When you own your emotions, you have the freedom to change them.

But as long as you think Billy Bob is creating how you feel, then you have no power over it. So part of being self-possessed is owning your emotions. And I will tell you, this is the secret to everything. It's changed everything for me. I'm happier, I'm more at peace because I know I get to create that for myself no matter what is happening outside of me.

The next area of ownership that I want you to think about is your self-opinion; owning your self-opinion. Now, I talk about this in episode 111. It's titled Is Your Self-Opinion Holding You Back, and this is something I talk about a lot with my clients. But you get to create your self-opinion. Really think about that.

You get to decide how you want to think about yourself. You get to design that on purpose and your self-opinion is creating everything in your life. If you think that you are lazy, you will create evidence for laziness. If you think that you are shy, you will create evidence that you are shy. If you think you're not good enough, you will create evidence that you're not.

But equally, when you own your self-opinion and you know that you're the creator of it, you can begin to create self-opinions to drive new actions, new behaviors, new habits. Now, a lot of people's self-opinion is based on what they think other people's opinion of them are, or is based on evidence of the past.

So an example of that would be some women will tell me, well, I never follow through, and they have a lot of evidence from their past that they don't follow through. But I tell them, do you want to continue having that self-opinion or do

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you want to create a self-opinion of you being a woman that does follow through? And then go out there and create new evidence for that because you can do that as well.

I am very mindful of my self-opinion and I want to create it on purpose. So when I think of me, I like the opinion that in confident, that I can do hard things, that I am capable, that I am smart, that I am kind, that I am abundant, that I am creative. These are self-opinions that I have created in my mind that then I go out there and create more evidence for.

And to me, that's part of being self-possessed. You deciding on purpose what you want your self-opinion to be and then you go out there and you live it. So what is your self-opinion? Is it something that you have created on purpose or are you living by the opinions of other people about you? You get to decide.

I think this is like, the best news ever. You get to decide what you think of yourself. I want your decision to be one that's empowering, that's going to drive the actions that you want to take in the world. So part of being self-possessed is owning your own self-opinion.

Okay, next area of ownership is your desires. Own your desires and own them unapologetically, my friends. Now, I know that some of you struggle with this one. I have struggled with this one as well, and it creates what I call split energy. So, split energy is when secretly deep down you want something but you're afraid to admit it.

Maybe you want that rocking body but you're afraid that you'll be seen as too vain for admitting that. Maybe you want the millions of dollars but what will people think if you're someone that wants money? Maybe you want to travel the world but you're thinking, I don't deserve that. Maybe you want a closet full of beautiful clothes but you're thinking, what will my neighbor Sally think if she sees me sporting that new handbag?

You know who I'm talking to out there, and I've certainly been there as well. But again, that split energy, it's like the universe doesn't know what to do with it. It's like deep down you're wanting something but you don't have the courage to say it. But when you are self-possessed, you own your desires unapologetically and

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then what is beautiful about that, then you can begin to line up your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions with what it is that you want to create.

But the first step is admitting it to yourself. Admitting it to yourself what you want, being 100% honest with yourself. So what have you been secretly desiring but you're afraid to admit? I think about being self-possessed, you own it all unapologetically, including what it is that you want. I personally think that desire is a beautiful thing. It's what creates innovation, it's what keeps expanding our world.

And there's something beautiful too about a woman who is unapologetic about what she wants. Now, it may trigger people and it usually triggers people because they're not honest with what they want. But what I know is that if you want to live a grand life, whatever that looks like for you, if you want a French Kiss Life, you have to be willing to trigger people because that's their stuff for them to work on, just like what triggers you is your stuff to work on.

But this is where I see so many women holding themselves back. They're not honest with what they desire, and here's my theory on desires. I'm just going to throw this into the episode. When you think of god, the universe, whatever that higher force is, I have this vision that he or she or it wants to experience all of life through us, which is why we all have such unique desires.

And so I see me denying my desires as me denying the presence of god within my life, because what I desire is so different than what you may desire. Like, some women desire to be artists, they want to paint. Some people desire to drive Ferraris. Some people desire to sell everything and live very simply. It's all amazing, right?

The only thing that matters is that you like your reason for whatever you want. That is the only thing that matters. But you first have to get really honest and you have to own what it is that you desire. Okay, next area of ownership is owning your decisions. This is a big one, you all.

I know some of you out there are doubting your decisions, you're blaming other people for your decisions, or you're not making decisions, which therefore is a decision. So I tell my clients all of the time, the most important decision you will

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ever make is not the first decision. It is the decision after the decision, which is owning it and deciding how you're going to feel about it and taking 100% responsibility for your decisions.

I've seen time and time again that we blame our children for our decisions. Well, I had to do this because I'm a mother, or I had to do this because of my job. And that just makes you a victim of circumstance and you all are not victims. We are heroines of our journey around here, and so there's something about choosing it, deciding that you're going to give up this opportunity because you are a mom right now, and not blaming your children for that decision, but you owning it because you do have a choice. You always have a choice.

You could take the opportunity and sacrifice in this other area if that's what you choose to do. The only thing that matters is that you feel good about your decision either way. But what we often do is we make a decision and then we feel regret or we blame someone else for our decision, and you lose all of your power in that process.

An example of it I have around this is about three years ago I had some really big business initiatives, and around the same time my daughter became sick. And so I decided that those business plans were going to be put on the backburner because she was my number one priority. I didn't feel resentful; I didn't blame her for it. I decided and I moved on.

I was working with a client recently and she was blaming her boss for her decision to stay and work late. And what I told her, I said you know what, I want you to see that this is a choice. You don't have to stay and work late, right? You could say no. Now, there may be a consequence. You may lose your job, but don't blame him and don't blame your job. You take full responsibility for that decision because then when you do, you can start to make very clear decisions, because you're no longer a victim of circumstance.

And you start to get your power back when you own your decisions. When you're saying you know what, no, I'm choosing to stay late to work, in that choice, you realize wow, I get to own that decision. It's not happening to me. I am choosing it, and if I'm choosing this, that means I can choose something else if I choose to. So

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part of being self-possessed is owning your choices, owning your decisions, and deciding how you're going to feel about them.

Okay, so let's talk about the last area of ownership, and that is owning your presence. Now, your presence is a combination of many things. It is how you dress, it is how you walk into a room, it's how you treat other people. But at the core, your presence is an energy and I believe that we should be 100% responsible for the energy that we bring into a space.

Now, what we often do is we walk into a room and we feel out the energy and then we either rise or we lower ourselves to whatever that vibration is. So if you walk into a room and everyone's happy and they're upbeat, then typically we match people at that level. Equally, if we walk into a room and we can tell the energy is sort of low, it's down, maybe you can feel some tension, we tend to match that as well.

Now, here's the best news ever; you get to be very deliberate with your energy that you bring into a space. And I am always thinking about before I walk into a space, what is the energy that I want to bring? Now, if I'm walking to a funeral you all, I am not wanting to bring in this happy, life is great kind of energy. Even though I do want to have a sense of celebration at funerals, I also want to respect what is happening.

But here's the thing, I'm responsible for it. I don't want to be one of those women that are a chameleon, and I'm just looking around for the world to tell me how I should be and what my energy level should be. I want to be very intentional and deliberate with the energy that I bring into a space. But I've also been sloppy with my energy. It's almost like just spewing all of your stuff all over the world.

I've been there, and to me, a great example is walking to meet friends for lunch and you walk in and you're like, oh my god, it's been such a busy day, I couldn't find a parking spot, and it's like hello, can you just greet people and leave all of your drama outside the door? And to me, that's called sloppy presence management.

It's just walking into a room, reacting. Instead of getting grounded and asking ourselves like, how do we want to be in this space? How do we want others to feel

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in this space? And then designing it on purpose. And to me, when I think about a woman who is self-possessed, she is very deliberate. She's very intentional with the words that she speaks, with her presence, with her emotions, with the stories that she tells about her past, about herself. It's all master-minded with intention to create her life as a work of art.

Now, you may be hearing this and thinking, but Tonya, this all sounds so contrived. But here's what I want you all to know; we're all living out our stories, but a lot of times we're living out the stories that someone else gave us. But when you are self-possessed, you own your life. You own yourself. You don't blame other people for why you are the way you are. You don't blame other people for your choices and your decisions and why you feel the way you do.

Instead, you take ownership of your past and you take ownership of your emotional life, your self-opinion, your desires, your decisions and choices, and your presence, how you show up in the world. And when you truly own it, that's when you have the power to change it, my friends.

So are you a self-possessed woman? And if not, don't judge yourself because we've all been there, but just be curious about the areas of your life that you're not owning and commit to owning them so that you can then change them.

Now it is time for J'adore. This is the part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you. And today's J'adore is one of my travel essentials, meaning I don't leave home and get on a plane without these. So first of all, let me ask, have you ever been on a plane and there's a screaming kid behind you or beside you? Or maybe someone just likes to talk a lot.

While I love interacting with people, when I'm traveling, I'm very much in my own little bubble. I don't like having a lot of conversations, I just love being with me and my movies and my own thoughts, which is why I never travel without my Bose noise-canceling headphones. These things are magic. Number one, as soon as you turn them on it cancels out all the noise. And number two, when you're wearing them, people are less likely to tap you on the shoulder and say hey, want to talk?

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I am such a big believer in looking at how you can upgrade your experiences and for me, when I'm flying, this is just one of the ways that I do it. It's as if I turn that button on and I just descend or ascend into my own little world. So if you're someone that travels a lot, especially you fly a lot, I would highly recommend that you check these out.

In fact, I will leave the link to the ones that I have in the show notes so you can read all about them. The technology is great, they're wireless so you can connect via Bluetooth to your laptop or your phone, or it also comes with the plug in where you can plug it right into the airline's TV and watch movies.

But I never get on a plane without my Bose noise-canceling headphones. So that is my J'adore for today. Go check it out in the show notes. I hope you all have an amazing week and I cannot wait to see you in the next episode. Cheers.

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.