



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 166

Embracing Your Humanness

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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Embracing Your Humanness

There's a great passage by Rumi called the *The Guest House*. And here's how it goes:

“This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
For some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them all at the door laughing,
And invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.”

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, beautiful people. How's it going? I wish you could see me right now. I'm couched down in this little closet because I'm with my daughter in downtown Denver. We've been apartment hunting, and no matter where I go on this apartment, there's just noise everywhere. Part of city life, I guess. I've been spoiled, living in the woods in Colorado, but here we are. It's been such a fun week so far

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because we came to Denver last month and we looked at apartments. We really did find one that fit our budget, that we really liked.

But Sarah had a vision of what she wanted, and she also had a very lean budget of how much it could cost each month, and so we just kept looking. We kept just being open to the process, and we finally found her apartment, and it's perfect. She walked in, and she was like, "This is what I've been imagining in my head." The best part is that it was way under budget. During the whole process, I was thinking about us, the French Kiss Life community, because there is such a beautiful metaphor for our whole apartment hunting adventure.

One of the things that Sarah had was the vision of what she wanted. Now, keep in mind that we had people telling us, "It's not possible to find that kind of apartment at your price point," but she didn't buy into that. She was determined that she was going to find the apartment that was hers. We just kept touring new places, showing up, and eventually, the apartment revealed itself to us because she was a match for it. All she had to do was believe in the possibility of finding this apartment, and then she just kept showing up and showing up and showing up until voila! There was her apartment!

I know sometimes we can get so caught up in the how like, "I don't know how it's going to happen," but the how is not your business. All you need to know is the what and the why and practice believing in it, and as you do that, the how will reveal itself. When it happens, then you'll be like, "Oh that's how it happened." But until then, you don't know the how and the good news is you don't need to know the how, you just need to show up. You need to go on the apartment tours or make the calls or write the blogs or do the things that you think you can do and let the how surprise you, let it delight you.

So yeah, she found her apartment and we move in on Friday. It's going to be super fun. I'll be sure to post some pictures on Instagram. If you're not following me on Instagram, what in the world? Head over to @TonyaLeigh and you can see some of the behind the scenes as we get this apartment ready for her to move in.

It is time for a Community Spotlight. This is the part of the show where I get to highlight someone in the community who has benefited from the French Kiss lifestyle, and I'm so excited to highlight this beautiful woman who has been in my

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life for a decade now. Her name is Toni and she wrote me a five-star review on iTunes that says, "From Little Sis." Here is what she had to say.

"I've been following Tonya for 10 years. I started with some private coaching sessions and soon dived into her Slim, Chic & Savvy program. Modern Day Icon and most recently her Society program. Over the last years Tonya has virtually guided me through so many seasons of my life that I now think of her as my wiser, loving and totally cool older sister even though for the record I am older. Her guidance has given me the tools to navigate parenting my son, my marriage, and my weight.

But the single most important thing Tonya has taught me is how to love myself. Yes, I've had to do the work in all of these areas, but Tonya's steadiness and the way she conveys her message was the reassurance I needed when the discomfort in those moments threatened to sink my resolve. Because of Tonya, I now know I can literally do anything and that there is no dream too big.

Recently, I produced and directed a short film. I had no previous experience doing this, and I literally was flying by the seat of my pants as I sat in the director's chair. Before Tonya, my lack of experience would have left me curled up in the fetal position but with Tonya's coaching I've embraced the experience playfully, like a small child filled with wonder. As a result, the production was wonder filled and one of the most soul satisfying experiences of my life. I love you Tonya." Signed, "Little Sis."

Oh, my Goodness! I'm a little teary today. I cannot tell you how much this means to me because, again, I've known Toni for ten years. Yeah, it's been like a decade, and one of the things that I always say to my clients is like I feel like we're all growing together. We are such a witness to each others journeys, we get to see each other go through those different seasons of our lives.

To see you, Toni, sharing your experience of being a director of a movie, like let's just consider this. You went from an idea in your head, not knowing how you were going to do it, but then you did it. You figured it out. We sell ourselves short as human beings of what we're capable of because we hold ourselves to such high standards to such levels of expectation and perfection that we do miss out on the play and the wonder of life and how fun it can be creating our dreams. I just want

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to say you inspire me on a daily basis, and I am so grateful that our paths crossed ten years ago.

So, what does it mean to be human? This is the kind of question I've been thinking about a lot recently. On one level, it's our ability to communicate with words and letters and symbols and our facial expressions, our body language. It's also our ability to think about our own thinking. We can sit and ponder our past, our present, and our future, but I want to talk about it on a very soulful level.

When I first dived into the world of personal development and decided that I wanted to be a coach I had this belief that I needed to be perfect, that I needed to cleanse my mind of any kind of negative thought, that I wasn't really allowed to have a bad day, that feeling sadness or sorrow or fear or anger or humiliation, like all of those things needed to be off the table.

In essence, I thought I needed to be perfect. What I realize now is that that is not what it means to be self-actualized. In fact, that is resisting the human experience. Then I started to ask the question, "Well, if that's not the goal to always be happy and to always have positive thoughts, then what is?"

What I've come to really embrace and understand is that the spiritual journey is really about becoming more human, allowing yourself to be so human and embracing the messiness of your humanness. For me, slowly, I started to play around with this, I started to share my struggles. I talked about having bulimia, I talked about my weight struggles, I talked about my divorces and all of the things that I had so much shame around because I thought, "Tonya, who are you to help people when you've struggled so much?"

But then, something really interesting happened. Number one, I started to feel this weight lift off of me because I wasn't living and hiding. I was just like, "Yeah, this happened and here is what I'm choosing to make it mean about myself." Right? That's where I got my power back, because what's happened is done. Now it's just a story in your head, you get to decide what you make it mean. You get to learn the lessons that experience brought you.

But when we hide from it and we have shame around it, we don't want people to know about it, we tell ourselves this terrible story around being a human then that's

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what causes us so many issues. When we don't embrace our humanness is when we are resisting life itself. So for me, I started to feel more freedom, more lightness. But then the other thing that happened, which was crazy, is that I found that the more I shared about the struggles and the darkness the more people were like, "Yeah, me too. Thank you, sister, for talking about this because been there and done that."

Then the people who judge me for it, because there have been people who have judged me for these things, I realized that maybe, just maybe, they weren't ready to learn from my lessons or we're just not a good fit. That's okay, too. But what I can tell you is that the more I've embraced my humanness, the more fun life has become. It's actually so much easier to create what it is you want when you're not resisting who you are.

The other thing that I've noticed as well is that by embracing my own humanness I can also embrace other people's as well. In fact, something happened recently in my life where something was said about me that was hurtful. Now, granted you all, I know that the reason why it was hurtful is because of the thoughts in my head. But I'm human and what was said was hurtful. But I had this moment of just realizing I'm human, and I'm experiencing hurt and this person who said what they said they're human too, and I don't know why they said it, but we're just messy humans having a messy experience right now.

Just getting to that place, I was able to relax and realize this is part of the journey, my friends. And so, when I was preparing for this podcast, I was thinking about the things that we as humans, if we were to embrace them, it would make life so much easier.

The first one is, you're going to feel like a toot sometimes. That's a word we use a lot in our house. You're going to have days or moments where you're not happy, and you're not joyful, and you're not excited, and you're not passionate. Welcome to the human experience. The more we fight that, well, you'll have to also understand is that we're fighting having those mind-blowing moments of elation and ecstasy and joy and passion. Right?

Because one doesn't exist without the other. Life is about contrast, and part of being a human is all of it. To me that is what *joie de vivre* is. *Joie de vivre* is the

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joy of living, and part of living is sometimes you're going to feel like a toot, and sometimes you're going to feel on top of the world. But when we fight those bad days, it just keeps them going because it's true what you resist persist, right?

The more I embraced the sorrow, the sadness, the doubt, the fear, the anxiety, all of this stuff that comes with being a human the less power it has over me. It feels like life is flowing through me versus me resisting it and thinking, "Oh my God something's wrong, I'm having a negative emotion, I'm going to be attractive negative things." That's BS because it's the resisting of the negative emotions that keeps them sticking around because they have something to teach you.

As Rumi says, "Welcome all of it." Be like, "Come in my friends, let's just have a party, let me see what you're here to teach me." That's one thing of being a human is to just accepting you're not going to feel great all the time. What if that's the way it's supposed to be?

The other thing is, you're going to make mistakes. I'm always so perplexed when my clients come to me, and they have these big dreams, and I can see them doing it, living it, being it, but they're so afraid of making mistakes they don't even try. Not realizing that the only way to get there is through mistakes; that's how you learn, that's how you grow.

I think of little babies learning to walk. Imagine if they fell down for the first time and they're like, "Well, that's it, don't want to make that mistake again! I guess I'm just going to crawl for the rest of my life." So, embracing the part of the human experiences you are going to make mistakes. That is how you learn and grow. I still make them all of the time. I've come to embrace that that is the path, that is the journey, that is embracing my humanness.

The other thing that is part of being a human is that you're going to doubt yourself. I am all for confidence, and I will tell you part of the confidence that I have today is because I do doubt myself. Here's what I mean. Confidence is not the absence of doubt. Confidence is being willing to have the doubt and believing in yourself anyway. I like to say doubt your own doubt and keep showing up, prove yourself wrong. Prove that you can do it. Prove that you will do it. Prove that you're committed. That doesn't mean you don't have doubt.

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I think doubt is just a normal part of evolving. Maybe it's something you've never done before, maybe somewhere you've never been before, so your mind is automatically going to be like, "Oh, whoa, sister, this is not possible for you. Are you sure you can do this?" The answer is, "Let me go see, let me try, let me prove to myself that I can." That is how you overcome the doubt.

Just know that part of being a human is having self-doubt, it's very normal, my friends, so if you are growing, just know that that is part of the package. What if you embraced it instead of fighting it? What if you realize, "Yeah, this is what I signed up for"?

The other part of being a human that I see so many of us resisting is that sometimes you're going to act in ways that you're not proud of. This still happens to me. Even with all of the tools, even with me practicing every single day, there are moments I'm like, "Ah, I didn't like how I showed up. I didn't like that conversation. I didn't like how I treated that person." I've just realized that that's part of my journey. If I didn't have that experience it would not birth the new desire of how I want to be in the next experience.

So many of us beat ourselves up, and I see this a lot with moms. Maybe you lose your temper, you scream at your kids, and then you spend so much of your energy beating yourself up for being human. Instead of being like, "Okay, that happened, and I'm going to embrace it because that experience taught me more of what I want and what I don't want. Now what?" But if you're so busy beating yourself up for being human, you're not able to really get the lesson that these moments are there to teach you.

Here's another part of being human, and this one's really hard for a lot of us because many of us ladies and guys, we want to please. We want people to like us. We want to do everything that we can to make sure everyone around us is happy. But the truth of it is that you're going to disappoint people. It's just part of the human experience. People are going to disappoint you. Part of the human experience. We can argue with that, we can fight it, or we can just embrace them, be like, "Yeah, I realize that I disappointed that person or that person disappointed me." Welcome to being a human! But it's so much easier than beating yourself up. I know I've disappointed people. I know that I've hurt people and it's not because I intended to. Because I really believe that at the end of the day we want to do the

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best and sometimes we're doing the best we can with the tools that we have and I just believe every human being is doing the best that they can in that moment.

To beat ourselves up for that is just an added layer of suffering that doesn't help us become better humans; it keeps us in the same familiar patterns. The moment you are like, "Okay, I accept that this happened, now I'm going to be curious about it, I'm going to offer compassion to myself and to that other person so that I can get down to the core of why this happened. Why did I show up this way, or why did I react this way, or why did I do this thing?" That's when you can begin to make incredible change through self-compassion and self-acceptance.

And in a very similar note, part of being a human is that you're going to have your heart broken and there're going to be people that break your heart. Now, again, I know that the self-actualized person is like, "No one can break your heart, it's always your thinking breaking your heart," and yes, that is true. But my point is we're human, and so it's normal for us to feel hurt or to feel like someone broke our hearts. That's just part of the human experience.

When you resist that, when you are afraid of having your heart broken, you're also resisting having your heart delighted and finding the love of your life or the many loves of your life whatever that looks like for you. And, again, as someone who's had her heart broken and I've broken hearts, I come back to the belief that we're just always doing the best that we can in that moment with what we know and the tools that we have. Beating ourselves up for it is not useful at all. Never. You're beating yourself up for being a human being because every single one of us has had these experiences.

You will not meet a person that has not disappointed someone or had their heart broken or experiences self-doubt or who's never made a mistake. If you meet that person, you need to run because they're probably a robot. We've entered into the age of artificial intelligence, so you need to doubt that person because, again, part of being a human are all of these human experiences.

What if the point of it all is to embrace that? What if, by embracing our humanness, we do become better humans not by resisting it or fighting it, but by just embracing all of it. What if you decided that instead of trying to be more

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perfect, you're going to decide to become more human? Which again means embracing all of the human experience: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Because here's the thing, we're all so flawed, but it's the flaws that make us so beautiful and interesting and adds complexity and creates the tapestry of our lives. I don't know if you all have ever been in a room full of people that are trying to be so perfect - and I've definitely been one of those people just so you know. Like I want to impress people and I want to be so perfect, and I want people to like me. It's the most boring room ever. It's only when someone's like, "I'm having a terrible day, where's the glass of wine?" that everyone's like, "Oh, thank God we have a real human in the house."

But in all seriousness, when I think back to the years that I struggled the most, it's because I was resisting my own humanness. I thought I had to be perfect in order for people to love me. I thought I had to present myself in a certain way in order to be accepted. I thought that mistakes were bad, and so I would either try to avoid them, or I would hide them out of so much shame, not understanding that mistakes are part of the experience. That's how you learn, right? There were times where I tried to present myself as confident when inside I was full of self-doubt.

Then I realized, "Wow, this is like a false confidence." Real confidence is, "Y'all, I am scared, and I'm doing it anyway" versus "I'm so confident I've got this." There is a lack of congruence, right? These are things that I have struggled with personally, and I'm just coming to this realization that maybe the whole point of this experience of life is to come back to our humanness to embrace it, to stop fighting it and then all of that energy is then freed up just to be you and to create because fighting with yourself and fighting with your experience is keeping you locked up in it.

A couple more things before I wrap up this podcast. This episode is really just been from my heart, it's like a pep talk more than anything. I'm just wondering what may be going on in your minds, those of you who are part of French Kiss Life and you know what I stand for what and we're all about. It's about living artfully and well, and I love thinking about living an elegant life, and so some of you may be thinking, "Well, isn't elegance just being poised and perfect and showing up in pearls and lipsticks all of the time?" Did I just say lipsticks? Lipstick, but let's keep going.

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Here's the thing. Elegance is simplicity and effectiveness, and the most simple and effective way to live your life is through alignment, being aligned. What alignment means to me is thinking on purpose, feeling on purpose, and showing up on purpose. Part of that process is allowing yourself to not be on purpose because it is those contrasts that tell you where you're off course. Very simple.

To fight with that is to fight with your humanness, and that's not elegant. That's not simple and effective. The more you fight your humanness, the more you're not allowing yourself to be a human, and you're here to be human.

The other thing is that some people may say to me, "But Tonya, you know, you love to dress up, you love to show up and present yourself in a certain way." It's all about intention. If I'm doing that because I'm trying to prove something or I'm trying to hide something, or I'm trying to be better than, then the energy is all off. That energy is the antithesis of being human because part of being a human is realizing you don't need to impress anyone, you don't need to prove anything, and you certainly aren't better than anyone.

Now the energy behind me doing those things is just because I love it. I love beautiful clothes, I love dressing up, I love how it makes me feel, but it's not being driven by the actions that, quite honestly, it used to be driven by. It was all out of my own insecurity. My insecurity was because I was not allowing myself to be a human.

So, my friends, here's what I want to say to you. If you just acted in a way that you're not proud of, welcome to being a human. If you're having a lot of doubt and fear, welcome to being a human. If you have had your heart broken or you've broken someone's heart, welcome to being a human. If you have flaws, know that those flaws are actually probably your perfection and welcome to being a human. If you feel like a toot today, welcome to being a human!

What if the point is not to resist it but to embrace all of it through that self-compassion and that self-acceptance? That's when you can create massive change in your life and even though there are days when I feel like a toot, and there are days when I've disappointed people, or I've acted in ways that I'm not proud of, what I can tell you is that those moments are less and less.

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I really believe it's because I welcome them and I don't fight them, and I just know it is part of the human experience. What would it look like for you if you didn't hold yourself to such perfection, and you just embraced your humanness? I believe from there, that's when you can create the most incredible, incredible change in your life. I love you and please, please, please don't beat yourself up for being a human.

It is time for a *J'adore*. This is the part of the show that I get to share something that I love, with you. For many of you, it will not be a surprise that I love handbags. I love looking at them, I love seeing what is in style this season, I love to discover new designers, I just love handbags. I love what they can do for an outfit. I think you can have such a simple wardrobe and with the right accessories you can make any ordinary outfit remarkable and handbags is just one of the ways I like to do that. I was thinking about why I love handbags so much, and for me, it's with me all of the time, it's a part of my journey through life. It carries letters and my phone and my lipsticks, it carries documents sometimes. It's like that forever companion in a woman's life.

When I was in New York recently, I went to the new Nordstrom's that's up near Central Park, and I just spent hours just perusing the handbag section. Everything from super high-end designer couture handbags that run \$6,000, \$7,000 to the more contemporary lines and I was so impressed by these new designers that are making really high-quality handbags, and they're running less than a \$1,000. And so I started to look at some of these designers, and I found one that I absolutely love.

What's really interesting is when I came home, I subscribed to Vogue Business. So, it talks about more what's going on in the industry in fashion and things, and there was an article talking about the demise of the "It" handbag. People are choosing not to spend thousands and thousands of dollars on handbags. They're finding these really great designers that are creating beautiful handbags, again, less than \$1,000, and the bag that I saw in Nordstrom's was the one that was featured. It tells me I've got good taste.

But I wanted to share it with you because maybe you're on the hunt for a new handbag. I know spring is coming up, and so we tend to change our bags up a little

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bit. I wanted to share this bag with you because I love it. I have not bought it yet, but it is on my list. I do this crazy thing where I reward myself, and so I have this goal that if I made it, I get the handbag. It really inspires me to reach the goal because then I'm like, "Guess what? If you do all these things, you get the handbag."

It is on my list to get, but I wanted to share it with you first because I have a feeling it may sell out. It's by a designer called Wandler. I hope I'm saying that right, W-A-N-D-L-E-R. The bag that I really, really love is called the Hortensia mini leather shoulder bag. When I saw this bag, all I could think was, "This is such a cute bag to wear with a sun-dress in the spring and summer," or you could even wear it with jeans and a T-shirt and a cute pair of sandals or pumps.

It's such a beautiful, versatile spring bag. It is a mini, so if you're looking for a big bag, this is not your bag. But this is a great bag if you're going to meet girlfriends for lunch and you just need your cellphone and a couple of items, it's so cute. It's like this half-moon shape, and it has gold hardware and a handle, and then it comes with a shoulder strap so you can wear it as a cross-body as well. Why don't you just go check it out for yourself? You can go to FrenchKissLife.com/Wandler, that's W-A-N-D-L-E-R and check out the cute little mini Hortensia bag. Have a gorgeous week, everyone! Go out there and French Kiss Life!

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 Three Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs by visiting FrenchKissLife.com/Mindset. Because, after all, mindset is the new black.