



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

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(Part Three) Dream Making: Grace

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(Part Three) Dream Making: Grace

“Grace is what picks me up and lifts my wings high above, and I fly. Grace always conquers. Be graceful in everything; in anger, in sadness, in joy, and kindness, and unkindness. Retain grace with you,” by C. JoyBell C.

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.

What is happening, my beautiful friends? I wish you all could see where I’m recording today’s podcast. So, I’m someone who I believe in taking what is and making the best of it. and what has been for me recently is people in the house all day.

And as someone who’s used to spending a lot of time alone and works from home, this has been challenging because I don’t have a separate office in its own room. In fact. I decided to have my office upstairs with this beautiful view, and upstairs is very open. And it’s great when we’re not sheltering in place.

But when we are, it’s a little bit of a challenge. And so, I started to get creative. I’m like, where can I go? Because our house is very much open style. It’s like a loft. And there’s only one room that is separate. Everything else is super-open. And the one room is where my daughter stays when she’s here. And so, that’s not an option.

I’m like, “Okay, well I could go sit in my car.” But that sounds terrible. Like, who wants to sit in their car for an hour with a laptop in their lap trying to record a podcast? So that’s not an option.

And then I realized that Glen has a camper that’s actually quite cozy. And so, I have set up my podcasting studio in the camper out in the yard. And that is where this is all going down.

And I feel like there’s a bigger message in this because a lot of times, when we have challenges and obstacles we want to shut down, we start spinning in

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frustration or worry or anxiety. We want things to be different than what they are, which only causes us to be more anxious.

But what if you didn't? What if you refused to shut down? What if you became the kind of person that whatever is handed to you, you're like, "Yes, and here's what I'm going to do with it..."

I'm actually teaching a soiree today. If you're listening to this on the day that the podcast comes out, on a Wednesday, I'm going to be hosting a soiree later today on how to show up when you want to shut down. It is going to be super-super-powerful because right now, with everything that's happening in the world, I see so many of my clients and my friends, and I've even noticed myself at certain points, wanting to shut down.

But what if we didn't? What would be possible? That's what we're going to be exploring at the soiree. So, if you have not joined us already, head over to frenchkisslife.com/showup, and then show up for this incredible soiree with me and the *French Kiss Life* community.

It is time for a Community Spotlight. The part of the show where I get to highlight someone in the community who has benefitted from the French Kiss Lifestyle. And one of the things that I do is I read every review that comes in; on Facebook, on iTunes, on Stitcher. And some of them are great. Some of them not so much. But I love to focus on the ones that are positive.

Isn't it crazy how our brain, we can get like 1000 amazing reviews, and one person comes along and they're not happy and we want to focus on that? But I've really trained my brain to focus on the people that are being served, that are getting value from the work that we do at *French Kiss Life*. And sometimes, when I'm reading the review, the title catches me. And this one definitely did that. This is from Maggie, who left a five-star review on iTunes. And this was the title of her review; When You Need a Little Champagne in Your Orange Juice. I love that.

Here's what she said, "Tonya, I can't believe I've waited so long to write this review. What in the world? After a lifetime of telling myself that something was wrong with me, that I needed to be fixed, I was simultaneously comforted and inspired by your insistence that people are not broken and in need of fixing. Slowly

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but surely, your outlook and attitude helped me reinvent my own and my life is now filled with more curiosity, joy, and self-acceptance than ever before. It didn't happen overnight and it involved a lot of showing up on my part. But I look around now and I have a life that's beyond what I could have ever imagined for myself.

As I'm writing this review, I'm sitting in a beautiful New York City apartment with the love of my life in the next room. I am more comfortable in my skin than ever before and I have a career and friendships that are extremely meaningful to me. Sometimes, you just need a little champagne in your orange juice. And over the last two years, that's what you've been for me. Thanks so much for the continual reminder that life is beautiful, especially with lipstick and flowers, love Maggie."

Maggie, it has been my absolute honor to be a little splash of champagne in your orange juice. And just sitting here in this little camper in the woods and imagining you in your New York City apartment with the love of your life, really loving yourself, accepting yourself, and knowing that you're not broken and as a result being able to enjoy your life so much more fully is why I do what I do.

So, Maggie, thank you so, so much for that lovely review. And hey, listen, if you listen to this podcast and you enjoy it and you have not left a review, what in the world? Head over to iTunes or Stitcher, or even on Facebook and let me know how the podcast has touched your life and who knows, maybe I will feature you in an upcoming Community Spotlight.

Today is the final part of a three-part series that I've been doing on dream-making. So, the first part was all about gumption; deciding what you want and having the courage to go after it. Last week, in part two, we talked about grit, which is all about being persistent, having the perseverance, having that no matter what attitude.

And then the final part of dream-making is all around grace. Last Sunday, I had the opportunity to watch Bocelli perform at the Duomo in Milan. And as he walked out of the church and he stood in front of the doors and he sang Amazing Grace, I cried an ugly cry. Seriously, I was sobbing.

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And I was wondering, like, why that song touches me so much. And it really does come down to the word grace. And when I looked up the definition of the word grace, it included words like approval, favor, an act of kindness, courtesy, compassion, or forgiveness towards someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm, unmerited favor.

And I started to think about how this relates to our dreams. And grace is something I talk about in my programs a lot. I'm constantly telling clients, we all need to extend ourselves more grace, because how many of you are your own worst critic? How many of you are telling yourself things like, "I'm a terrible mother? I should be doing more. It wasn't good enough."

We walk around punishing ourselves for being human. But what I tell my clients, they'll say to me, "But what is grace like? How do you define grace?" And for me, it's more of a visual. And the way I like to think of grace is me, the mortal me, the very human me walking along, falling down, making mistakes, doing things she's not proud of, doing things that maybe cause her shame, being a human being.

And then there's this other part of me. It's like the divine part of me that grabs me by the hand, that scared human version of me, full of doubt, full of insecurity, wants to beat herself up as if that's going to help. And she grabs me by the hand and she's like, "No. I love you no matter what. I've got you."

To me, grace is forgiving ourselves for our humanness. Grace is saying to yourself, "I've got you. I've got you and I love you. And you're perfect just the way you are. Now, let's go."

To me, that's what grace feels like. And it's probably, I would say, the most important ingredient of dream-making because, inevitably, when you decide what you want and you go for it, you're going to make mistakes. You are going to fail. That is part of the process.

By the way, failure only means that you didn't achieve your desired result; that's all. But think about the stories that we build around that. We tell ourselves, "I'm a loser. I'll never make it happen. I'm not capable. I'm not worthy. I'm not deserving."

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But when you just strip all of that away, failure only means, “Hey, you didn’t reach it.” And then you get to decide what you make that mean. You get to decide, “You know what? I’m on my way to reaching it. I am learning through this process. Every time I don’t reach my goal, it’s simply data. Let me use that data for me.” But a lot of us, we don’t extend ourselves that grace. And instead, we beat ourselves up for not reaching a goal.

Really think about that. You beat yourself up for having the courage to set a goal, and then because you don’t reach it, you beat yourself up for that. It makes no sense. But what a lot of people do is that they just decide that they don’t want to fail, so they don’t set the goals and they don’t go after it. And what they end up doing is they end up failing by not even trying. And to me, that’s the worst kind of failure because that is what leads to a life of regret.

But what many of us do is we set up all of these rules about life that don’t serve us. And they don’t serve living a well-lived life. Rules like, “I shouldn’t fail. I should always succeed. I should have it together all of the time. I should never make mistakes. I have to be a perfect mother, a perfect wife. I have to run a successful company and I need to have dinner on the table every night and I need to have the house perfectly clean.”

And then, because we set such high standards for ourselves, we end up failing in meeting those standards, and then we beat ourselves up. And then we have all of society’s rules about who we should be and how we should be. And they’re impossible to live up to. And we beat ourselves up.

I love the quote by Dwight Moody where he says, “Grace isn’t a little prayer that you say before receiving a meal. It’s a way to live. The law tells me how crooked I am. Grace comes along and straightens me out.”

So, I want to talk about the qualities of grace as they relate to your dreams and how to cultivate them within your life. The first one is approval. Grace says that you are enough just as you are. But a lot of you believe that you are broken and somehow you need to be fixed.

And so, what you end up doing is you set goals to reach to somehow affirm you, to approve of you. But the flawed premise here is that something is wrong with you.

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And no amount of success is fixing the real problem, which is the belief that you are broken. Are you with me?

It's a very different experience because I've done it both ways. It's a very different experience to go after a goal just because you want to and that you think it will be fun and that it will grow you, and that it will be exciting, and from a place of abundance, from a place of enoughness, versus trying to reach a goal because you think somehow you'll be a better human being over there than you are here.

You're an amazing human being right here. Reaching a goal is not going to make you a better or worse human being. It's just going to be you in the goal having grown from the experience. But your worth is no better than it is right now. You are 100% worthy just as you are.

And there's something about approving of yourself that is so powerful because what we often do is, we're trying to get approval from everybody else. We want people to approve of what we want. We want people to approve of what we do. We want people to approve of who we are as individuals.

And this is what I call emotional outsourcing. We outsource our emotional lives to people that probably can't even handle their own. We want them to approve of us so that we can approve of ourselves. But what I'm going to challenge you to consider is that you just get to approve of yourself. That is what grace is. Approval is just the belief that someone or something is good and acceptable. This comes down to self-acceptance.

Here's the thing, you all. When it comes to your dreams, I want you to have big dreams. I want you to go for it. I want you to see what is possible in your lifetime. I want you to create a life that your 90-year-old self is going to look back on and be like, "Wow, look at you. Well done, darling."

But I don't want you to do it because you somehow think that that will make you good or acceptable. I want you to do it because you are good and you are acceptable right now.

I was working with a client recently who went to an Ivy League school, got her law degree, and she did it all because she wanted approval from her parents. Her

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parents had told her, ever since she was a young girl, that to be successful, she needed to either be an engineer, a doctor, or an attorney.

And so, she went on to do what her parents wanted, to seek their approval. But what ended up happening is that she has created a life that she doesn't approve of. It doesn't feel true to her. It was her parents dream and not her own. And with grace, you begin to approve of yourself and everybody else's approval is so much less relevant. You don't need it because you're approving of yourself.

Now, think about this in relationship to your dreams. When you believe in your dreams and you approve of your dreams and you know that you're good and acceptable enough to go after them, not because you need to prove anything but because you've already proven it to yourself, it's so much more powerful. And you're so much more likely to create your dreams. So, grace is all about giving yourself approval.

The second quality of grace that is so important and so needed is forgiveness. I have personally seen so many women keep themselves stuck because they refuse to forgive themselves for things that they've done in the past, which keeps them from moving on and creating the future that they want.

A great example of this is a client that I worked with several years ago. She came to me because she was so full of shame. And shame is one of those emotions, y'all, that feels terrible. Trust me. I've had a lot of shame in my life. I totally get it.

But she was having shame because she got a DUI with her child in the car. And it had happened like 10 years prior to us working together; 10 years. And she was still beating herself up. She was still using that as a reason to believe that she was not a good mother. She was still using that as a reason to believe that she was a flawed human being.

And I'll never forget asking her why she continued to feel guilt and shame around something that happened 10 years ago. And she said to me, "because I deserve that punishment. I put my child's life in danger, and that, I will live with for the rest of my life." And that's why we need grace.

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Now, I'm so excited. I just corresponded with her a few weeks ago and she's doing amazing. She's doing so much better because she did the work to work on these beliefs that she had around something that happened. But grace is about forgiving ourselves for being human.

We are going to make mistakes. We're going to do things we're not proud of. Ut I'm a big believer in that we're all doing the best that we can with the tools that we have, always.

Now, sometimes we do things that are dangerous. We do things that could potentially harm other people. But I don't think it's because we're bad people. I think it's because we don't know how to handle our lives. We are suppressing emotions. No one ever taught us how to deal with our emotional life. And sometimes, when we do that, it comes out in ways that just don't serve us.

But with grace, we can all just forgive ourselves. Forgiveness is a choice. There are some things that I've done that if I allowed myself, I could feel so much guilt and shame around. But I realize, I get to choose grace and extend it to myself, realizing no one wins when I beat myself up. It doesn't make me a better mother. It doesn't make me a better friend or a better human being.

If anything, it makes me less effective in those roles that I play. And so, to create your dreams, you're going to be required to forgive yourself over and over again. Just this morning, I made a mistake. I didn't really make a mistake. I had a technical error on one of my coaching calls and my Zoom froze up. And Grace is about forgiving yourself for putting yourself in that situation, even though it was out of my control.

I'm one of those people, when something goes wrong, I automatically want to blame myself. Like, a tornado can come through and I'll be like, "Oh that must be my fault. What did I do to create this?" But grace is about forgiving ourselves for being human, extending ourselves so much love and kindness, which is the other quality of grace; kindness.

I feel like we think we need to beat ourselves up to create what we want. I see this especially around weight loss. Like, "If I hate my body enough, I'll be able to

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change it.” Well, that is not how it works. Because if it worked, so many of us would be able to lose so much weight with ease.

But it doesn't. It keeps you caught up in the loop of overeating and beating yourself up and feeling bad. When you're feeling bad, what do you want to do? You want to overeat. And so, you just keep creating the result that you don't want.

I will tell you personally, when it came to my weight loss journey, when I decided one day, I was no longer available to beating my body up, that's when it became so much easier to lose weight. And it didn't happen overnight.

My brain would want to go to, “Look at those stretch marks. Look at what you've done to yourself. You should be ashamed of yourself. Why can't you get it together.” And I would have to forgive myself for thinking that and come back to the truth.

The truth is, I am enough. I always have been. I always will be. That is grace. Sometimes, I wonder what the world would be like if, instead of trying to fix ourselves, that we forgave ourselves. Really think about that because I feel like the whole fixing is just a symptom of us not forgiving ourselves.

If we just forgave ourselves, we'd probably realize, actually, we're really amazing human beings who've had an extraordinary life experience, who've made a lot of mistakes, who are learning along the way. Forgiveness and kindness and approval is part of making your dreams come true.

Because, here's the thing, as soon as you set a big goal for yourself, you're like, “Here's my big dream, here's my goal to get me there, my next goal that I'm going to focus on,” what's going to happen is you're going to mess it up. You're going to try something and it's not going to work.

Maybe you get onstage to give a speech and you freeze; which has happened to me, by the way. I actually got so nervous onstage one time, you guys, I had, like, spaghetti legs. Have you ever had that happen? And I was like, “Oh my god, somebody get me a chair immediately.” And I sat down and I was fine. I was fine once I did that.

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But grace is all about, “That’s okay, I’ve got you. I’ve got your back. Even when you’re scared, even when you’re nervous, even when you’re about to faint onstage in front of an audience of like 300 people, I’m still here. I’ve still got you. You are enough. Even if you pass out and get a concussion in front of a whole group of people, you are still enough.”

Grace is when you decide, “This is the year I finally lose the weight.” And even though you have a lot of doubt, because you have a lot of evidence as to why you can’t, you decide you’re going to go all in. And so, day number two of this decision, you find yourself in the pantry, looking for the bag of chips because you feel so terrible and you need a little bit of relief. And next thing you know, you’ve had the whole bag of chips.

Grace in that moment is saying to yourself, “I love you no matter what. You are enough. There’s nothing wrong with you. I forgive you. Now, let’s sit down and figure out why you did that.” Not because there’s something wrong with you, but because I know you want more for yourself, and I’m here for you.

We all have the ability to be that person for ourselves. And I want you just to think about that because, again, I think a lot of times, we think we need to beat ourselves up to create results. But in that moment, what we typically do is we say things to ourselves like, “Well this will never work. You’re such a loser. You’re so fat. You’re never going to lose the weight.”

Which makes us feel terrible. And when we’re feeling terrible and we don’t know how to manage that emotion, we want to reach for food to just, again, give us temporary relief. But imagine if you didn’t do that and you’re like, “You know what, that’s okay. This is part of the process.”

I tell my weight loss clients all of the time, I’m like, “Listen, failure is a part of weight loss. You’re going to have times when you overeat. You’re going to have times when you do skip your workouts. You’re going to have times when you don’t really show up for yourself. And that’s all a part of the process.”

Now, when those times happen, how you talk to yourself, how you treat yourself when you’re down is going to depict whether you’re successful or not because when you’re down is when you need to have your back the most.

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Can you imagine kicking a little baby when it's trying to learn to walk? It falls down and you just kick it and you're like, "Well you're useless. You're never going to learn to walk." No. We cheer it on. We're like, "Come on. You've got this."

It's all part of the process. You're going to fall down. But eventually, if you keep getting up, you're going to learn to walk, to the point you won't even have to think about walking. It's just going to be what you do. And that's what it's like creating our dreams. We're going to fall down. But when we fall down and we beat ourselves up for it, that's what keeps us down.

But grace invites us to do the opposite; to have our own backs, to cheer ourselves on, to remind ourselves it's part of the process. Grace is about never ever abandoning ourselves, no matter what.

One of my favorite lines of the song Amazing Grace is when it says, "It was grace that brought us safe thus far. And Grace will lead us home." And to me, home is back to myself, back to my truest self, back to who I really am when I'm not engaging in the lack of forgiveness, when I'm not approving of myself, when I'm not engaging in all of the negative self-talk.

To me, that's when I feel at home with myself. And grace will get you there, my friends. And when it comes to your dreams, you take gumption and grit and grace, and what I know is that those three ingredients are what is required to truly make dreams come true.

It is time for J'adore; the part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you all. And whenever I'm thinking about what I want to share with you, it typically falls into one of three categories. So, one of the categories is just the things that make me happy, that bring me joy. The other one is the things that make my life more beautiful. And then finally, things that make my life easier.

Well, today's J'adore falls into the latter category; things that make my life easier. And really, this J'adore could be an entire podcast episode because it's something that I see so many women struggle with. And it's definitely something I used to struggle with, which is why I'm so passionate about it.

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And that is scheduling; creating a schedule for yourself. There was a time in my life where I was so anti-schedule. And I equated it with being free. I wanted to be a free spirit and spontaneous. And the reality is that during that time of my life, I was anything but free. I was wrapped up in behaviors and ways of being that just were not serving me.

It felt so hard to reach my goals and create results in my life because I wasn't planning for them and I didn't have a calendar that represented the life that I wanted to have for myself. And then years ago, I read this book called *Get Things Done*, or *Getting Things Done*. And I really started to see the value of being a woman who decides what she wants and creates a calendar that reflects that decision.

So, today's J'adore is my calendar system, which is Google Calendar. I cannot imagine my life without Google Calendar. I am one of their biggest brand ambassadors because Google Calendar has just elevated the quality of my life.

Now, granted, you have to be someone that shows up for your calendar, which is a whole different conversation. But having this calendar system and being able to plan my life on purpose has changed everything. But why Google Calendar? You may be thinking, "But, Tonya, I have a paper and pen calendar."

And that's great if that works for you. I'm just about you finding a system that works for you. But I'll tell you why Google Calendar works for me. The first thing that I love about Google Calendar is its ability for you to create different calendars.

So, imagine you have a calendar for family, you have a calendar for travel, you have a calendar for different parts of your business. Even from a psychological level, it's really effective for me to go in and only show one calendar and to see how much that part of my life is being nurtured or is being ignored.

So, let's say, for example, you have a calendar for health and you look at your health calendar and you're like, "Oh wow, it's only showing up one day a week on my calendar." It's very telling, right? And so, you can even use it to look at, "Where is my life out of harmony?"

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If you're in business and you go and look at your marketing calendar and there's very little on it, that's very telling. You're like, "Why am I not marketing? Why is there not space in my calendar for one of the most important business activities that I could be engaging in?" And so, again, I love that you can create those individual calendars.

The other thing that I love about Google Calendar is that you can share those individual calendars, or you can share all of them. But imagine if you have a calendar for family. How impactful it would be to be able just to share that with your partner or your children so everyone is on the same page and they know what is happening.

The other feature of Google Calendar that I really like is the fact that you can send yourself notifications. And so, every morning, I've set it up so that Google Calendar actually sends me a list of everything that I am going to be doing that day. And so, first thing in the morning, I sit down at my desk and I look at my calendar and I know what I've planned for the day. It's like having a personal assistant.

The other feature that I like is the ability to go into an event that you've scheduled and put notes or attach documents. So, imagine that you and I have a meeting that we planned six months ago, and so, when we planned it, we knew what the agenda was. We knew what we wanted to talk about. But now, it's six months later and you're trying to find those notes, to know what in the world we're supposed to be talking about. But with Google Calendar, as soon as you create your event, you can put those notes in there. And so, it always keeps you on track, with is super-super-powerful.

I also love that it's always with me. Unlike when I used to attempt to have a paper calendar, and sometimes it was in the car, sometimes I forgot it at home. The one thing that we almost all have with us all of the time is our cellphone. And because Google Calendar syncs across platforms, I always have my calendar system with me.

And so, if I'm out and about and I meet up with a friend and she's like, "Hey, let's have lunch in a couple of weeks," we can go ahead and schedule it. I've got my

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calendar right there. And then, I can send her an invite from Google Calendar so that she has it on her schedule.

So, there's so many features that I love about Google Calendar that really, what it does is it helps me to maximize my time and therefore maximizing my days. And for those of you who are in the Dream Atelier, one of the bonuses that you get is a behind-the-scenes of my Google Calendar.

You'll get to see all of my individual calendars. You'll get to see how I think about scheduling. Because I'm very mindful of what I put on my schedule because I know that once it's on my schedule, I'm going to show up for it. And so, I really think through what goes on my schedule. I don't treat it lightheartedly because that's where I see a lot of you making mistakes.

You'll just throw things on the calendar and then you don't show up for it. and what do you do? You use that as a reason to beat yourself up or to feed this BS story that you're not someone who follows through. But imagine if you were intentional and you were serious. Like, if it goes on my calendar, it's legit. I'm showing up for it.

And so, I will take you behind the scenes of how to think about what to schedule, how to schedule. And then, you'll get to see a literal – I call it a dream-mapping process, of me scheduling my dreams and my goals on my calendar. And women have told me year after year of doing this program, it's one of their favorite bonuses because they finally get it. They finally get that they can create massive results in their lives if they'll just learn how to schedule and schedule with intention.

And so, again, if you're in the Dream Atelier, you're going to be getting that bonus where we go deep into this topic. But if you're not in the Dream Atelier, that's okay. Just look at Google Calendar. Play around with it and decide, is this a system that you could make work for you? Because as someone who used to be so anti-calendar and anti-scheduling, I will tell you, Google Calendar has brought me so much peace and so much freedom in my life.

Have a beautiful day, everyone. I'll see you in the next episode. 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 Three Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs, by visiting frenchkisslife.com/mindset. Because, after all, mindset is the new black.