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## Love Notes: Collection Three

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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## Love Notes: Collection Three

I have some love notes for you. Today is the final installment of love notes for 2020. These are little notes that I've been writing over the last decade to inspire you to live an extraordinary life. So enjoy this episode of love notes, collection number three

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 friends. Are you ready for the holidays? For me, this year, the holidays are going to be so simple. And I could not be more excited. In fact, I ordered a tree for my apartment. And it's a 10-foot tree that has flocking, so it looks like it has snow on it. It's so beautiful.

And I put it together, plugged it in, turned on the lights, and I was sitting there looking at it. And I decided, I'm not going to put one thing on this tree. I want it to be that simple. And I couldn't be more happy with my decision. And I feel like, for so many of us, we're feeling this deep need to just simplify things. We don't have to add a bunch of stuff.

In fact, I think oftentimes, the most beautiful lives are the ones that are most simple and most intentional. So, I am ready for the holidays. I plan to go spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with my dear friend Brooke and her family. We are going to go skiing. We're probably going to play lots of games and just spend quality time with the people that we love. So excited.

For this episode, I have decided to do a final collection, for now, of love notes. If you've not heard the past two episodes, I basically have taken some of my best writing from over the years and created an episode full of what I love to call love notes. And I realize that these love notes, many times, were for myself. They were things that I needed to hear.

And the others were things that I knew my clients were expressing and where they were feeling challenged and stuck. And so, I hope that you feel the love in this episode of love notes, collection number three.

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You get to decide. I'll never forget hearing my mentor Martha Beck say something that would forever change my life, "You get to decide what you believe about yourself." As soon as I heard her say this, I pulled out a piece of paper and I wrote down all of my self-beliefs.

When I looked at the negative opinions I held about myself, I asked, "Would I choose to believe this on purpose?" The answer was, "Hell no." If I had a choice – and it is a choice – I wanted to choose wisely. So, that's what I've been doing over the past decade; deciding on purpose how I want to think about myself.

What do you want to believe about you? When you look at your life, you can decide that it's rich or poor, beautiful or terrible, joyful or full of sadness. You also get to decide what you believe about yourself.

It's important to understand what your current self-opinion is and whether you want to keep it or not. Look for and create evidence for what you want to believe.

When I look at myself, I want to believe things like, "I'm amazing. I can do whatever I put my mind to. I'm beautiful and kind. I'm strong and capable. I know what I want. I'm wealthy. I'm a great mom. I am in control of myself. I'm creative. I'm a great businesswoman. I'm a great writer."

Now, some people may disagree with these statements. And some may not. But guess what? It doesn't matter what other people think. I get to decide what I want to believe about myself. And you get to decide what you want to think about yourself.

If you no longer want to be overweight, stop thinking of yourself as a fat person. If you don't want to struggle with money, stop thinking of yourself as poor. If you don't want to be lonely, decide to see yourself as lovable. If you don't want to be stuck in life, see yourself as creative and decisive and resourceful.

Decide and practice the self-opinion that will make your 90-year-old self proud. Each day, look for all the ways these things are true and take action to create more evidence for what you want to believe about yourself. The more evidence you create, the more deeply rooted the belief becomes.

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So, think about a negative belief you've been holding about yourself. What would you rather believe? How would you show up differently if you did? What would you create in your life if you believed this about yourself?

A breath of fresh air. My Dad is my hero. He's also my breath of fresh air. Whenever I have felt suffocated by the heaviness of life, his presence, words, and spirit were always the lightness that I needed. I could breathe again.

So, when I got the call this past year that my dad had coded, was put on life support, and was being airlifted to a large hospital facility, I could not get to him fast enough. I could barely breathe.

I booked the first flight available and was by his side 12 hours later. I sat by his bed in the hospital listening to him struggling to breathe. I wanted to be his breath of fresh air because he's always been mine.

He taught me the power of love and understanding. He instilled in me to not wear a chip on my shoulder, no matter how much I'd been hurt. He taught me to harness my maiden name, Rising, and rise above the heaviness. He taught me to be a breath of fresh air.

Life is too short, my friend, to be bitter and carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. It slows you down. It weighs you down. It holds you down.

We all need fresh air in our lives, fluidity, lightness, effervescence, and expansion. We need it and we need to be it for our own sake, and for the sake of the world at large, especially now.

When my dad was finally taken off of life support and I sat by his bed holding his hand and he could talk, I asked him. "Dad, how are you feeling?" And he replied, "It's all good." And just like that, I breathed in his fresh air.

Giggling. "Tonya, you're always giggling." I've heard this more than once, often with a bit of sarcasm. Urban Dictionary says, "A giggle is the uncontrollable surge of laughter that takes over and makes everything that was once worth a smirk seem unexplainably funny. When you have or had the giggles, you feel giddy for a while after."

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So, call me childlike if you wish. I take that as a huge compliment. Children have more fun, live in more awe, and have big imaginations. They also laugh, on average, 400 times a day. Guess how many times adults laugh? Four. Sad.

Laughter has saved me from falling into deep depressions when my mind wanted to trick me into thinking that everything was so serious. I believe laughter is keeping me young. Cortisol ages you faster than a cheetah will run you down, which I'll admit wouldn't be so funny.

Laughter actually helped me lose weight and keep it off because suddenly I wasn't creating emotions that I wanted to stuff down with Cheetos and Krispy Kreme donuts. It's helped me make more money. It's amazing how much more you can create in your life when you're not so uptight and living in fight or flight.

In every moment, you have a choice; to be miserable by focusing on all the problems, or to be lighter by looking for the possibility, or even the hilariousness that is also available. I'm going to keep on giggling in hopes of infecting you too because I love you, and I know that laughter has the power to change your life. How many laughs do you think you're having a day?

Going within. Four years ago, I was met with unexpected circumstances. My baby girl was sick. I watched myself panic and the spiral of doom and gloom set in. I was staying up until four and 5am researching, trying to figure out what was going on with her. And as a result, I felt myself falling apart. And I even had the lab work the doctors had run to prove it. I had created my own internal chaos that was revealing itself in not only my body, but in my relationships, my business, and every part of my life.

When the world feels like it's in chaos, our number one priority is to go within and find our calm. So, here are some suggestions. Create yours and God's list. Here's what I mean. When I'm feeling worried and I can feel myself panicking, I sit down with a piece of paper and I write down everything that I'm worried about. And then I divide it into two lists.

On one side is everything that I have control over. And on the other side is only what God can control. And my work is to focus on my list. And then my personal choice is to believe that whatever is happening outside of my list, the things that I

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can have control over, is happening for me. And so, then I just let go and I focus on what I can do.

The second thing is to ask quality questions, such as what are the possibilities in this? How is this serving me? How can I love and serve even more? How can I take exquisite care of myself? How can I find my calm so that I can support others?

You see, the quality of the questions that we ask of ourselves is creating the quality of our lives. And so often, when things happen that we weren't expecting, that we'd prefer not to happen, we can start to spiral in questions that don't serve me.

For example, asking ourselves, "Why does this have to happen to me? What if I can't get through this? What if I fail?" These questions will never reveal answers to you that support you. So, pay attention to the questions that you ask of yourself.

The third thing is to stick with the facts. There's a difference between fact and fiction. Learn the facts and then decide what you want to think about them. Always choose a meaning that will drive you to take the best actions, not meanings that will cause you to act out of fear.

The next one is to find ways to love and live today. We are so afraid of dying that we aren't even living. And yet, every day, we face the uncertainty of our own mortality.

What's happening in the world right now is a sign for me to live like I've never lived before and to love more than I've ever loved. Focus on your own wellbeing. More than ever, we need the tools to manage our emotional and mental states. It will determine how you navigate this challenging time.

Also, don't fight what you're feeling. It's normal to have fear, anxiety, and worry. Do you know why? Because you're a human being. And when you fight with these emotions, you only strengthen them. Ironically, I'm finding my calm by embracing all of it.

And then, I remember what my grandmother always said, "This too shall pass." Nothing lasts forever. The sun will shine again. And until then, I'm choosing to dance in the rain.

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Following the feel-good. Sometimes, a woman will say to me something like, “But Tonya, you seem to have it all figured out.” Nothing could be further from the truth. I don’t know what my 10-year vision is. I don’t know how I’m going to reach my goals. There’s a lot I don’t know.

The secret is I’m okay with that. I follow what feels good. And pressuring myself to figure it out doesn’t feel good. What if you don’t need to know all the answers? What if you don’t need to know how? What if all you need to do is to wake up and live each day to the fullest by following what lights your soul and letting go of the rest?

What feels good today? Maybe it’s deciding on your next goal or project, making your bed, going for a workout, wearing a beautiful outfit, taking a step or two towards your goal, writing the chapter, cooking a delicious meal, saying no, saying yes. It’s good to feel good.

What if you made feeling good your number one priority? I wonder where life would take you. My guess is to beautiful, enchanting places.

What are you fighting for? How often are you fighting for your own limitations, for your own suffering? You’ll know because when someone offers you a possible solution or reframe, you’ll say, “But... But this is too hard. But I’ve never been able to do it before. But it runs in the family. But it will take too much time. But I had a terrible past.”

My friend, I get it. When my daughter became sick, I was so scared and angry and anyone that tried to offer me a lifeline was met with, “But y’all don’t understand.” For weeks, I had to process it. And I don’t encourage bypassing this step. We are all human, experiencing real human stuff.

But at a certain point, you have to be honest with yourself and ask, am I fighting for my own suffering? While hard and hurtful things happen, you still have the power to change them. You do not have to be a victim of circumstances. You don’t have to stay stuck.

What I’ve learned is that no problem presents itself without also presenting its opposite; possibility. But at some point, you must give up fighting for why you can’t do it, why it’s too hard, why you’re not enough. And you have to pivot.

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Imagine what your life would look like if you championed for your possibility, always looking for things like how you can do it, how you can break family patterns, how you can overcome it, how you can create it, why you are the perfect one to do it, the possibilities in the challenge, how amazing you are.

This is a mindset shift we can all learn. And the more you practice it, the better you get at it. but step number one is this; you must move out of victimhood where everyone fights for their limitations, and move into power city, where championing for yourself is always in style.

A bring-it attitude. Some people think that the purpose of life is to be happy 24/7. This is not what it's about because that's not life. Life is about contrast. A well-lived life is about embracing all of life, the ups and the downs, the beauty and the not so beautiful, the positive and the negative, the pain and the ecstasy.

It's about not fighting with life but allowing it, then you get to decide how you show up in each moment. Most of our suffering is wanting life to be different than what it is in this moment. while desire is a beautiful thing, you don't create it by fighting with what you have.

I've experienced so much relief and personal power by saying, "Bring it," to my own life. Bring me the pain and the joy. Bring me the terror and the beauty. Bring me the failure and the success. Bring me the sickness and the health. I'm willing to experience all of it.

I don't want to fight with life. It's exhausting and it only keeps me stuck. I want to be open to all of it, knowing that no matter what happens, I will always be okay, and so will you. Think about what kind of life you'd have and what kind of life you would live if you had a bring-it attitude.

Let it be easy. Think about all of the areas of life that feel hard for you. What would it look like and feel like if you let it be easy? I know we've been taught that certain things are hard, such as losing weight, making money, growing your business, being a mom, writing a book, relationships. Notice how, when you believe things to be hard, how you're really good at proving that true.

For years, I've wanted to write a book. It felt so hard because I had been told that it is, and I believed them. But I was determined to not let another year go by without writing the book that was within me. So, I asked myself, how can I make this easy



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and fun? Suddenly I had an idea. I would film 12 videos from around the world and release them each month. These videos would turn into the chapters of the book.

Now, imagine if I'd gone about writing this book the hard route, the way people told me I should do it. I would be obsessing about a book title, slaving away at the computer worried about what everybody was going to think, selling my soul to get some publishing deal. That felt hard. But my way felt easy.

Now, don't get me wrong, I still have hard days. And it's because I'm thinking about things the wrong way. I'm available for hard. But the moment I decide to make things easier, new possibilities start to show up everywhere. So, be careful what you've been taught, especially when it comes to how hard things are. That's the thing; you get to decide the rules of your life. What if you created a rule to let things be easier?

Tolerating. You don't get what you want. You get what you tolerate. What are you tired of tolerating? Procrastinating your dreams away? Not working out? Overeating? Lack of money? Heart-sucking relationships? Listen up, my friend; you get to decide that you're no longer available to tolerating your life.

It's a decision. It's a shift. It's a new way of being. It's saying, "I'm no longer available to this." And then it's practicing your decision every day until you look around and realize that you're no longer tolerating your life, but you've fallen madly in love with it.

She embraced it all. One day, she decided to own all of it; her divorces, eating disorders, stretch marks, her quirky ways, what she wanted, what she loved, her success, her failures, her past, her present, and her future. Suddenly, the shame melted away.

She was no longer in hiding. She was standing boldly in her life, unshackled by the past and sauntering towards her future. She was embracing who she was, all of it. and life embraced her in return.

The past. You can talk about my past, but I don't live there anymore. How much time do you spend talking about your past? People love to bring it up. We think about it often. We talk about it a lot. We can use it as an excuse as to why we can't do what we want to do and be who we want to be.

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But here's the deal; it's done. What happened 10 years ago, 10 months ago, 10 days ago, and even 10 seconds ago is history. It now exists only as a story in your mind.

If you want to create a new future, you must stop hanging out in the past. This is one of the biggest shifts that my clients make. We stop hanging out in the past and start celebrating where we are and where we're going. And as we embody our future selves, not our past self, we magnetize our futures to us.

Self-image. We often try and change our lives by taking a lot of action, only to keep coming back to a similar result. For example, we go on diets only to come back to a certain number. We go on dates, only to keep attracting the same kind of person. We take the business courses only to stay at a certain level. We read the financial books and sit down and create our budget, only to have an unexpected bill or overspend within weeks.

Here's the thing. Life is reading your energy, not your actions. And it's always responding to who you believe yourself to be, not what you do. Of course, I believe in action and I believe in taking action from who you want to be. That is the secret formula.

This requires a complete makeover of your self-image, how you think about yourself, how you see yourself, what you see is possible, how you show up, what you surround yourself with. Because your life can only be as expansive as you are.

Big decisions. For years, I wanted an expansive and extraordinary life, but I was too afraid to make the big decisions. What if it doesn't work out? What if it fails? What if I lose money? What if people judge me? So, I settled for ordinary because I was only willing to make ordinary decisions.

But when I started to make the big extraordinary decisions, life started to meet me there. Life rewards courage. And the past year, I have made some big decisions. And hey, listen, there are no guarantees. It's all unknown. And I've witnessed my own brain want to freak out. But I remind myself that I have my own back.

I also remind myself that I'm not here to live a status quo life. I want adventure, abundance, passion, love, and ecstasy. These all require that I have the courage to step into the unknown. I'm willing to take the risk, because without the risk, there is no reward. So, what's a big decision your soul is asking you to make?

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Believing first. How many times have you said, “I’ll believe it when I see it?” We have it backwards. What you currently see is based on your current beliefs. If you want to see something different, you must practice believing in it first. This asks that you stop looking around at what is and start dreaming of what can be. This requires creativity, imagination, play, and fervent faith.

It also requires that you relax in trust because when you truly believe in something, you don’t have to pressure, hustle, and punish yourself to get there. You find so much joy in the journey when you believe in where you’re going.

It’s like pressing the click button on Amazon and knowing that your order is going to show up. What’s something you want to see? What do you need to believe first in order to see it?

Scheduling you. Are you on your schedule? In one of my programs, I teach women how to create a calendar that reflects their dreams and desires. And guess what I challenge them to do? Schedule themselves first.

What do I mean by this? Scheduling the things that light you up, make you feel beautiful, inspire you, energize you, relax you, feed your feminine soul. You may think you don’t have the time, but let me assure you, coming from a former critical care nurse; you don’t have time not to. When you make yourself a priority, life starts to prioritize you in return.

Three options. I’ll never forget reading a passage from Eckhart Tolle. He said, “If you find you’re here and now intolerable and it makes you unhappy, you have three options; remove yourself from the situation, change it, or accept it totally. If you want to take responsibility for your life, you must choose one of those three options and you must choose now.”

At the time, I felt stuck in a negative situation. I’d spent months complaining about it, resisting it, and indulging in the suffering. When I read this, I decided I was going to change it immediately. With one decision, my energy started to flow again.

Do not spend another moment of your life resisting what is. It’s too short and way too precious. Refuse to be stuck. Either remove, accept, or change. You’ve got this.

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Slow living. Is time measured in seconds, days, months, and years? Or is it how much life you were able to experience in those moments? Is time something that is the same for all of us or are some of us able to experience time in a different way? Are some of us able to slow time down and others speed it up?

I am at a season in my life where my calendar is full, and yet, ironically time feels much slower. Living a slow life is not about moving slow. It is about living a life that is true to you, cutting out the noise that takes you out of your sweet spot. It's about being fully present with each moment.

Many assume I'm too busy or I'm moving too fast. But my experience feels much slower than those days when my life was filled with shoulds. I'm starting to believe that the faster you are moving in alignment, the slower you experience time.

What are you consuming? Last week, Instagram informed me that my daily time on the app is down to less than 15 minutes a day. Facebook is a bit more because I love going into my group and supporting the members of my program. I love celebrating with them.

However, I'm spending less and less time on social media these days because I don't like how it feels. Life changes when you develop an only haute couture mindset, when you're very picky and only invite the best into your world, when you value how you feel more than what's happening on the outside.

Haute couture represents quality and high standards. What if you only consumed things that lifted your spirits, inspired you, made you smile or laugh, made you cry with so much love, reminded you that you're amazing and beautiful just as you are, encouraged you to relax and have more fun, spark passion and joy, reminded you of what you're capable of, nourished your soul and body, encouraged you to celebrate every single day? You become what you consume, so consume on purpose.

Dead fish. One of my favorite quotes by Rumi says, "Why look like a dead fish in this ocean of God?" Sometimes, people will say things to me like, "Tonya, it's easy for you to be happy, look at your life." I want you to hear me. When I started creating my life on purpose, I was a fulltime critical care nurse working 12-hour

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shifts and I was overweight. I was not jet-setting to Paris or running a company. I was cleaning bedpans and eating Cheetos straight from the bag.

Like so many, I bought into the illusion that life would be better one day when, when I lost the weight, when I found the new career, when I had more money. You know the drill.

One day, I decided I was done putting my joy and happiness off until one day. And I started to bloom when I was planted. I started to come alive. I smiled more. I dressed better. I ate a little less. I moved a little more. I tried new things. I read new books. I woke up to the life I had. And, my friend, that's when things started to change.

Every day, you can focus on what's wrong and walk around with a sulk. Or you can wake up and find joy and blessings in your life as it is right now. And they are everywhere. As you come alive in this ocean of God, you'll notice that your life starts to change with ease. You attract who you are. SO, if you don't want to attract dead fish, don't be one.

Okay, my friends, that concludes Love Notes: Collection Three. If you haven't listened to the first two, make sure you go back to the last two episodes. And I will be doing these more in the future because, as I said in a previous podcast, I have been writing content for over 10 years, so have so many things that I want to share with you. But this wraps up the love notes collection for 2020.

And if you want a little sneak about next week's episode, I'm going to be talking about my biggest lessons from 2020. And, y'all, I think we can all agree, 2020 has served up some lessons for us. So, I can't wait to share mine and I look forward to hearing about yours. Until we meet again, hopefully next Wednesday, much love and much blessings to you. Take care. 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 Three Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs, by visiting [frenchkisslife.com/mindset](https://frenchkisslife.com/mindset). Because, after all, mindset is the new black.