



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 212

---

# Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

FRENCH KISS LIFE

[FRENCHKISSLIFE.COM](https://frenchkisslife.com)

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

I think the majority of people would agree that 2020 has been a fascinating year. One of the things that I do every single year towards the end is I sit down and I reflect over my biggest lessons learned, which is what today's episode is all about. Enjoy.

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. I am so excited to be recording this episode. This morning, before sitting down here at my desk with my microphone, I spent about two hours reflecting over this past year, reflecting over 2020. I do this at the end of every year. I love to think on my year, what I learned, who I became, and the lessons learned. And let me tell you, my friends, a lot of lessons came out of this year. But there are three specific lessons that I want to share with you today.

I remember when 2020 rolled in last year. And like so many of us, I'm always excited about the beginning of a new year. Even though it's just another day, I feel like it's a chance for us to reflect and to think about what we want to create over the next year.

Now, like you, when I sat down and thought about what I wanted for 2020, I had no idea that the world was going to turn out the way it did this year. So, around March when news started to come out about COVID and an impending pandemic, like most people, I was afraid. I was very worried. Only because it was new, it was unknown.

And so, I went into lockdown with the rest of the world. In fact, I don't think I left my house for like six weeks. I just stayed home and did a lot of reflection. It was actually a beautiful time for me to just be with myself in such an intimate way for such a long time.

But then, I started to notice things that people were saying. And you have to understand, during this whole time, I was working on my brain around it because I realized it wasn't COVID making me feel anxious or making me feel worried. It

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

was my thinking about it. Because that's just how it works. What we think determines how we feel about anything.

And so, some of the conversations I started to notice between friends and on social media were really negative. Things like, "This is going to be a terrible year. I'm not going to be able to achieve my goals this year. This has really screwed up my life." And there was a moment where I decided to control my own narrative.

Now, this is something I've been doing for a long time, which is why I've been able to create the results I've created in my life. But my mind wanted to trick me that this was new, this was real, this was something I should definitely be worried about and abandon ship on everything I'd planned for the year. And that was one of the lessons that I learned this year. We must always control our own narrative.

What I teach is that there's a difference between fact and fiction. And a lot of what I was hearing was people's fiction about the facts. And it became this collective energy of fear and doom and gloom and I was plugged into which is why I was feeling so worried and so afraid.

And there came a moment where I was like, "Okay. I see what's happening in my brain. It's time that I control my own narrative." And I began to question things like, "Why can't this be my best year ever? Why can't I create more than I've ever created?"

My word of the year for 2020 was amazed. I wanted to be amazed with myself and my life. And thank goodness I did not abandon that word because of what's happening in the outside world. In fact, I turned it up even more.

Every day, I woke up, I'm like, "How am I going to amaze myself today? What's amazing about life today?" Fast forward to today. We're almost at the end of 2020. And I can say this is the year that I've evolved the most than any year in my history.

And I can also say, I am truly amazed with who I've become this year. And let me tell y'all, I've been amazed with life this year. If you want to be amazed with life, just visit 2020. But there's a different flavor when you look through the eyes of amazement.

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

Amazement is defined as a feeling of great surprise or wonder. There's been a lot of surprises in 2020. And I have looked at it with so much wonder. Like, how is this going to make us better? What good is going to come out of this? How is this here for us, not against us?

And because I've been asking quality questions and I've refused to buy into the narrative of fear and worry and anxiety, I can say 2020 has been an amazing year for me. And it only happened because I controlled my own narrative. Because here's the thing, you all, you live into the story you tell.

Whatever story you're telling is what you're telling your brain to go out there and create. And you have to be mindful not to plug into the energy of everybody else who's telling a terrible story. You have to be mindful of the opinions that you adopt from other people. Because people have an opinion about what's possible for you. And it's probably because they've limited themselves as to what's possible for them.

People have an opinion about how you should think and feel about anything. And if you don't like how they're thinking and feeling, why would you buy into their narrative?

People also have an opinion about how you should behave. In fact, if we're being honest, we probably have opinions about how other people should behave. But when you bring it all back home to you and you think about who you want to be and what you want to create and what you want to experience then it's up to you to control your own narrative. And 2020 taught me that.

It's a lesson I knew, but 2020 gave me an opportunity to practice it on a whole different level. It's why I turned off the news. There was a certain point where I realized that the news was just evoking so much stress and anxiety. I knew the facts at that point. I didn't need someone to tell me how to feel about the facts. I wanted to decide for myself what to think about them and how to feel about them.

It's why I'm very careful about who I follow on social media. I'm very mindful about the people that I trust and the people that I hang out with and have conversations with. Because controlling the narrative that you want to tell is so much easier when you are around people that have a similar narrative for

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

themselves. And so, thank you, 2020, for reminding me of the importance of controlling my own narrative.

Now, the second lesson that came up for me came up in such a big way. And in many ways, I thought I had overcome this one. But 2020 reminded me that I still had a lot of work to do in this area, and that is around people pleasing.

People pleasing is a recipe for a miserable life. So, what is people pleasing? It's when you have an emotional need to please others at your own expense; the expense of your own needs or your own desires.

And listen, people pleasing isn't all bad. I think it shows that you care. I think it shows that you value others and you enjoy making others happy. But it becomes a problem and it makes you miserable when you're constantly putting your needs to the side for the sake of others being happy.

And this came up for me this year. I made a decision to leave a long-term relationship and I saw this in such a big way. I didn't want to hurt someone. I didn't want them to feel bad. I wanted them to be okay.

And there was a part of me that told me, "Just stay. Just deny what you want. You can be happy no matter what. Don't worry about it. Just deal with it." But I had done that so many times in my life, I was just like, "I cannot do that again. I have this one life. I cannot ignore what my soul and my intuition is telling me."

And so, I had to do a lot of work around this. And then, on top of that, I have been in the process, as many of you have probably seen who've been listening to this podcast, of changing my entire business. And there have been people that don't like it.

Now, there are way more people that do and have sent me so many lovely messages about how much they love the School of Self-Image, how much they are loving the membership, how their lives are changing.

But there have been some people who have not been happy with my change. And I had to ask myself, am I willing to neglect myself and what I've been called to do to please a handful of people? And that was hard. I don't like feeling like I am the source of someone's unhappiness.

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

But then, when I know the truth, that I'm not the source of someone's happiness, we all have to be emotionally responsible and accountable and to know that if we're unhappy, it's because of thoughts in our head. Then I could just come back home to myself and work on my own thoughts about myself and my decisions and have my own back on them.

And I will tell you, the best way that I've come to really overcome this people pleasing tendency is to be honest, to have 100% honest conversations with people. Because if you think about people you love and that you genuinely care about how they feel and you care about their welfare, honesty is at the core of those relationships.

Do you want to be in a relationship with someone who's lying to you? No none do. And yet, that's what people pleasing is. It's lying. It's saying that you want to do something when you don't. It's saying you feel a certain way when you don't. It's saying you believe a certain thing when you actually don't, just to make the other person feel comfortable and to be happy. But who suffers in that? You do.

But I believe, when you come to conversations with an intention for love of both parties – and that includes yourself – and you are honest, then good things do come out of that. When you lie, that's when you create so many problems in your life. And so, this year has been about so many honest conversations and telling people how I feel, what I want, and trusting that we're all adults and we're all going to be okay.

It has been painful, y'all, not going to lie. Because in the moment, it's so much easier to feel the comfort of people pleasing than to feel the discomfort of being a bold truth-telling woman. But the long-term rewards that come from that I am living today and I can tell you, it is so freeing.

And it's like a muscle you have to practice. I've been practicing it all year, this muscle of just being honest and coming at these conversations with so much love and putting a stake in the ground.

Another analogy that one of my mentors gave me – because I called her up and I'm like, "I need help right now," and she was like, "Tonya, you are a people pleaser. And that's not a bad thing. It has served you in many, many ways. The problem

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

though is if you think up a big group of people that you're trying to please, you're at the back of the group."

She was like, "I want you to put yourself in the front of the group and make sure, if you're pleasing someone, you're going to be pleased with your pleasing of them, that you're not sacrificing something that you want or sacrificing who you are in order to please. Make sure you're pleasing you and then, if you want to please others and it's coming from a genuine abundant and loving place, go for it."

I think it's just my nature. I think about the women in my membership. I want to please them. I want them to receive so much value from this work that we're doing. I want to overdeliver. But I don't want to do it from a place of not enoughness and scarcity and fear.

Because when you live your life that way, guess what you create more of? Scarcity, not enoughness, and fear. And like I said, I've had so many lessons coming up from this year, but I'm only going to share three; three of the big ones.

And the last one is around decisions. And that is a big life requires that you make big decisions. Life meets you at the level of your decisions. And this year has been a big year for me. And when I look back as to why, it's the year I've made the biggest decisions in my life; decisions that scared me. I felt nauseous. I was having a lot of anxiety around them. I had my brain freak out on a regular basis for about 30 days.

And I had my own back on my decisions. I did not make them and back out of them. What I did do is I managed my brain around my decisions. So, I've already mentioned some of the big decisions that I've made this year, but I want to talk about them a little bit more so that hopefully my experience and my process will support you in some way.

So, back in March, April, I had a lot of time with myself, did a lot of journaling. And I asked myself questions like, "What are you ready to let go of? What do you want more of? What feels complete? What are you ready to say yes to? And what are you ready to say no to?"

And these kinds of questions are powerful when you sit down and you trust the answers that come up for you, no matter how scary they are. Because my answers were scary. And do you know why they were scary? Because they required a big



## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

decision. One of them being leaving an almost eight-year relationship with an incredible man.

And there were many factors that went into it. And I don't need to go into the details about it. But it was things that have been weighing on my heart for a while and I believe just that time alone gave me a chance to just be honest with myself.

And that decision was, "You need to go." But then, the question was, like, "Where do you want to go?" And I just decided to pick a place. And I picked Denver, Colorado. I wanted to be in a city. And I love Colorado. I do love this state.

And so, I made the decision to leave the relationship and move to Denver. Two big decisions, especially when you consider I haven't lived alone, except when I went through my first divorce, I lived alone for a while. But that's been many, many years ago.

And so, of course, my brain started to freak out. Like, "You're going to be so lonely. Can you do this on your own? What are you doing? It's not a bad relationship." Which is another topic. Why do we have to wait until relationships are so horrible to leave? Why can't we just leave because we're being called for something else? We're being called to evolve? But again, that's a whole different conversation.

And I followed through on my decisions. Because there have been times in the past where I've wanted to make a decision and I've made it and then I've backed out. And that is so disempowering. It's gathering evidence that you can't trust yourself. It's gathering evidence that you're not strong enough.

I don't want to gather evidence for such terrible beliefs. Do you know what I want to gather evidence for? That I'm a strong woman that is decisive and has her own back on her decisions. And so, within the process of a few weeks, I had a moving company come and get my things. Lots of tears, lots of beautiful conversations, and I found a beautiful place in Denver and I moved.

And I'm thinking about it now. I could have done all of that without the mind drama. But that's part of being a human. That's part of the stuff that we have to work through. It could have been as simple as, "I'm leaving. I'm moving to an apartment. I'm coming to get my things."



## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

But part of the human experience is all of the thoughts. Because we have so many emotions wrapped up around relationships and experiences. And so, I had to work through all of that. So, those were two big decisions, big audacious decisions to leave a relationship and move to a new city on my own.

The third one was when I was doing this reflection, it became very clear to me – and I was a little shocked by it – that French Kiss Life was complete. I have been running this company and this brand for a decade. And it will forever be a part of who I am.

And nothing delights me more than to see a #frenchkisslife on Instagram and to see what all of the amazing women in the community are up to and how they're celebrating their everyday and living with more elegance, style, and joie de vivre. And it felt complete.

And if you think I cried over the relationship, when I thought about my relationship with my business and letting that go, I cried for days. Because here's the thing; it was good. It was growing. It was better than it's ever been. And that's sometimes when it's the hardest to let something go; when it's good.

It's easy to let things go when it's not so good. But when things are good and you decide to leave it, that's when it's even harder. But it was so clear to me in my gut that I was ready to evolve into the next version of me. And when I sat with my journaling and was reflecting on the last 10 years, it became so obvious what the next iteration was going to be. And that is supporting women around transforming their self-image. Because your self-image is creating your entire life.

And when I look back to my trips to Paris, when I look back over my programs, when I look back over the thousands of women I've coached, it's around helping them transform how they see themselves in their career and their relationships with their body and their health. Because when you elevate how you see yourself, you create different results in the world.

And so, back in October, I opened up the School of Self-Image. It's a monthly membership. And I could not be more proud of the work that we're doing in there. But I, even more deeply, could not be more proud of myself for having the courage to do that.

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

I want you to remember that life will meet you at the level of your decisions. If you keep making small familiar ordinary decisions, it's going to lead to a small, familiar, and ordinary life. And there's nothing wrong with that, if that's what you want. But I believe we're here to grow and evolve and to be amazed with our own lives. And that takes a lot of courage. And it takes big, audacious decisions.

And when you make them, it's going to lead to a big and audacious life. So, I just want you to think about what decisions are you being called to make? And will you create the courage to make them? That courage is yours, my friend.

And I will tell you, 2020 has taught me that that is not easy. But did you come here to live an easy life? Or did you come here to live an extraordinary one? I'm choosing the latter. And I'm willing to feel all of the big feelings that come with that decision. And I'm willing to have my own back.

And that's what I've done this year. I've had my own back in all of it, more than ever in the history of Tonya. I've allowed people to be upset with me and I've loved them anyway. I've practiced pleasing myself so that I can serve on a bigger level. I've controlled my own narrative. I've been writing the story that I want to live into, not the story that everyone else tells me I should be telling.

And I've made big, audacious decisions in 2020. And yes, I have been so amazed. I am grateful for 2020. I am looking for the lessons in it. And I really encourage you to do the same because the story you tell about this year is going to impact how you show up for next year.

And right now, you can rewrite your narrative about 2020 and I encourage you to do so. Create a narrative that inspires you, that excites you, that gets you excited about the possibilities of not only 2021, but all of the years of your future. That's what I'm going to be doing.

I am so grateful for you. I am truly amazed with the women in this community. And I cannot emphasize enough how honored I am to show up on this podcast every single Wednesday and talk in your ear about how to live an extraordinary life. Thank you, my friends.

And next week, I'm going to be sharing with you my word of the year. And I'm giving it a little twist, so you may want to tune in. It's going to be a good one.

## Top 3 Lessons Learned in 2020

Have a beautiful holiday, everyone. Much, much love to you. Blessings to you and your family. And I look forward to seeing 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 Three Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs, by visiting [frenchkisslife.com/mindset](https://frenchkisslife.com/mindset). Because, after all, mindset is the new black.