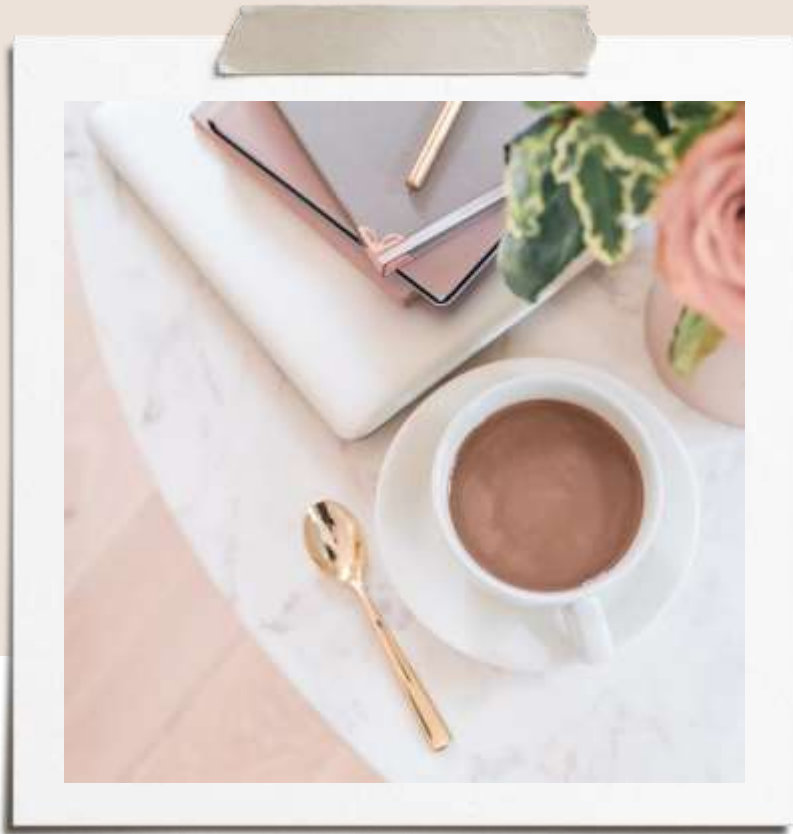


VIDEO TRANSCRIPT



EPISODE 217

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## The Art of Becoming

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## The Art of Becoming

One of my favorite quotes is by Anaïs Nin where she says, “And the day came when the risk remained tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” The moment you decide to blossom is the moment you decide to embrace the art of becoming, which is what this episode is all about.

Welcome to the School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here’s your hostess, master life coach Tonya Leigh.

Hello, my beautiful friends. Did you know, it is my birthday week. And I have had the best birthday ever. I celebrated with some friends. We had a very small get together. And one of my dear friends had the most gorgeous cake made for me. It was topped with macarons and gold glitter down the side. It was the most beautiful, feminine cake ever. And we listened to good music. We had good food. And as always, we had great conversation.

And it’s interesting. Every year around my birthday, I start to think about the woman I’ve become and I’m always curious about who I’m going to be five years from now and how she’s going to be different than the woman I am today. And that actually inspired this week’s podcast.

I want to talk about the art of becoming. One of the ladies in the School of Self-Image membership asked the question about my becoming. And what she said is that she keeps revisiting before and after pictures of me and her brain just can’t fathom that I’m the same woman.

She’s always seen me in a certain way. It’s hard for her to think about me being that before person. And she was asking, what is the process like of becoming? What has to happen for you to have a radical transformation, which I personally feel like I’ve had in my life; everything from how I speak to how I dress, to my hair, to even my body. It’s completely different than it was in all of those before photos that some of you have seen.

And so, I wanted to have a conversation around the art of becoming and what I have discovered you need to focus on in that process. And I feel like focusing on these things decreases the overwhelm that we often experience when we have a big vision for our lives but it seems so far from where we are.

It’s just like when I was over 200 pounds. The idea of losing 70 pounds created so much resistance and anxiety and fear and doubt within me that it was so hard for me to even imagine it. Like, I could decide that that’s what I wanted for myself. But the process of actually going through that just felt so overwhelming.

The same goes with my business when I first started my business. I knew where I wanted to be, but I was a newbie. I was just starting out. The thought of how to get there and what that was

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going to be like was so overwhelming. And that's why a lot of people don't actually go for it. Because it feels too overwhelming.

But what if it didn't have to be? What if there were some things that you could focus on that would decrease the overwhelm and bring it back to a daily practice, which is what I want to talk about on this episode.

So, in the process of becoming, I was thinking about my own journey and what I focused on every single day that has led to big results over time. And the first one is I started to practice focusing forward, focusing on the future instead of constantly looking towards the past. So, in order to do that, it's important that you have a vision for your life, you have goals for yourself, and then you can begin to line up with it.

So, for example, let's just use my weight. For a long time, what I would do is I would focus on my past; all of my failed weight loss attempts, all of the times that I had disappointed myself, how hard it had been in the past. And the more I focused on that, guess what I kept creating more of. Yep, my past.

But when I started to practice focusing on my future, focusing on where I wanted to go, who I wanted to be, how I wanted to be with my body and with food, how I wanted to feel in my body and around food, and I began to practice that on a daily basis, I started to create my future instead of constantly recreating my past. Which is why it's so important that you all have goals for yourself.

Because if you don't have something to look forward to, your brain is automatically going to look towards the past. You have to give your brain direction. It's just like kids. My grandmother used to say – what was the quote she used? “An idle mind is the Devil's workshop.” She used to say that all of the time.

That's why, with kids, we need to have things planned for them. They need to have extracurricular activities. They need structure. They need sports that they can play or instruments that they can play. Because if not, what happens in their brains? Usually, they get up to a lot of mischief. Well, we're no different, adults. We need to give our brains direction and focus.

If not, it's going to go to all the mistakes you think you've made, how you think you're not good enough, to all of the things of the past. But when you have goals that you're looking forward to, you can begin to ask yourself, who do I need to become? What do I need to practice today to line me up with those goals? So, that's the first focus of becoming; focusing forward, focusing towards your future.

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The second focus is to focus on feelings. I know a lot of y'all don't want to talk about your feelings. But it's so important. Your feelings are the GPS system of your life. They tell you when you're on track and when you're off track.

Now, what we often do is we want to suppress our feelings. We want to eat them away, shop them away, work them away. We want to do things to avoid our feelings. And what we're doing is we're turning off the GPS system to our life.

When you allow feelings and you understand the thoughts creating them, that's when you can get back on track. And so, in the art of becoming, it's so important as women that we tap into our emotions. Are you feeling sad? Are you feeling angry? Are you feeling joyful? Are you feeling excited, happy, glad, mad? And begin to identify your feeling state.

Because the goal is to line up your feelings with your future. So, what does this look like? Well, remember this. The reason why you want anything is because of the feeling that you think that thing will give you.

Now, in order to have that thing, you need to feel the feelings of already having it. In the art of becoming for me personally, I would imagine, what would it feel like to not struggle with my weight? What would it feel like to have a slim body? And I would immediately go to feelings like confidence, sexy, happy, peaceful.

But here's the thing, you all; a body doesn't give you that. There are many women who are walking with a size two body, and I actually got down to a size two very unhealthily, and I wasn't confident. I wasn't happy. I wasn't feeling sexy. I was miserable. I was scared because of the way I had gone about it. And so, what ended up happening is I ended up gaining the weight back.

So, when I started to focus on feelings, everything changed. I started to practice being confident in the body I had. I started to practice feeling sexy in the body I had. I practiced starting to feel happy in the life I had. And as I did that, guess what ended up happening? I wasn't reaching for food to stuff down my emotional life. I was instead feeling the emotions of what I wanted to have for myself and I didn't need to reach for food as an escape from my life because I was starting to enjoy my life more.

So, I want you all to think about that. What is that thing that you are so wanting? What is your goal and how do you think you will feel over there? because in the art of becoming, you begin to feel that emotion in the life you have right now. So, focus forward, focus on feelings.

The third thing that you need to focus on in the art of becoming are the things that you can change. If you begin to focus on the things that you can't change in this moment, you're going to feel disempowered and defeated. If you're trying to change your husband in order for you to feel better, in order for you to become your future self, you've set yourself up to lose.

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Because you can't change other people. And there are certain things that you can't change in this current circumstance. So, why waste your energy trying to change things that you can't change? I want you to focus on what can I change in this moment? And it's always going to come back to you.

So, for example, when I was extremely overweight, I could not change the scale in that moment to read 10 pounds less. But I spent so much of my energy and time trying to change that number. But in the moment, I weighed what I weighed. What I could change were my thoughts about the number.

What I could change was my thoughts about myself, about what's possible for me. I could change how I was showing up. I could change my outfit a little bit, to put on something that made me feel a little bit better.

So, I started to focus on the things that I could change in that moment. and what ended up happening is I felt more empowered. I felt like I had more control over myself. Because as long as I was trying to change the unchangeable, I felt out of control. But when I focus on what I could change, I started to feel in control of my life.

So, what can you change in this moment that will put you in an energetic alignment with what you want for yourself? What can you change in this moment that helps you to feel the way you think you're going to feel over there when you've reached your goal? Focus on the things that you can change.

The other thing that I focused on that, in the moment, didn't seem like a lot, but over time has created a completely different life, is I focused on the tiny daily changes. Here's the thing with the tiny daily changes. They're not that sexy in the moment. They don't create a big result that you can see immediately. But they have a cumulative effect.

And that's why, when I think about the art of becoming and my own becoming process, it was these little daily changes that I didn't even experience in the moment. I couldn't see the effects of them. But over the course of six months, then a year, and then two years, and then five years, I look back and I realize how powerful they were in my life and they continue to be. These tiny daily changes are rewiring your brain. They are elevating your self-image. And over time, they completely transform your life and what you're experiencing.

I've had someone that has recently come into my life and we were talking the other night and he was like, "I just rarely have met a woman like you who is so chill and not petty and level-headed." And I was laughing, like, "Well, listen, if you'd met me over 10 years ago, you would not be saying that about me."

He's looking at my after. He didn't know my before and the process that I had to go through to become the woman that he sees today. For example, the number of times I was triggered and

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that old response of wanting to be passive aggressive or criticized or complain or be bitter, he didn't see those moments where I was like, "Deep breaths, Tonya. Let's really look at what's going on within you and think something that feels a little bit better that leads to a better response."

Over time, doing that has created a woman where I am pretty chill. I do think I'm pretty level-headed. I'm not petty. But that's not who I've always been. I didn't come into the world like that. Actually, I think we all come into the world pretty chill but we get trained out of it because of life.

But today, I am that woman. But the process of becoming her has been years in the making, of practicing showing up a little bit different, making that tiny daily change that, again, has created a cumulative effect in my life of my after story.

The same with my style. Again, women will say to me, "You look like you've always been stylish." They didn't see me when I was wearing clothes from Kmart trying to put together a decent outfit and filing miserably. But it was practicing trying a new style, putting a little bit of effort in every single day until, one day, I was like, "Okay, I know how to do this now."

But the process of becoming her was in these tiny daily changes. It was going through five bad haircuts and hair colors to finally find something that complemented me. It was wearing an accessory every single day and feeling a little bit better and seeing myself in a different way that planted that seed in my head of, "Maybe I am a stylish woman." That's what the process of becoming looks like. It's so often slow and little increments that, in the process, you can't really see it or feel it.

Maybe you feel a little bit better, but if you keep going after it, over time, you're going to see yourself in a completely different way. And you will have created very different results in your life in the process as well.

So, in the art of becoming, when we look at the tiny daily changes that you can focus on, I always think about three different areas. And these are the three areas that we work on within the School of Self-Image. The first one is mindset; thinking a thought that feels a little bit better and looking for evidence for it.

As I tell my clients, it's very difficult to go from, "I'm not enough," to, "I'm amazing." The cognitive dissonance will not allow you to do that. Your brain is going to be like, "You're lying." And it's not because you're not amazing, because you are. But it's because you've practiced, "I'm not enough," for so long and you have a lot of evidence to prove that true, that if you try to make that big of a leap, it's often impossible for most people.

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We have to gradually make steps towards that direction. So, it's thinking something that feels a little bit better. Maybe it's, "I am an amazing friend. I am a good mom. I cook a great casserole." It doesn't matter, as long as it feels better, right?

And over time, if you keep reaching for better feeling thoughts, what happens is you feel a little bit better. You're more aligned with the woman you're becoming. And eventually, you will get to that point where you look in the mirror and you're like, "I am amazing. I love myself madly." But in the process of becoming, it's those little tiny daily habits, the changes in your habits when it comes to your mindset that will lead you to where you want to go if you stick with it.

The other area is around your style, how you're showing up in the world. And it's not just about what you wear. It's how you carry yourself. If you spend all day really focusing on your posture and holding yourself highly, it's going to impact how you feel about yourself, how you see yourself for that day.

And that's going to spill over into what you do and how you speak to other people, and that's going to have an effect. You're going to start to think differently about yourself. And as you begin to think differently about yourself, it's going to continue to reinforce you showing up differently.

Putting on an outfit that makes you feel like a million bucks has an effect. Imagine focusing forward and constantly making these tiny daily changes to help you align with the woman you're becoming and the way you're showing up in the world. Over time, you'll have your own after story.

And people may be saying to you what they say to me, "I can't believe you were ever that woman you talk about because that's not how we see you now." But in the becoming process you have to be willing to go through these tiny daily changes and trust in the process, trust that if you stick with it long enough, you're going to become it.

And then the other area where you can focus on tiny daily changes is in your surroundings, in your environment. People used to joke with me because I talked about how flowers can change your life. But I swear to you all, by having fresh flowers in my house for years now, it has literally changed how I see myself. I see myself as a woman who is deserving of beauty, who cares about her environment, who really cherishes quality things, simply by having a vase of flowers on my table at all times. And that has spilled over into other areas of my life.

Changing just one person that you're hanging out with can have an exponential impact on your life. The books you read, the TV you watch, the music you listen to, it's all impacting you. Do you like the impact that it's having? If not, begin to elevate these everyday experiences in your life. Because that's what happens in the art of becoming.

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You are constantly tweaking your mindset, your style, and your environment to align with who you are becoming. And then, the final focus in the art of becoming is to focus on the practice. A lot of you all are so tied up in the end result and focusing on your lack of not being there yet that it creates this defeated feeling within yourself and you give up way too soon.

And for me, really believe that the reason why I have become the woman that I am today is that I fell in love with the practice more than the end result. Every day, I wake up and think about I get to practice being the woman I want to be today. Just today.

And sometimes, I fail miserably at it. Sometimes, I'm disappointed in myself and I realize that too is part of the practice. But many times, I'll have clients say to me, "But Tonya, is there a day when you get there?" It's like they're so wanting to get somewhere other than where they are that they miss out on today is the day that you get to practice. Today is the day that you get to really enjoy being you.

Because if you think about the woman you want to become, she enjoys being her. So, you have to enjoy being you today and enjoy the practice of becoming who you want to be.

And if you think about athletes, the ones that are the greatest in their sports are the ones that are committed to the practice. And as I tell clients all the time, you get good at what you practice. Are you practicing your own becoming? Or are you focused on not being her yet? Which then makes you resent the practice.

I love the practice. And the practice often presents itself in life's greatest challenges, when you feel like you've hit rock bottom. That's when you need to practice it the most and realize who you truly are, which is extraordinary. So, the art of becoming is about focusing on these areas, focusing forward towards your future, focusing on your feelings, noticing when you're on track and when you're off track and really practicing the feelings of the woman you're becoming as you are today. Focusing on the things that you can change, focusing on the tiny daily changes that are available to you, that will put you more in alignment with who you want to be, and then focusing on the practice.

If you focus on those five things, you will become the woman you want to be. But you have to commit to becoming her. Don't give up on yourself. Don't throw in the towel. It's in those moments you get to see what you're really made of. And let me tell you, the woman you want to be is strong, she's extraordinary, and she never, ever gives up on herself.

So, let me give you a little practice on the art of becoming that I really want you to think about this week. First of all, focusing forward, what is your goal for this year? And I really want you to think about who you have to become to create that goal for yourself.



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As far as the feelings, focusing on feelings, I want you to imagine that you've reached that goal and how does it feel? What is the feeling that you're after? Because you need to begin to create that feeling in the life you have today so you can be a match for what it is that you want.

Today, what can you change in order to align with the woman who's created that goal? What are some actions that you can take from where you are that will lead you in that direction? What are the tiny daily changes that you can begin to practice in your life when it comes to your mindset, your style, and surroundings that will align you with that woman?

And then, what does that daily practice look like for you? For me, it always comes down to managing my mind, showing up on purpose, and curating surroundings that really foster my growth and align me with who I want to become. That is what the art of becoming looks like on a daily basis.

And if you want to practice this with an extraordinary community of women, I highly encourage you to join us within the School of Self-Image. We're about to close the doors and I'm actually going to be leading women through the Dream Atelier process, which is one of my most popular programs that I'm including within the School of Self-Image, where you learn a framework that I use to turn dreams into reality 30 days at a time. It is a super-powerful process that I cannot wait to teach you all within the School of Self-Image.

So, come and join us. You can head over to [schoolofselfimage.com/join](https://schoolofselfimage.com/join) and I can't wait to see you inside. It is a phenomenal membership. I am so thrilled to see women's before and afters that are already happening within the school.

We are practicing the art of becoming. And I think it's one of the most powerful practices you will ever, ever learn in your life, if you are committed to your own growth, your own evolution, and your own becoming. So, I look forward to seeing you within the membership and, of course, as always, I look forward to seeing you on the next episode. Cheers.

Hey, are you ready to transform your self-image but lack direction and support? If so, I'd like to invite you to join the School of Self-Image. This is an exclusive monthly membership where you'll create your own powerful before and after story. Through weekly classes and coaching, you'll learn powerful techniques on how to elevate the quality of your mindset, style, and surroundings to change how you see yourself and create extraordinary results in your life. Head over to [schoolofselfimage.com/join](https://schoolofselfimage.com/join) to learn more.