

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT



EPISODE 253

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# Overcoming Upper Limits

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## Overcoming Upper Limits

Have you ever been making progress towards your goals, or even finally achieved the result that you've been working so hard to achieve, and all of a sudden you find yourself doing crazy things and subconsciously sabotaging yourself?

Listen, all that's happened here is that you've hit an upper limit. It's a part of the journey. And in this episode, I'm going to share with you why that happens, how you can overcome it, and ultimately, I just want to convince you that it is safe to be successful. It is safe to have abundance. It's safe to create achievements. So, let's dive into this episode.

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

What is happening, my friends? Oh my goodness, I'm so delighted to be recording this podcast. I'm just delighted with life right now. It's been a whirlwind couple of months, but I'm finally settled into my new place in Denver and we're having our first cold front come through. So, I've got a sweater on and I'm actually looking forward to some cooler weather. My mom just left this morning. I had a wonderful visit with her. Yeah, it's just like now I'm ready to take a sigh.

For those of you who've been following along on my crazy journey over the last couple of months, you know what I'm talking about. But nevertheless, today I want to talk about overcoming your upper limit.

Years ago, I read the great book by Gay Hendricks called *The Big Leap*. And in that book, he talks about upper limits. And all of a sudden, it made so much sense to me, why I had been sabotaging myself for so many years.

And this is something I hear so often from many of you. You have dreams. You have goals. You have things that you want to achieve and yet you find yourself sabotaging yourself over and over. And you're wondering, "What is wrong with me? Why can't I do this?"

Well, I'm here to tell you that you can. And it's understanding how your brain works and how to work with your brain instead of against it. Which if we don't have the proper tools, we just innately work against our own selves.

And all of this has everything to do with your self-image. It just came together for me last week because I was hitting my own upper limit. I keep hitting them. You know, you keep setting goals for yourself and it requires that you grow. It requires that you birth a new version of yourself. And so, inevitably, as we go after our dreams and goals, we're constantly going to be bumping up against our upper limit.

I like to describe an upper limit as how much feel-good you allow yourself to have. Each of us has this internal thermostat that is set to how much love and success and fun and creativity

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that we allow ourselves to enjoy. And it's formed in us from childhood. It states, "This is what I am willing to experience in terms of my upper limit."

So, the way this looks for most of us is that we start to make progress towards our goals and our dreams. Maybe you start losing weight. Maybe you start making more money. Maybe you attract an incredible relationship into your life. Maybe you get the promotion. And things are going so well until you hit that upper limit.

And as soon as you do, it becomes so uncomfortable because it's outside of your current thermostat. You're set at 75 and that takes you to 80 degrees and it starts to feel so uncomfortable. You're hitting upon the edge of your self-image. That's really what's happening. And so, then we will do some crazy things to subconsciously sabotage ourselves.

So, for me, when I was hitting my upper limit recently, I walked into my new apartment. And let me tell you all, it is gorgeous. I'm going to be doing some behind-the-scenes for the School of Self-Image so you can see it. But you have to keep in mind, I come from very humble beginnings.

I grew up in a trailer. And then I lived in a very small house with my first husband. And then we got divorced and I moved back in with my mom and dad. And then I moved into a little tiny apartment and then, you know, I kept upgrading a little bit.

But when I walked into this place, I felt so uncomfortable. In a beautiful way. In many ways, I've been envisioning myself being in a place like this for a long time. And my last apartment was gorgeous. But this one, to me, is even more up-leveled. And it's crazy how it all unfolded. It's less expensive and even more beautiful, in my eyes.

But I just found myself feeling, like, elated. In the beginning I'm like, "Oh my goodness. This is so beautiful." And then I started to worry. And that is the first symptom that you've hit your upper limit. You start to worry, "Am I going to be able to keep this up? What are people going to think? This is too good to be true. The shoe's about to drop."

You start to have all these worrisome thoughts. And I've hit so many upper limits now, I just know that I'm hitting an upper limit. But if you're not mindful, you'll start to sabotage yourself. Instead of stepping into it and enjoying it, you'll find yourself maybe starting arguments with your spouse or a friend.

Maybe you'll find yourself deflecting. So, someone might say to you, "You did such a great job." And you'll be like, "It wasn't that great." Or, "I worked really hard." It's like you don't just own it.

You may also find yourself getting sick. There have been two times that I can remember where I hit a big upper limit and I could feel myself just contracting. And within days of that, I started

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getting sick. One year I got the flu, which I never get the flu. And another time, I got a really bad case of bronchitis.

For some of you, you may find yourself reverting back to old, unhelpful behaviors such as overeating, over-shopping. Maybe you find yourself doing something you haven't done in years that's sabotaging yourself. These are often signs that you're hitting an upper limit.

So, how do we overcome it? Because it's inevitably going to happen because what's really happening is you are getting out of your comfort zone. You're getting out of a familiar state.

Unfortunately, far too many of us have an emotional thermostat that is set at a low energy. Maybe it's you're accustomed to worrying a lot. Maybe you're accustomed to feeling apathetic or maybe a little frustrated. Or maybe your set as feeling sad.

And then all of a sudden, you have this experience where you're feeling joyful and excited and it's so far out of what you're accustomed to feeling that your brain's like, "This isn't safe." Even though it's so much safer than where you were. But it's unfamiliar.

And so, the brain will work subconsciously to cause you to sabotage yourself unless you can understand that you've hit an upper limit – and here's the secret sauce, my friends – you're willing to step into it and feel the discomfort that comes along with it.

Yes, sometimes it's uncomfortable to be successful. Sometimes it's uncomfortable to be happy. Sometimes, it's uncomfortable to be content. Sometimes, it's uncomfortable to live in a state of abundance. Why? Only because we haven't practiced it enough and it's not a part of our self-image.

So, the other day, when I had that brief moment, it was really brief because I know how to work through it much more quickly now. Because I coach myself all of the time. But what I did is I just realized I was having an upper limit, and I was like, "Let's go." I literally visualize myself as I'm walking down the hallway of my new place, I visualize myself walking through the upper limit and getting to the other side of it.

The way I like to describe it to my clients is, imagine there's a line and it's where you are now. And then there's a line above it of where you're going. And then, there's the space in between. And often, what we do is we start marching towards that upper line and it feels exciting, it feels good, and then, "Oh my god, it's terrifying. I'm getting there. I'm there."

And all the time you're having so much energy in your body and you don't know how to process it. So, your mind tells you to run back; run back to that lower-level line. Because that is safe. And if you listen to that part of your brain, that's exactly what you'll do. But if you understand, it's just an emotion, it's just a feeling in your body.

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And if you can learn how to feel it and keep walking towards it instead of running away from it, all of a sudden, you'll be on the other side of that upper limit. And then guess what happens. It's just a part of who you are. Within a day of being in this apartment, it's just who I am now.

I'm like, "Yeah, this is where I live. It's beautiful. I've worked hard. I deserve this. I'm so happy to be here. I'm just ecstatic." And that's because I was willing to keep walking through that upper limit.

And watching my own brain and also in coaching so many women, I've been looking at why. It's always because we're afraid. Always. But what are we afraid of? And a lot of us are afraid that we're going to be found out. Imposter syndrome.

So, we've worked hard. We've created success and all of a sudden we're there and we're sitting maybe in the office or the penthouse or on the beach. And all of a sudden, we're like, "Oh my god, someone's going to find out that I'm fundamentally flawed, that I don't deserve this, that I don't belong."

And with that type of thinking and the shame that we think we'll feel if we think we're going to be found out, we will sabotage ourselves so that we won't be exposed. So, what we have to understand here is that all of that drama in our heads is just our brain's way of trying to get us to run back to safety. Even though nothing we want is back there.

It's actually unsafe to be back there. But because we lived in it for so long and we survived in it, we think it's safe. Actually, where you are now is where you're meant to be. So, you have to be willing to feel that discomfort, manage your brain around it, and own that space that you're in. And remind yourself of why you are there, the commitments that you've made, the work that you put in, the hours that nobody even sees that were put into you creating that result for yourself. You have to keep reminding yourself of that.

The other reason why so many of us are afraid – and I've coached a lot of women around this – is they're afraid that if they're successful, in whatever it is – it could be around weight loss. It could be around making money. It could be around meeting the love of your life – there's this internal fear that you're going to be abandoned. Y'all know what I'm talking about. Some of you have dealt with this.

You're afraid that maybe your family won't approve of you. You're afraid that your friends won't want to hang out with you any longer. You're afraid that you will be alone if you're too big, if you're too successful. That's another fear that I've seen.

Another fear that I hear a lot is that you're afraid of being too much. You're afraid of outshining other people. You are afraid, if you create these amazing results in your life, that you're going to make others feel bad.

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But I want you to turn that around. Because what I have found is that the life I have lived has been way more inspiring than it has been making others feel bad.

Now, if someone feels bad because of the results that I've created in my life, then that's because of their thinking. And almost always, it's because they've limited themselves. They've seen something I've created, or maybe you've created. And they feel bad because, deep down, they don't think that they can do it for themselves.

Which is why I love the work that I do. Because I destroy that BS. I'm like, "Listen, if I can do it, there is no reason why you can't." But us being good people – and a lot of us are people pleasers and we want everyone around us to feel good – we have this fear that if we live a big audacious life, then we're going to make other people feel bad.

But you can't make other people feel bad. People feel bad because of the thoughts in their head. So, if you're in my world and I am your coach, I am going to encourage you to turn it up even more, to see how much discomfort you are willing to feel and you being the shining example of you. And over time, if you do that enough, it will be your new norm. You'll realize that everything you want is in that space of you being the biggest version of yourself.

And again, this all comes back down to you being willing to feel the discomfort that comes with hitting these upper limits.

The final fear that I've seen a lot, I've certainly experienced, is the fear of losing it. And so, because that's your fear, if you keep focusing on it, you ultimately will create that result because that's just how the brain works. And I've seen this time and time again in my life; losing weight and then getting to my ideal weight and then freaking out and thinking, "Oh my god, I can't keep this up. I'm not going to continue to maintain this weight." And then all of a sudden, the scale goes back up.

And all of that was because I never created the self-image. I never stuck with that discomfort long enough and kept thinking and behaving and showing up as a woman at that weight in that body. In my mind, I was still the old version of me.

And so, of course, when I hit that upper limit, I just went right back to that default thinking, which created the old results of weight gain. So, I see this a lot too. Women will start to make more money in their businesses. And they'll be so excited for a moment and then they're like, "I don't know if I can keep this up. This is too good to be true."

And if we can intercept that thinking quickly enough and they can work through it, they can go on to continue to grow their income. But if not, they will subconsciously sabotage themselves because they were focused on losing it, they will take actions in their business, or inaction, to prove themselves true.

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So, if you find yourself hitting an upper limit, maybe you've bought the house. Maybe your business is growing. Maybe you've paid off debt and you're feeling good, you're achieving results and all of a sudden it starts to become too much and it's way uncomfortable. And your brain is trying to convince you that it's not safe, the only thing that I know to do to overcome that is you have to create a new self-image.

You have to create the image of the woman who is comfortable in that result. And ironically, the only way to do that is to feel the discomfort of being out of your old thermostat set point.

So, as I was saying earlier, you have to continue to walk through the discomfort. Feel it. Don't listen to what it's telling you to do. Because it's going to tell you to do things that's going to take you back to your old results. It's going to tell you to do things that's going to sabotage all of the hard work that you've put in.

You can't listen to that voice. You have to listen to the future you, the woman that you're becoming who's on the other side of it, that's telling you, "Hey, sister, my love, my darling, this is yours. Enjoy it. Celebrate it. You're just going to keep growing. It's going to keep getting better. And you're going to keep stronger. So, even if challenges come your way, guess what? You've got what it takes to overcome it. So, you can relax because, you know what? You have your own back."

And if you can talk to yourself like that and you can hold your hand through these uncomfortable upper limits that you're going to go through, I promise you this; you are going to get to the other side. And on the other side is just a new normal. Have a beautiful week, my friends. I love you all and I cannot wait to see you in next week's episode.

Hey, have you grabbed your free copy of the School of Self-Image Manifesto? If not, what in the world? Head over to [schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto](https://schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto) and get a copy that teaches you how to think and show up in the areas of mindset, style, and surroundings so that you can transform your self-image.