

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT



EPISODE 289

5 Reasons Why I Journal

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5 Reasons Why I Journal

This episode is for all of my dear friends who don't like to journal. My intention is to not only convince you that it is a way to transform your self-image, but also to get you to actually do it.

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

Hey, gorgeous friends. Welcome back to another episode of *The School of Self-Image Podcast*. It has been a busy week around here, my friends. I had my parents and my niece, who came for a week. And then they left, and two days later, my man's family came, and we have a one-year-old running around my house. And he is the cutest thing ever.

But I'm not used to having one-year-olds around. But I'm just soaking up every moment. We are having so much fun. We are playing games and going out to dinner and sitting around and chatting. And then, during the day, I have like three hours blocked off where I am just head-down getting work done, which is the time that I'm recording this podcast. I sent them all out to have breakfast so I could get some work done.

And I was sitting here and, I don't know why, I was compelled to go and look at reviews for the podcast because it's something I rarely ever do. And oh, my goodness, you all. First of all, for those of you who have taken the time to go into Apple and write a review, I just want to say thank you from the depth of my heart for doing that.

I know it's time out of your day. It means so much to me. And I also want to encourage you, if you have not left a review and you enjoy this podcast please do. And the reason why I ask you is that it helps this podcast get seen by more people. And when I read all of the transformations that are happening just from women who are listening to the podcast – they're not even doing my program – it just made my heart so happy. And I wanted to share one with you.

This is from MomOf3Pros. And the title of her review says, "Wanting to change finally clicked." Here's what she said, "I'm so thrilled that I found Tonya about four years ago. It was the golden ticket to my transformation, for the dreams and goals I had secretly within me to be brought forth and accomplished. I was an insecure, mousy person when it came to standing up for myself. And Tonya reached into my life and helped me to see who I am, and my future self has begun to be reality. I am no longer ashamed or afraid to be myself and be that strong woman who unapologetically takes good care of herself. I have lost over 75 pounds..." What? This is so fun, "Advanced my career, stepped up my image, and my environment, even my car. There is more coming. You deserve to have your own back. Sign up for the School of Self-Image. Your transformation awaits. I love you, Tonya."

MomOf3Pros, I love you back. Please email us. Let me know who you are because I don't know who MomOf3Pros is, but I'm so proud of you. And thank you for leaving that review. And this is what happens, you all, when you change your self-image. I know I keep preaching this, but

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it's just the way it works. And that's why I want to talk about using journaling to change your self-image in this episode.

I was journaling this morning and thinking about when I first started journaling over 10 years ago, and how this one practice has completely changed my life. And I'm saying this to those of you who do not like journaling. You know who I'm talking to. I talk to you all within the membership. You have a lot of resistance around it. You don't like it.

You think it's too hard. You think you're doing it wrong. How many of you all think that? Like, "I don't know how to journal..." And some of you just don't think it works. But I'm here to tell you, it 100% works.

Now, I also want to acknowledge that journaling is not a requirement to live an extraordinary life. There are many different ways to reach your goals and to grow and to evolve, but I'm just sharing with you my experience and why I want to encourage you to consider creating a journal practice for yourself.

Journaling has been the number-one way, or let me just say the number-one tool that I have used to transform my self-image, and therefore my entire life. At the Business Image Mastermind a few weeks ago, I shared some of my journal writings from years ago, and it's crazy how the things that I wrote three, five years ago, I am now living.

The question becomes, would I be living it had I not journaled it? And my answer is, "I don't think so." So, let me tell you five reasons why journaling will change your self-image. And I'm doing this to encourage you to consider having it as a practice in your own life.

The first thing that journaling offers you is an awareness of who you are and how you're thinking in this moment. So many people don't even know what they're thinking. They just wake up thinking the same thoughts day after day, never questioning them, never arguing against them, never challenging them.

They wake up thinking thoughts like, "I'm not good enough. Things never work out for me. This is going to be too hard. I don't have what it takes. I don't know what I want." And they accept these thoughts as truth. And whatever you believe to be true is what you'll create.

Journaling opened me up to be the witness to my own thinking. Until I started journaling, I didn't even know what was going on in this brain of mine. I just knew I was miserable, I was overwhelmed, I was overweight, I was over it. But I didn't understand why. And it was only until I started journaling that I could see the thoughts that had landed me in the place that I was in that moment and why I felt the way I felt.

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And so, with that awareness came this hope, this sense of possibility that maybe, just by changing my thinking, I could end up changing my entire life. And that's what I did one thought at a time. And I continue to do this.

I still have some crazy thoughts, y'all. In fact, the month of May was our best month in business. And I'm so proud of our team. I'm so excited about the work that we're doing and what's happening in the membership. And out of nowhere – in fact, it was last week – I woke up with so much anxiety. And I grabbed my journal and I just downloaded what was going on in my brain. And, lo and behold, there was the reason why I was feeling so much anxiety.

I saw, on paper, thoughts like, “You're not going to be able to create that again. What if that was the climax of your business journey? You won't be able to repeat that.” Just all of these thoughts that, in the past, before I started journaling, I would have never been able to access. I would have just been anxious all day without ever questioning it.

And there's something beautiful, you all, about putting your thoughts on paper because suddenly you are separated from them. And you can look at them. And the question I always ask myself and I ask my clients, I'm like, “Of all the thoughts that are available to us, why would we choose to focus on that one?”

So, for me, why would I choose to focus on a thought that says, “You won't be able to do that again?” That is just a thought. But when you think it and you feel that thought and then that feeling depicts how you show up in your life, you're going to prove yourself true.

I don't want to prove that thought true, but I wouldn't even know that that was the thought I was having, unless I put it down on paper.

So, I looked at it and I'm like, “Huh, that is just my scared, little Tonya who is afraid for me to go out in the world and do big things.” I love her, but she's not in the driver's seat. And so, I decided, once I saw that thought, I replaced it with, “Oh, honey, we are just getting started.” Now, that thought excites me. It makes me feel powerful and full of energy. And then, that state of being informs how I show up and what I do.

And I just get to prove to myself, “Oh, we were just getting started back in 2022.” Can you all see how this works? But the first thing you have to do is just be aware. And that is what journaling offers you. It offers you an awareness of what is going on in your brain. And you can put it down on paper, and here's the secret, you all, you cannot judge yourself.

This is where I see my clients mess up. They'll have some crazy thoughts because they have human brains. And then, they'll beat themselves up and say, “I shouldn't be thinking that.” Of course you should, because you have a brain, and your brain is afraid, and it doesn't want you to go out there and do big things in the world because it doesn't know that yet. It's not familiar with that.

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And the brain is afraid of the unknown, even if it's a positive unknown. So, of course you should be having these thoughts. Nothing has gone wrong. But first, you have to know, what am I thinking?

So, if you are feeling negative emotion most of the time, journaling is your ticket to freedom because you can start writing down all of these thoughts and understand exactly why you are feeling the way you're feeling. And then, one by one, you can begin to change those thoughts and therefore change your life.

I will say, probably the first three to four years of my journaling practice was just doing this; just being aware of my own thinking. It was such a new skill for me. It wasn't something I was used to. And I had a lot of stuff to unpack and to look at.

And so, again, the first part of my journal practice was just this awareness piece, just being aware of, "What am I thinking?" and how that thinking is impacting my life. But then, I started to move into the other way that journaling changes your self-image.

And that is, I started to use my journal practice as a way to dream and come up with ideas. Every day, I like to come up with 10 new ideas. And I have a journal that's dedicated to this. I keep it with me at all times. And it's a way for me to practice using my imagination to create something that is not created yet.

It's a way for me to practice that creative part of my brain. And so, sometimes it's like 10 new ideas for the membership, 10 new ideas for a podcast, 10 new ideas of how to be a better friend. I love this practice because, many times, we can think that there is a shortage of ideas, that we don't have anything original or new to put into the world.

And to me, that is just a result of being lazy with our own brains. We use so little of our brains on a day-to-day basis because, most of the time, we're just in autopilot anyway, and we're not forcing our brains to come up with new ideas, new solutions, and dreaming, and thinking of things that don't exist yet that potentially you want to bring into existence.

Now, this doesn't mean you have to take action on every idea that you have because then you'll end up being overwhelmed and not doing anything. The whole purpose of this is just to get your creative juices flowing.

One of the things that I'm always wanting to do is to make the School of Self-Image membership even better. And so, a lot of times, I will just sit down, and I'll ask myself, "How can I make this membership better? If I were to burn it down and restructure it, what would I do differently?" forcing my brain to think in ways that it hasn't been thinking.

Because we can get in just these ruts in terms of how we think because we're not asking more of ourselves. We're not asking our brain to operate at a higher level. Again, there is so much

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potential within that brain of yours. There are ideas and solutions and things that you are needing right now in your own life that you haven't been able to access simply because you're not asking that of yourself.

You are not demanding more of your own mind. So, for me, journaling is a way for me to, number one, have a date with my destiny, as Tony Robbins would say, to dream about my future, to think of ideas like, "Where do I want to live? What do I want my house to look like? What are new ideas for the membership? How can I take better care of myself? How can I be a better friend?" as I mentioned earlier, "What are some ways that I can elevate my every day?" and just coming up with idea after idea after idea.

And some of those ideas spark something deep within me and I'm like, "Ooh, that feels so aligned. That is an idea that I'm ready to take action on." But the whole purpose of the journal practice is just to exercise that part of my brain. And so, that is what happened.

I went from journaling for awareness – and I still do, when I'm having a negative emotion, when I feel stuck, when I'm facing a problem and I'm having a lot of anxiety around it, I will journal for awareness. I'm like, "What am I thinking right now?"

But a lot of my journaling these days is about that dreaming, the ideas, thinking from my future. I literally dream up ideas and solutions, and also new versions of me in this process. Like, who am I being three years from now? How is that version of me different from the version of me from today? And all of these things, little by little, tweak how I see myself.

And that leads me into the third reason why journaling changes your self-image, is that when you start to journal, you will notice that you're being more intentional. So, you go from awareness to dreaming and ideas, and then you start to use journaling as a way to be intentional about how you are thinking and living your day-to-day life.

Within the School of Self-Image, we do this journal practice called the Daily Three. And it is a structured way to journal out your day so that you are living it intentionally.

So, imagine every morning sitting down, becoming aware of what's going on in your brain, maybe playing around with coming up with some new ideas, just for fun, and then getting intentional about your day and writing it down. Something happens when you write something down. It's like a written command for your brain.

Instead of letting your brain run wild on default, it's you sitting down and deciding ahead of time who you're going to be, how you're going to think, how you want to feel for the day, how you're going to show up, how you're going to carry yourself. And over time, practicing this begins to inform your brain about this new image that you are stepping into.

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Now listen, you all, you're not going to do it perfectly. You're going to fail along the way. That's not a reason to give up. That's a reason to keep going. As I say, you get good at what you practice. So, this way of journaling, to be intentional with your life, is so powerful. And one day, you're going to realize you don't need to journal it because you're just being it. And then, guess what's going to happen?

You're going to fall in love with this process so much, you're going to set another extraordinary goal for yourself that's going to require a new version of you and you're going to have to do it all over again. That's what I do.

But journaling allows you to live intentionally. And when you live intentionally, what you're really doing is you're changing your self-image. You're changing how you see yourself.

The fourth way that journaling changes your self-image is that it allows you to create from your future. And the way this plays out in my journal practice is that I often journal from my future self. What this looks like in my journal practice is that, many times, in the morning when I'm journaling, I will have a date with my future self.

She is the version of me who is living in the future, having what it is that I want, and being who it is that I know I need to be. And I will have conversations with her. I will ask her questions, like, "How do you think I should handle this? What would you do right now? Tell me something that I need to know."

And sometimes, I just ask her, like, "Just give me a pep-talk." And I just let myself just flow words onto paper. She often says things like, "Girl, I'm so proud of you. I love you so much. Slow down. Enjoy the ride. It is all unfolding. It is happening. You have so much to offer. You are loved. You are supported. You are just getting started."

Now, imagine if you did that every single day, how you would feel, how it would impact your state of being, and therefore how you're showing up in the world, and therefore the results that you are creating.

The world is simply mirroring back to you who you are. Are you being you on purpose? Are you being the version that you want to be, to be a match for what it is that you want? This is what journaling allows you to do.

And then finally, the way that journaling changes your self-image is that it is a space for you to celebrate. I think the reason why a lot of people don't enjoy journaling is that it becomes this chore that feels really heavy.

And when you're in the awareness part, I'm not going to lie, it is because you've got a lot of unpacking to do, of a lot of heavy thoughts. But you have to be willing to open up that junk closet and look at what's in there, so you can clean it up.

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But what we often want to do is we just want to shut the door and be like, “I don’t want to deal with that right now.” But if you just keep shoving junk into that closet, eventually the door is going to open, it’s going to spill out into the hallway anyway, so you might as well open it up and look at it now.

And yes, that process does feel heavy, only because you have so many heavy thoughts that you need to unpack and look at so that you can change. But I also want you all, when you’re journaling, to be having fun with this. If we’re not having fun, what in the world are we doing?

Yeah, we can have some heavy parts to the practice, but there also needs to be some fun and light parts. And that’s why I love the dreaming part. I love the creating from your future part. And I definitely love the celebration part. Because when I think about my future self, guess what she does a lot of: a lot of celebrations.

And so, my journal practice always consists of me celebrating my own life. Sometimes, I celebrate something from the past and how it’s gotten me to where I am. Sometimes, I celebrate what’s happening right around me right now. And sometimes, one of my favorite things to do is celebrate the future as if it’s already happened.

So, I will go into the future, let’s say a year from now, maybe three months from now, and I will think about a result that I want to create in my life, and I will start celebrating as if it’s already happened.

In fact, last month, we had our launch for the School of Self-Image, and, at the beginning of the month, I was already celebrating. I was celebrating the amazing women that I’m going to get to meet and to support within the membership. I celebrated what they’re saying.

I envision and imagine women saying, “Oh my goodness, I’m just two weeks into this program and I’m blown away. I love the changes that are already happening. I love this community and how supportive they are.” And guess what happened, you all? Those same exact words were reflected back to me.

I had women say, “Oh my goodness, I cannot believe the content that’s in this membership. I feel like I just got the deal of a lifetime. I’m already making powerful changes. This membership, this community is incredible. I love how supportive everybody is.”

It was crazy because I had already celebrated that, weeks before. And I was in that energy. And then, the world reflected it back to me. So, in your journal practice, make sure you are celebrating. Because at the end of the day, what we are trying to do is to create a feeling.

If you think about it, the reason we want anything is because we want to feel a certain way. And then, we deny ourselves of that feeling because we don’t have the thing yet, therefore keeping us out of alignment with that thing that we want.

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Because, to attract what you want, you have to be a match for it, meaning however you think you're going to feel then, you need to feel now. And journaling is a way to do that.

You get to look at, "What is standing between me and how I want to feel?" And it's always going to be a thought. And that's where the awareness piece comes in.

And then, from that place, you can start to dream about, like, what would be fun to dream about? "What ideas will help me create this life that I want to have?" And that's exciting. And that's fun when you allow yourself the space to do it.

And here's the deal. When you start dreaming, notice the thoughts that come up that tell you, "That's not possible." That's just another thing that you need to be aware of, you need to unpack and look at so that you can change that thought, so that you're not blocking what it is that you want.

And then, we get to be intentional with how we're thinking and living our day-to-day lives, creating that feeling for ourselves every single day. We get to talk to our future selves. And then finally, we get to celebrate. These are things that we get to do within our journal practice that, over time, will completely change how you see yourself. It will completely transform your self-image.

So, if you've been one of those people who don't like to journal, I hope I've convinced you to at least consider it, so that you can create extraordinary results in your life. But even more, so that you can get to know yourself. That's been the bonus of journaling. It's been a tool that's helped me to get intimate with myself and to know myself at such a deep, deep level. And for that reason alone, it's been worth it.

So, are you going to journal? I hope your answer is yes. Have a beautiful week, everyone. I will see you in next week's episode. Cheers.

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 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.