

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT



EPISODE 295

My Work Philosophy

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My Work Philosophy

Did you know that I love working? I've been working since I was eight years old. And when I think about my future, I never imagine a version of me that's not working. And in this episode, you're going to learn why I love working so much. I'm going to be sharing with you my work philosophy, so let's dive in.

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? It feels like it's been so long since I've talked with you all because I've been on vacation. I was in Europe for over two weeks, and then I came home. I was home for 24 hours, get back on a plane, went to Vegas for the weekend, and then flew from Vegas to DC, which is where I'm at right now.

So, I have missed you all. I have missed when I don't do these podcasts every single week. But it has been nice to have some time off. My soul needed it and I've been missing Europe. I've been missing traveling internationally. But I am back and I am so ready for today's podcast episode because I thought a lot about the topic that I'm going to be speaking with you about while I was on vacation.

And for those of you who are within the School of Self-Image membership, we are going to be dedicating the entire month of August to this topic, the topic of work. And if you're not in the membership, what in the world? Seriously, you need to come be a part of it. And we actually just opened the doors today for new members because I'm so passionate about what I'm going to be teaching next month, I want every woman who wants to learn this to be a part of it.

So, you can go to schoolofselfimage.com/join. Come into this membership and decide right now that you are going to create your after story, which is what we do within this membership. Every single week, we get women submitting their after stories. And it's why I do what I do.

I love seeing a woman come in with her before and being stuck and feeling like she can't get beyond where she is, and then as she transforms her self-image, watching how her life begins to transform as a result.

And one of the topics that comes up a lot within the membership is our work. Our work in terms of our attitudes, in terms of the results that we're creating, in terms of dealing with other people. And so, I want to dedicate this entire episode to my personal work philosophy.

So, let me just start by saying, I love working. I really do. I have been working since the age of eight years old. I got my first job. I worked on a strawberry farm, and I remember, I would get five cents for every quart of strawberries that I would pick. And I was always determined to pick the most strawberries.

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It felt so fun to do something that I was rewarded for in terms of money. And then, you fast forward, every summer I worked on a farm, I worked in the tobacco fields. That was not my favorite. I loved when I'd actually get to work at the tobacco barn because that wasn't as taxing as it was to be out in that heat suckering tobacco.

And then, when I was 15, I could get my work permit and get a legal job, and my first job was at a Hardee's, at a fast-food restaurant. And for any of you that know the Hardee's chain, you know that uniform is so ugly. It's like brown polyester.

But I worked the morning shift. I would get up at five o'clock and I would go and work. And then, sometimes I'd work the evening shift. But I loved working in the morning, getting it out of the way so I'd have the rest of my day. And I was going to school.

And then, I went to nursing school and I worked the entire time I was in nursing school. So, I am no stranger to work. So, when people say stuff to me – in fact, someone on my Instagram last week said, "Yeah, that's something a rich person would say." I'm like, "Listen, I have been working and working hard my entire life and I will never apologize for the results that I have been able to create in my life." And I want to help women create similar results in their lives.

Whatever it is that you want to create, I want to help you have a relationship with work that will help you create those results. Just last week, when we were wrapping up our trip, we went to Paris, Portofino, Italy, Florence, and then we ended in London, and when we were in London, my man Fonz, he wanted to go to a barber to get his hair cut, but he couldn't find one close by to where we were that knew how to cut his hair, or that he trusted.

So, I'm like, "I can do this. Let me try." And so, I watched myself work on his beard, work on his hair, and I was like, this is one of the reasons that I have been successful in life. First of all, I am willing to learn. I'm willing to do a bad job, but I'm going to show up and give it my best. And I want to go all in on whatever it is that I'm doing.

And so, I was working on him like I was a master barber. It wasn't something that I was like, "Let me hurry up and get this out of the way." I was like, "I'm going to go all in and do the best job I can possibly do."

And that's how I approach my work. Now, here's the thing. What I produce is not always the best. But my heart and my intention is and I know that, by doing things, I'm going to learn and I'm going to get better.

I know, if I continued to cut Fonz's hair, I'm going to learn how to be the best in the world at it. And that kind of mentality, that kind of attitude has helped me create phenomenal results in my life.

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When it comes to work, I don't believe any work is beneath me. And I think I learned this from my mom. My mom is all about just getting the job done. Even in my business, I don't think, because I'm the CEO, because I'm the owner, that I can't go in there and do the things that other people are doing. I'm willing to do whatever it takes for us as a team to create the results that we want.

I remember, when I worked as a nurse, I had some of my fellow nurses that were so opposed to doing what the nurse's aides were trained to do. We were all trained to do it, but they had this attitude of, "I'm a nurse, I shouldn't have to do that." And I was always the total opposite.

I'm like, "Listen, we are here to take care of this patient. If the nursing assistant is busy then it is our job to get in here and change a bed pan, empty the catheter."

And looking back now, I am so grateful that that has been my work ethic and my work philosophy. Nothing is above or beneath me and I'm not too good to get in and do anything. I can get down and dirty. I can also put on a ballgown and get onstage and speak. It's like, what do we need to do? What are we here to accomplish? Let's do it. Let's go.

And so, my work philosophy and what I'm going to be teaching within the membership next month is what has allowed me to, number one, enjoy working as much as I do, number two, it's allowed me to create results at a quicker pace and do so much more than I've watched some of my colleagues do, where they're still struggling, they're not producing that much.

And it's also helped me to know where to focus my time, what is most important. It's helped me to create the results that I currently have in my life. And what I can tell you is it's all teachable. I don't have some special trait. I don't have some special gene that has allowed me to do what I do.

What I do have is an attitude that has helped me create results and also a methodology that's helped me break down the results I want to create and effectively work on them.

So, when it comes to work, a lot of people may think, "Well I don't really work. I don't have a job." And so, you may think that this topic is not applicable to you. You are absolutely wrong. If you're a human being, breathing, you're working.

Every day, whether you're a stay-at-home mom, whether you're retired, if you're going into an office, if you're running your own business, you're working because working simply means to produce or to complete a task.

What if you could become so good at doing that? What if you could get so good at not being dramatic about it or not feeling resistance around working, or having a bad attitude when it comes to your work, and truly enjoy the process of working?

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That's what we're going to be talking about within the membership next month. And if this is something you've struggled with, you need to be in this membership. Even if you just come in for the month and do this course with us, it will be life-changing.

So, let me share with you my work philosophy. And this comes from a term that I coined, gosh, 10 years ago, called leisurely hustling. So, the way I like to think about it is that there are two parts within every single one of us. There is our inner lady of leisure, or man of leisure.

And this is the part of us that wants to relax and enjoy and leisure, rest, do what we want to do, have fun, have our hobbies, travel, and I love my inner lady of leisure. But there's also this other part of ourselves that we have, and it's the part of ourselves that wants to have a purpose, that wants goals, that wants to accomplish.

And it's when we get out of balance with these two parts of ourselves that we start to resent our work and we stop producing as many results and we feel like we're just not as fulfilled. And the few times in my life where I thought that the answer was to not have a job and to not work, it was because I was simply out of balance.

I wasn't taking care of my inner lady of leisure. And there have been moments in my life where I've been more in that inner lady of leisure and I started to get really restless. I was like, "I thought this is what I wanted. Turns out, it's not."

So, for me now, when I think about my future, I never imagine a future when I'm not working. And it's because of what I'm going to be talking about within the school next month. It's my whole work philosophy and the work habits that I have that make me enjoy work so much.

And some of you may think, "Well, Tonya, of course you enjoy what you do. Look at what you do." And some of you may even fantasize about doing what I do. And what I can tell you, it's not about the work. Because I started developing this attitude when I was working as a critical care nurse, that completely changed my life.

And I also know there are people in my industry that maybe even you're looking at thinking, "They've arrived. If I did what they did then I would want to work as well." And because I know them and I know that we all have human brains and we all have resistance, that they aren't as fulfilled with their work as you think they are.

Why? Because wherever you go, there you are. And the way you do one thing is the way you do everything. And so, when it comes to my work philosophy, it is this; you have to honor both parts of yourself.

So, for some of you all, you may be feeling very unfulfilled. And I've even seen this in my daughter's generation. You know, they're growing up in this environment that tells them that

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they shouldn't really have to work that hard, they should just be able to go on Instagram and do a cute video and thousands come pouring in.

And because of that, there's a lot of dissatisfaction. There's a lot of insecurity. And there's a lot of just this sense of not being fulfilled because they're not living up to their potential. And they think the answer is not working, and I'm like, no, that is not the answer.

Working, producing something, showing up, giving value, being the kind of person that commits to something and follows through, that is how you build character. So, for some people, the answer is to get more into that inner hustler, find some goals, create a plan, take action, fail, learn about yourself, grow and keep showing up.

And the confidence that comes from this process is the best part, being the kind of person who never gives up, who goes all in, who commits to something is such a beautiful thing. In fact, I was just at actually one of my dear friends – and she's also a SOSI member – Dalia, her husband passed a couple months ago and I'm actually here in DC because I went to his memorial service.

And his name is Justin Constantine and there were, I don't know, it felt like 600 people in this room at the Army Navy Country Club who stood up and talked about him and his work ethic and his dedication. And this was a man who was shot in the face by a sniper over in the Middle East and who overcame that.

And even the face of struggle, he just kept showing up. And his attitude was extraordinary. I walked away from that just wanting to be a better human. His life was such an example of what it means to commit to something and follow through, especially when it gets hard because that's when you are forced to become the best version of yourself.

And so, for some of you, you may realize, "Okay, I've been leisuring a little bit too much. I'm waking up. I'm feeling restless. I'm feeling like I don't have a purpose. I'm feeling like I'm just not going anywhere. And I want to do something."

You've got to tap into your inner hustler. What do you want to achieve? Where do you want to go? What are the results that you want to create? And start getting more into that energy.

But for the majority of my people, you have not honored your inner lady of leisure. You've been in hustle mode for a long time and you're overwhelmed, you are burnt out and you think the answer is to give up work. And maybe even you fantasize about going and sitting on a beach and drinking Mai Tais for the rest of your life.

I do think you should give yourself the opportunity to go sit on a beach for a moment and catch your breath. But not working is not the answer because, even if you're retired, you want

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something to wake up to and something to work towards every single day, something that gives you purpose when you wake up.

But when you are in your hustler energy all of the time, without honoring that part of you that wants to just slow down and savor and appreciate and enjoy and indulge in this present moment, you start to not only emotionally wear yourself down, but then you start to physically wear yourself down.

And I know there is this idea that we can buy into of, “I’m just going to hustle, and when I get to a certain place, then I’ll be able to take a breath. Then I can slow down.”

And what I can tell you is, that day never really comes. You’re always going to be throwing the stick a little further ahead. You don’t ever allow yourself to catch it. And so, when I started my business years ago, I decided – because I saw other people who were doing similar businesses, a similar type of work, and they were not happy.

They were stressed out all of the time. They were staying up late hours. They were burning themselves out. And I said, that will not be me. I want to enjoy this journey. I want to enjoy this process of building my business.

And what that meant is maybe I’ve grown a little bit slower, but it’s also meant that I’ve been enjoying this journey all the way. Now, that does not mean I don’t have my bad days. It doesn’t mean I don’t get stressed sometimes. But all in all, I have honored my hustler and my inner lady of leisure throughout my whole business.

And what that looks like for me is, every day, I make sure that there’s time for me. I make sure that I am resting, I’m eating well. And any season in my life where I haven’t done this, I’ve gotten thrown off-kilter and I’m like, “Okay, I’ve got to come back to my philosophy that I know works.

It means taking breaks throughout the day. It means taking vacations. I can’t remember the exact statistic, but I remember when I read it, I was astounded by how few people take their vacation days. What is happening?

We need to honor that inner lady of leisure that’s within ourselves so that we can come back and do our best work. What I can tell you is I never get my best ideas when I’m sitting at my desk in front of my computer trying to come up with it. I get my best ideas when I step away and I’m out enjoying my life. I maybe am on a walk. Maybe I’m on vacation. Maybe I’m at dinner with friends. Maybe I’m just at a coffee shop.

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It's when I'm away from that energy of work and in my inner lady of leisure that I'm more creative, I am more rested, and I get my best ideas. And then, when I am in hustle mode, I am all in. I am working. I'm head-down. I'm creating results.

And I'm going to be teaching you all exactly what this looks like, like what my process is. Because I can't go into all of it today, but there are very clear habits that I have that have helped me double, triple what I'm able to create even compared to five or six years ago because I just keep getting better at this process.

But when I'm in hustle mode, I am in that energy of get it done. I'm not thinking about what I should be doing. I'm not thinking about what happened yesterday, I'm not thinking about what could happen tomorrow. I am focused on the project at hand. It's just like, right now, I'm recording this podcast for you.

If I don't manage my brain appropriately, my brain's going to be telling me, "You need to hurry up. You've got this next thing that you need to do," or, "This isn't good enough," or, you know, whatever, whatever my brain wants to spout out at the time. And I just don't allow that to be an option.

I'm like, "No, this is what we're doing." Head down, go all in, do the best you can do and be willing for it not to be your best. And I'm going to be talking about perfectionism a lot as it relates to our work in the membership next month.

But by honoring my inner lady of leisure and my inner hustler, I wouldn't call it a work life balance because sometimes I'm more in my inner lady of leisure, depending on the season, depending on the goals. Just like for two weeks while I was on vacation, I didn't work at all except for one Instagram.

I completely unplugged. I was totally immersed in my inner lady of leisure. And now that I'm back I'm way more in hustle mode. So, it doesn't look like 50-50, but it's a feeling. You can tell when you're like, "Oh, I'm really just exhausted right now. I need to take care of my inner lady of leisure," or, "I feel like I'm not creating the results that I'm wanting to create," then maybe you need to get more into your inner hustler.

But for me, it requires that you're constantly having conversations with yourself, that you're paying attention to yourself, and that you're honoring what you are needing in that moment to help you produce your best work and to help you enjoy your life. And those two can coexist.

For those of you who are within the membership, I want to teach you how to enjoy your work. Because as I said earlier, you're going to be working the rest of your life. Truly. Even if it's not in a job, you're going to be working in your home, you're going to be working in your community.

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And so, I want to teach you how to enjoy it. And I want you to enjoy the job you have right now because there is no upside to not enjoying it.

Because, I see this so often with my clients, they're like, "Well, I need to leave this job to enjoy it." And so then, they make themselves miserable. And I did that one time. I was making myself miserable in my nursing career and I thought the answer was to leave it. But I didn't know what to go to.

And so, one day, I decided, I'm like, "Listen, leaving right now is not an option. I'm only making myself miserable," and I did a lot of deep internal work on learning to love and enjoy the job I was in. And let me tell you all, talk about things shifting around me, everything began to change.

I had doctors requesting me and families requesting me to be their nurse for their patients and their family. I got a promotion. All of these crazy things started happening. Why? Because I changed within the situation. And I'm going to be talking about that within the membership. I want to teach you on what to focus on to produce your best results. I'm going to be teaching you about scheduling. I'm going to be teaching you about your attitude. I'm going to be teaching you about staying in your own business in your work.

We're going to be going through a lot next month, so y'all need to get ready because working is something that I love so much, and I just love what has been a result of me loving to work so much.

And I know there are so many of you wanting to create results, but then you're telling yourself that you hate work, and so it's so hard for you to create the results that you want because you don't love the thing that will help you create the results.

But what if you could fall in love with work? Really think about that question; what if you could fall in love with work? And what I can tell you is it is absolutely a possibility and you don't even have to change the work that you're in to fall in love with it.

Some of you all may get a lot of resistance when I say that. You're like, "Tonya, I hate my boss. I hate my coworkers. I hate what I'm having to do." But what I can tell you, as I said before, there's no upside to that. And you may think that by falling in love with your work, you will never want to leave it. And that's simply not true.

What happened for me when I decided I was just going to love the job that I was in and I started to change my attitude and how I was showing up, all of that energy that I had been spending towards resisting and hating on my job, guess what? Now it was like, where are we going to focus? What are we going to do now?

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And all of that energy now could flow into potential new possibilities. That led me to sommelier school and then to food and wine writing and then to Paris, then to hiring a coach because I'm like, "What are we doing here?" I've got all of these new passions and new things I'm interested in that I never ever would have been able to even see as a potential because all of my energy was going towards resisting and hating my job and feeling miserable.

So, if you're in a job right now that you hate, I'm going to invite you to consider, maybe you can't get to a place where you love it, but you can at least not hate it so much. And you can free up that energy to be able to channel it towards new possibilities.

Because listen, I want us all to be doing work that we love and that we enjoy. But I know, from experience, the way to get that and to discover it is not by hating where you are.

I always love to look at our work as a gift. And for those of us who have jobs or companies, that gift is we get compensated, we get to create, we get to wake up every day and add value to the world. And if our job is working at home, what a gift that we get to create a home for our families to come home to and to enjoy.

We all work. I want us all to love the work that we're doing. And if you're not loving it, it's most likely because you haven't been honoring your inner lady of leisure and you're blaming work as the reason why.

But what if, by starting to honor her, by starting to give her a little bit more love and attention, you could love work more? Why I've enjoyed my journey so much is because I have honored these two parts of myself throughout. And that's what I'm going to be teaching you all next month in the membership.

So, come and join us. Go to schoolofselfimage.com/join. I promise you, your life will be changed, especially your work life, by doing the work that we're going to be doing during the month of August.

Have a gorgeous week, everyone. I cannot wait to see you in next week's episode, and maybe inside the School of Self-Image membership if you choose to join us. Take care, everyone. 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.