

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT



EPISODE 300

10 Lessons Learned from 300 Episodes

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10 Lessons Learned from 300 Episodes

Today is a very special day. I am celebrating 300 episodes of this podcast and I'm going to share with you the top 10 lessons that I've learned in doing 300 episodes. 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.

Hello, my friends. What in the world? 300 episodes. I'm celebrating 300 episodes today. It just hit me that I have recorded 300 episodes of this podcast. I sat down this morning – and by the way, excuse my cold. I have a cold right now. But we show up, even with colds.

But I sat down this morning, and I was thinking about the life that I have lived from when I first recorded this podcast, until now, who I've become over the course of creating this podcast and the lessons that I have learned.

And I thought it would be fun to share with you some of the things that came up for me as I was thinking about this journey. And I realized that what I've learned in doing this podcast is applicable to so many of you in your endeavor in what it is that you are creating in your life.

So, let's start with lesson number one that I've learned from doing 300 episodes. And that lesson is, just hit record.

I remember six years ago when I decided to start a podcast, I wanted to be confused, I wanted to do a lot of research. I wanted to take some podcasting courses. I wanted to talk to other podcasters. And all of that was just an attempt to keep me from podcasting.

And after a couple of weeks of spinning in fear, to be honest, I pulled out a cheap Yeti microphone from Amazon and I used a blog post that I had written, I hit record, and that was my very first episode. I literally read my blog post. You can imagine how exciting that was.

And it's so funny, I went back and listened to one of my first podcast episodes and I'm like, "Who is that girl?" My voice is different. You can tell I'm nervous. And that was the beginning of the story, my podcasting story.

Think about things that you want in your life, and you keep putting it on hold, you keep having excuses and you think you need more information. You think you need to take more courses. What you really need to do is your version of just hitting record. Maybe it's getting published. Maybe it's getting onstage. Maybe it's buying the house. Maybe it's starting the business. Maybe it's going to the gym. Maybe it's going on the date.

But your brain will always convince you that you're not ready, that you need one more thing, you need to wait one more day. And that is how dreams die. That one more day is where dreams go to die. And so, the biggest lesson here is just get started.

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Your brain will never let you feel like you're ready. And if you let perfectionism rule your world, you're never going to put your art, your value, the thing that could have an impact on other people's lives out into the world. So, you really do just have to get over yourself and know that you're going to learn and grow so much in the process. But you have to get in the process in order to learn and grow.

So, that is lesson number one from 300 episodes. Just hit record.

Lesson number two is to be grateful. There's a sense of entitlement in the world. We think we should have more than what we have. We think we should be farther along than where we are. And we use that as a way to beat ourselves up and to be miserable. And what I can say is that, from the very first episode that I recorded, I don't think there were a lot of people listening, not compared to today, but along this journey, I have so grateful for anyone that would take 15 to 45 minutes out of their day to listen to what I have to share.

I don't take that for granted ever. It is an honor of a lifetime to be able to show up and do this work. And even though my brain is sometimes like, "Oh, you've got to do a podcast? Another one?" I always remember you all. And you really are my why for this podcast.

I was looking at some of the reviews, which I rarely do, but in preparing for this podcast and celebrating it, I just went back, and I read through the almost 1000 reviews that we've had. And y'all, thank you, first of all for taking the time out to write a review, but for sharing how this podcast has impacted your lives.

And many of you, most of you, I will never meet in person, which is a shame, but I won't. And many of you who listen to this podcast will never join my membership or work with me or pay me money. And that's okay.

I want to inspire women to create their after stories. And if you're inspired to work with me, let's go. But if you just listen to this podcast and it changes your life, my work here is done. But not really because I'm going to keep doing this podcast. But that is the purpose of doing this.

I am so honored and delighted every time I hear about how this podcast has helped you get through a bad day or a breakup or a bad season in your life, how this podcast has inspired you to do something you didn't think you could do, how this podcast has helped you lose weight, how it's helped you find love, and most importantly, how it's helped you love yourself more.

Because at the end of the day, we come in with ourselves and we leave with ourselves, it's the most important relationship that you have. So, every time a woman tells me, "Because of your podcast, I'm loving myself more, I'm appreciating myself more," what a gift that is for me to be able to show up and share and help you have that experience in this lifetime.

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So, be grateful. When you get started on your journey, whatever it is, please don't be tempted to compare your before with someone else's after. Honor where you are. Because we all start from zero. Everybody that started a podcast started from zero. They had no podcast episodes, and no one had ever listened to that podcast.

But they got started. They hit record. And hopefully, for all of us who have the honor of being a podcaster, being grateful I think is part of the secret that inspires us to show up week after week. And so, on your journey, while you have your vision, don't forget to be grateful for how far you've come and where you are right now.

Don't buy into, "Over there when I have more listeners," or, "Over there when I'm making more money... over there... over there... over there, that's going to be better." If you can't appreciate here, what I know to be true, you won't be able to appreciate there. So, that is lesson number two, be grateful for where you are in your journey.

Lesson number three sort of ties into lesson number one on, "Just hit record." But it's to do your best and be willing for it to be your worst. As I said earlier, I went back and listed to some of my first episodes, and I was cringing a little bit. I was like, "What? Girl, relax. Enjoy this."

But that was the best for who I was then. And someone asked me recently if I wanted to take down all of the old videos and podcast episodes from my previous brand, which is French Kiss Life. Many of you know me from that brand. And I said no.

I think the beauty is being able to see another person's journey and seeing in them where they were, maybe that's where you are now, and looking at how far they've come. I always want to inspire, and I don't think I inspire by only showing you the here and now. I think I inspire by sharing my challenges, sharing where I've come from, and sharing with you how I continuously uplevel my life by uplevelling my self-image.

So, do your best, always, but allow it to be your worst. Because your brain, again, is always going to convince you that it's not good enough. The brain is always going to convince you that you're not ready. But when you're willing just to show up and give it your best and also be okay if it's your worst, that's when you get momentum going. That's when you start taking all of that action that's going to lead to results over time.

So, that's lesson number three. Do your best and be willing for it to be your worst.

Lesson number four is, be consistent. This is a big one that I know a lot of us struggle with. But I've talked about it before on one of the episodes, the concept called the compound effect. The compound effect basically says that it's the seemingly small tasks that you do every single day over time that end up equaling big results.

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So, you think about when I first started this podcast, I had no reviews. I had some listeners from my community, but not nearly as many as we have now. I mean, I've had over four million downloads on this podcast. It's crazy. But I started at zero.

And in the beginning, it didn't feel like I was getting a lot of traction, but I kept showing up week after week after week. I think, over the last – I said earlier it was six years. It's actually been seven years since I started the podcast. But I set the intention that I was going to do a minimum of two a month and that has turned into consistently being one every Wednesday.

But in that consistency of showing up, a couple of things happen. Number one, I built trust with myself. Building trust with ourselves is so important, knowing that when we say we're going to do something, that aligns with what we want, and then we show up and do it over and over and over again, it is sending a message to the universe that this woman, she's serious. She's serious about her dreams.

And on the flipside, for your community, for the people watching you, it builds trust within them that they can trust you, that you're going to do what you say, that you're going to show up, you're going to provide value.

And so, over the course of being consistent over the last seven years, I'm starting to reap the rewards of the actions that I took seven years ago. And I see this so often, especially with the clients that I have that are just starting businesses.

They want to get quick results now and they fail to see, for me and probably some of the other people that they follow and maybe they look up to, I've been doing this work since 2009. I started the podcast seven years ago. I'm sorry, I'm not doing math today, y'all, my head is stuffy.

But I've been putting in the work and the effort and the consistency for over 10 years. And so, as I said before, you can't compare your before to someone's after. But you can look at what are the basic principles that they have followed that I can follow, and one day reap the rewards of my actions today?

Because the actions you do today and tomorrow and the next day, those are going to be what creates your results a year, five years from now, 10 years from now.

If you exercise for 30 minutes every single day, think about how you're going to feel a month from now, a year from now, 10 years from now. Equally, if you don't exercise every day, think about how you're going to feel a month from now, five years from now, 10 years from now.

And here's the truth. When you're sitting down recording a podcast or exercising for 30 minutes, it doesn't feel like you're really moving boulders, right? It doesn't seem like a big deal. No one will know if you don't work out today. No one else will know if I don't record a podcast.

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Now, I'm at the point, I think if I didn't publish one on Wednesday, I'd have people reaching out being like, "Hey, where's your episode." But when I was first starting, no one really cared. But I knew and I cared.

And so, consistency not only creates results, but it's about the relationship that you form with yourself when you are consistent with your own word. So, that is lesson number four, be consistent.

Lesson number five is focus more on your vision and less on your metrics. Now, when you have a business, metrics do matter. And I didn't say don't look at your metrics. If you want to be a smart businessperson, or a smart person in life, you need to look around and be like, "How much money do I have in the bank account? How is my energy level? What are my labs?"

You need to have an assessment of how you're doing. But what I often see is that people start on a journey to creating extraordinary things and they get so distracted by what is and how it's not changing yet that they give up on their vision. They don't stay consistent. They don't keep going. And so, their dream is never realized.

It's important, no matter if you're starting a podcast or you're writing a book or you're starting a business or you're trying to lose weight, whatever your extraordinary goal is, it's so important that you live in your vision.

When I first started this podcast, my vision, my goal was to touch the lives of a million women. Now, I think I've done that. I don't have a solid metric on that, but with four million downloads, the people that I have on social media, the clients that I've had, the stages that I've spoken on, I feel like I have done that.

But imagine if I would have started this podcast and then I would have opened up iTunes and saw, "Oh, I only have two reviews. Why bother? This isn't happening fast enough. This isn't working." I just never did that.

In fact, when I first started my podcast, I didn't even look at the metrics at all. In fact, it was only recently that I found out we had over four million downloads. I was like, "Well that's cool." But I don't look at that stuff. I let my team look at it and they bring me the metrics that are important.

But I don't want to focus on things that take me out of my vision. And my vision right now is to help 5000 women create their after stories. That's a good one, right? I'm so excited. And we're already collecting them within my membership. And it's so rewarding to see women applying the tools that we teach and literally seeing physical transformation right in front of me in their before and afters, but then to hear the stories about it.

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Now, if I got too involved in metrics and I forgot about that, I would be discouraged and, at some point, I would probably stop showing up. There have been many times in my business – not only with podcasting but in launching programs and doing things – that the metrics did not line up with my vision.

But I kept going. I've stayed consistent over the years. I believe in my vision. I love my vision. I'm excited to recruit people to support this vision, hire people, share what our vision is. I'm so excited about it.

But if I get too distracted by metrics, then I'm out of the vision. And so, as I was saying, metrics are important if you want to be a smart businesswoman or businessman. But if they take you out of your vision, you either need to stop looking at them so much, or decide what you're going to make them mean and do a lot of mindset work around them.

So, that is lesson number five, focus more on your vision. Be in your vision and less in your metrics and eventually your metrics will catch up with your vision.

Lesson number six – and this is in podcasting. This is in running your businesses. This is in being out in the world, interacting with people. This is universal. And that is share who you are and let the universe take care of the rest.

How often do we hold back? And listen, y'all, I've done it, so I am preaching to the choir over here. But I don't do it anymore. I have learned that this is not the way to live, and this does not honor the way the universe works. But how often do we pretend, and we say what we think people want to hear and we say things in a way that we think won't upset people and we, at the same time, are denying who we are?

This podcast has been a great conduit to allow me to practice this. I have had upset people on this podcast when I mentioned that I have a deck of wisdom cards. They immediately thought tarot cards, right? They left me reviews telling me how disappointed they are in me.

And I respect that. I understand that not everybody enjoys cards. But I love pulling a card in the morning. And they're the most beautiful cards. They're inspirational. They offer guidance. They're beautiful. And they always really tell me what I already know, what I intuitively know.

But by me sharing that here on the podcast, I lost people. But if me sharing who I am causes you not to want to listen to me and follow me, then we aren't a match anyway. And that's okay. It doesn't make you wrong. It doesn't make me wrong.

We have matches in the world and the universe is always trying to put the matches together. But if you're holding back and you're not showing up as who you are and you're not being real and truthful, then you're going to get some matches that you're always having to pretend around, that you can't be yourself around, and that's not freedom.

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And at the end of the day, we all just want to be free, no matter what you are doing in life. Now, I know a lot of you do have your own business that listen to this. Perhaps you're coaches. But even if you're not, I want us to be audacious enough to speak our truth.

And this business journey has been an amazing opportunity to do that. The more I speak my truth, the better my life gets. And the people that I attract are a better match for me. And I only want to work with people and be around people that we vibe together, we get each other. And so, that is lesson number six, share who you are and let the universe take care of the rest.

And the universe is always rearranging to make sure energy is attracting as it should be. Like attracts like. So, when you share who you really are, you may have some people leave, and that's okay. But guess what? You're going to attract people who see you, who appreciate you, who get you. Maybe they want to learn from you. Maybe they want to hang out with you. But it will be fun being in each other's presence.

Lesson number seven is don't let one bad apple spoil the bunch. When you put yourself out there in the world and you start to share who you really are and you're going after big things and living an audacious life, there are going to be people who have thoughts about it. And they're not favorable thoughts, right?

And oftentimes, we let those people derail us and keep us from living in our vision. When it comes to this podcast, I'm very fortunate that we've had many amazing reviews. And again, thank you all so much who've taken the time out to write a review. But there have been a few that aren't so favorable.

Now, imagine if I hyper-focused on those few and forgot the almost 1000? But this is what our brain does. I know y'all know what I'm talking about. You can put something out in the world, and you'll have 10 people tell you, "Oh my god, I love it. It's so good. It's changed my life." And then, there's going to be that one who's like, "I hate it. I didn't like anything about it. I hate you. I hate everything you're doing."

And if we focus on that one, it spoils the experience that the other 10 are having with you because then you don't show up for them because you're over here trying to please this one that you were never a match for anyway.

So, focus on the people you love. Focus on the people who get you. Focus on the people who want to learn from you. Focus on the people you want to add value to their lives. And don't focus on the people that were never meant for you in the first place.

Now, sometimes people come along, and they'll say something that can add value and it may feel like criticism at first because maybe there is something that you can do to improve. And I always say, take that and learn from it. But put yourself out there.

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Be willing to be rejected. Be willing for people to say bad things about you. Be willing to fail publicly because those are the people that go on to do amazing things. Those are the people that end up creating extraordinary results in their lives.

But you'll never do that if you're trying to avoid that one bad apple because they're everywhere. So, what if you just embraced that that's going to show up and that you have your own back and you're tough enough to handle it?

I will tell you, bad reviews, bad feedback used to cripple me for days. So, if that happens to you, I totally get it. It feels awful. You really feel like the universe is ending, that your world is collapsing. You have all these visions of how you're going to be homeless and you're going to be lonely, have no friends, and your brain can just take you to the worst places, right?

But what I can tell you is because I have always been so devoted and convicted by my vision, that inspired me to keep showing up. And so, the more I showed up and the more I experienced that, it's almost like I became desensitized to it, and I understood it for what it was. Like the kind of people that I want to associate with, the kind of person that I want to be would never say those things.

It's always a reflection of the person saying it, not of you. And so, because I just have continuously and consistently shown up and made myself available to the bad apples – and listen, no one's bad. But people can do bad things and say bad things because they have a bad perspective of the world and maybe they're feeling really bad about themselves.

And that's why I say I understand where it's coming from. I understand the root cause. And so, therefore, I don't take it personally. If I can learn from it, great. But if something is just full of hatred and you can sense, "This person just doesn't like me," then that's not your person. Let them go, with love, and focus on the people you love, the people you're serving, the people that you're making an impact on their lives. So, that's lesson number seven.

Lesson number eight – and this applies to almost everything that we do – is keep it simple. That is one thing that I have done with this podcast. Now, people have thoughts about it. People think I need to bring on guests and they have all kinds of ideas about the production. And that's fine. Eventually maybe I'll bring on guests.

But it just hasn't been something that I've wanted to do up until this point. And I'm thinking about it now, but it's still not a strong yes. However, I've just kept it super simple. Every week, I pull out my mic, hook it up to Garage Band, and I jam for 15 to 30 minutes.

And I know some of you have asked about my podcast process. It's not that fancy. I keep a journal with ideas for podcasts because there's always so many ideas and being out in the world and seeing things and hearing stories and working with clients and talking with my friends, I always have so many ideas for podcasts. And so, I just write them down.

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And here recently, I've been working with my content director and we're planning out in advance, like a month in advance, which is new for me. I usually just decide a week before, "Hey, this is what we're talking about." So, that's been new and fun.

But I've just always kept it really simple. Me, my mic, and one podcast topic. So, when you're thinking about your goals and what you're creating, ask yourself, how can I simplify this? Because usually, the simpler it is, the better it is. But our brain will always try to convince us that it should be hard and complex and, if you're not struggling, you're not doing it right.

And I've learned that that's not true. Keep things simple. Simple gets results. So, that is lesson number eight.

Lesson number nine is, allow yourself and your show to evolve. Back in 2020, October, I'll never forget, I launched a new podcast. I completely changed my brand and started *The School of Self Image*.

And I had a lot of fear around it. And I've talked about it openly on this podcast, but my existing community at that time, they had been following me when I had French Kiss Life, which was my former brand. And so many of us, including myself, had been changed by the concept and the brand and it was hard to let that go.

But you have to be willing to let things go in order to evolve. And it was very clear to me – and during the pandemic when I was by myself a lot – that I was just being called to create something new. I was being called to step into the next version of myself. And so, part of that evolution was changing the podcast.

Now, I still have all of the old episodes up, as I told you before. But I have changed. And you can even go back and listen to my podcast. I'm a different human. And I felt called to create something that matched who I was becoming and who I had become.

And so, in our worlds, especially the business world when we're doing content and we're coaching or we're in an industry that has a brand, we often stagnate ourselves. We often stop our own growth out of fear of what other people will think.

It's hard to let go of things when they're actually working. But that's often what we need to let go of to get to the next level. And so, this podcast has been a platform for me to publicly grow and evolve and to share that journey with you all.

And it's not been easy, just so you all know. I think sometimes you all look at me and you're like, "Oh, it's easy for her." Let me tell you, if you all were in my brain every single day, you'd be like, "Oh, Tonya really is like us. She has all the crazy thoughts. She has all the crazy limiting beliefs."

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I still have that stuff come up. I just don't pay it that much attention. As you've seen over the years, I just keep showing up. I keep sharing. I keep adding value. And that is what you're seeing the fruits of today. But this journey of evolving and choosing to live a life that represents possibility and growth and evolution, it's not easy. But I wouldn't trade it for anything.

And this podcast has given me an opportunity to evolve and to share what this process is like. It really does come down to your self-image. As you change how you see yourself, you open up possibility that doesn't currently exist for you.

You open up opportunities that don't currently exist for you. And then, from that, you create results that, right now, maybe it's hard for you to create. And it's only because you haven't expanded your self-image, and so you have to be willing to change and grow and evolve and let things go, sometimes when they're working.

But it is so worth it. It is so worth the discomfort. It is so worth the grind sometimes. I wouldn't trade it for anything. And that leads me to the final lesson, lesson number 10.

The lesson that I've learned from doing this podcast is, have fun. We take things so seriously when there are very few serious things happening in the world. But our brain tries to convince us that everything is a threat and we're all going to die. And that is true. One day, we will die.

But who do you want to be and how do you want to live while you're alive? And so, when it comes to this podcast, I can say I have had fun creating it. It has been fun for me to be creative. It's been fun for me actually to get over my challenges when I've had a lot of resistance because I've grown so much from facing those challenges and doing it anyway and getting to the other side.

It's just like when I did my very first podcast, I was so nervous, "What are people going to think? I sound weird." And I did. I was like, "Who is that? I sound like I'm 13."

But now, it's easy. It's just what I do. It's just who I am. I'm a podcaster. But I had to show up and believe in it and practice it and fail and keep doing it until I could get to this place.

Sometimes, women in my membership, they'll say to me, "God, you're such a good speaker. How is it that anybody can throw anything at you, and you can coach them or talk about it?" And I'm like, "Listen, you all, it comes from years of practice."

I didn't pop out the womb speaking. In fact, I struggled with speaking for a long time. But now, I find myself on stages speaking and I'm becoming more comfortable with it. Now, you put me on a Zoom call, and I can talk all day. But that has taken time and it's fun to embrace that discomfort.

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And I think that's actually – it's funny I mention that. I think that is one of my big secrets to my success. I see the discomfort as fun. It's like a challenge. Where a lot of you don't want to feel the discomfort, you want to run from it, and so you never get to see what you're truly capable of.

But what if you view the discomfort of going after your dreams as, like, being a kid on the playground learning to play kickball for the first time? Yeah, it's going to be messy. You're going to get kicked a lot. But eventually, you're going to get really good at it. You're going to get out of the way of that ball. You're going to be able to hit targets that you can't hit right now.

And that's the way I view it. It's like this big playground that we're all on. And it's fun. It's fun to play. It's fun to learn. It's fun to grow. And more than anything, it's fun to show yourself what you are capable of.

And this podcast has been a platform for me to do that. And so, thank you all for 300 episodes. It's crazy that we have been together – some of you have been with me since the very first one. And if that's you, you know what I would really appreciate? If you send me a message on Instagram and let me know because I need to give you a personal thank you.

But thank you for your reviews. Thank you for being on this journey with me. Thank you for sharing your stories. Thank you for inspiring me. Many of the episodes or the topics that I choose are based off of things that maybe I've heard one of you say in a comment and a message and a coaching call.

So, a huge thank you. And I feel like I'm just getting started. That's a fun thought. Thank you all so much. I will see you in next week's episode. And hey, listen, if you enjoyed this episode, leave me a review, and share it with your friends. I would really, really appreciate it. Okay, see you all soon. Cheers.

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