



EPISODE NO. 311

# What Is Success?

Almost everyone is chasing it, and yet very few people stop to define it for themselves. What am I talking about? Success. In this episode, I'm going to share what success means to me, and I'm also going to encourage you to define it for yourself. 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 gorgeous friends? I feel like I have so much to share with you. I am coming off what I call a SOSI high. We just wrapped up the SOSI Desert Live event in Scottsdale, and what in the world. Best event ever. I say that with 100% confidence. When I am sitting at home and I'm thinking about events, I'm always thinking about you all. I'm always thinking about how can I create something that women want to come back to again and again, and they do? In fact, day two, the women were asking my team, "How do we sign up for the next one? This is so much fun. This is changing my life. I can't wait to do it again."

I had people working at this event who this is what they do. They just put on events. One of the guys backstage said, "I've never experienced anything like this." He was like, "This is magical," and it is. The reason being is because of the energy that everybody brings into this space, and the intention and the care that is put into creating an epic experience. So, I just want to thank all of you who were there for bringing it.

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You are why this event was so incredible. After the event, the next day, I went to the spa, because I needed to wind down.

A lot goes into an event. I told everybody there. I'm like, "This is like having a baby." When you're in the middle of it, you're like, "I'm never doing this again." As soon as it's over, you're like, "Oh my God, I can't wait to do it again," because I put a lot of thought and a lot of energy into my events, because again, I want it to be so incredible that women want to come back again and again. The day after the event, I went to the spa, and I had time just to sit and think about the event, and to really just spend some time celebrating, because a lot of times, we're so busy going off to the next thing that we don't take the time to be like, "Wow, look at what you just did. Take it in for a moment."

So, I did, and I started to think about success and how I was feeling so successful after that event, and why that was. This is a question that I get asked a lot. Like, "What is success?" I'm talking about successful people all of the time, but what does that even mean? So, I wanted to dedicate this episode to that question, "What is success?" Because it's important that each of us define it for ourselves. Here's the really important part, you need to define it so that you can feel it daily. I'm a big believer in like attracts like. I'm a big believer in that whatever it is that you want to create, you must feel the feeling of already having created it.

That means one of the big emotions that all of us need to be feeling is success, because I'm sure you want to be successful. You want to accomplish things. You want to experience certain things. You want to become certain things. That means that you need to feel the emotion of having done it, which means feeling successful. Yet, many times, we create definitions of success that makes us feel like constant failures. For example, maybe you think that you will feel successful when you make your first million dollars, or maybe you tell yourself that you'll feel successful when you've lost 50 pounds.

Maybe you tell yourself that you will be successful when you write the book, or you get your first 10 clients. Whenever you put anything in between where you are and how you want to feel, you're sewing down the process. It is so important that you create a definition of success that enables you to feel successful every day. That allows you to feel that emotion that is necessary to be a match for what it is that you want it. If you tie success to an outcome, think about it. It means you're never really going to feel it, because you're always going to have new outcomes that you want to create.

Therefore, you're always delaying feeling the very emotion that you need to feel to create the outcome. I need to feel successful to show up and put on an event. I don't

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need to delay my successful feeling until the event is over, because what am I going to feel instead? Doubt, worry, anxiety. If I don't manage my brain, that's where to go. But I need to feel as confident, successful. I need to create those feelings now in order to create the outcome that I want. So, I've been thinking a lot about how to teach this, how to talk about it, how to help you figure out what success means to you.

Notice I said what it means to you, not what you think you should be, not what you think you should want, not what other people have told you is successful, but really taking the time to answer, "What does it mean for me to be successful, and what does a successful life look like for me?" There have been times on my journey that I have gone after things, and realized after the fact, "Whoa, that was somebody else's version of success. That wasn't mine." Many times we can start to believe that success is making lots and lots of money, and for some people it is. It is a genuine desire, and I am all for genuine desire.

But if you don't understand why you're going after it, if you don't understand why you want it, maybe you just heard your parents talking about money growing up, or maybe you didn't have a lot of money, and so you thought that's something I should want, and you're pursuing it without being clear as to why. Then I've seen it so many times. You get it, and you feel empty. It doesn't feel like you thought it would feel. Maybe that wasn't a genuine desire of yours. Years ago, I wrote an article, and I think I may have even recorded a podcast episode on it. It resonated with so many women. The name of it was called Your Petite May Be Your Grande.

The whole premise behind the article was giving yourself permission to really want what you want without judgment. What I had found early on in my years of getting in touch with my desires is that in the beginning, what I wanted was not that grand, at least in other people's eyes, but it was grand to me, and it was the first step that I needed to take to open me up to more. It was my first step of deciding on purpose like, "This is what I want. This is what success looks like for me at this stage in my life."

Now, as I've continued to do this work, my desires have become more and more grand to everybody else, but back then, it wasn't, and I had to make peace with that. You have to make peace with it as well. If you want to live an extraordinary life, you have to be okay and comfortable and at home and unapologetic about what it is that you really, really want. I was looking up other people's definition of success, and there were some really good ones. One person said, "Success is having a place to call home." Success is always doing your best. Success is understanding the difference between need and want.

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Success is believing you can. Success is remembering to balance work with passion. Success is taking care of yourself. Success is learning that you sometimes have to say no. Success is knowing that your life is filled with abundance. Success is doing things that you really enjoy. Success is conducting your life with integrity and perseverance. Success is moving forward. Success is overcoming fear. Success is learning something new each day. Success is learning that losing a few battles can help you win a war. Success is loving and being loved back.

Success is standing your ground when you believe in something. Success is not giving up. Success is celebrating small victories. Success is never letting a disability hold you back. Success is understanding that you control your destiny. Look at how many different versions of success existed just within the last, I don't know, 30 seconds. Notice how when you decide what success looks like for you, then you have a code of conduct of how you can live your life so that you have more fulfillment, more accomplishment, and more guidance.

When we don't stop and ask ourselves what success is for us, oftentimes, we're following someone else's version of it. As I said earlier, it can be very unfulfilling. But when you define success for yourself, and you make it something that is independent of an outcome, that is when I have found it to be the most fun to go after being successful and living a successful life. Now, listen, I get it. It's hard for us to wrap our brains around success not being tied to an outcome. In fact, when you look up the definition of success, let's see what it says here. Success is a degree or measure of succeeding, a favorable or desired outcome, the accomplishment of an aim or a purpose.

So just in that definition, it ties it with an end outcome. Part of success is knowing what you want. What is the outcome that you are trying to achieve? You need to decide that for yourself. Sometimes that is the hardest step of giving yourself some space and some time to really think about, "What do I really, really want? What are my true genuine desires? What would I be elated to create experience, become, have? If there were no rules, if there were no limitations, what would I allow myself to truly, truly want?" That's some scary work.

It's some hard work, especially if you've been disconnected from your desires for a long time. It's a muscle that you have to get used to building, but you have to start by asking yourself, "What do I want?"

But then here's where I want to talk about success in a different way. Can you hold that for yourself, that outcome, and then let it go, and let the success be what you do every day in the pursuing of it? Let me give you an example. When I was planning this event,

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we decided how many seats we wanted to sell. That was the desired outcome. Up until the last minute, we had not sold all of the seats. We were almost sold out, but we still had a few more.

Now, if I made it so that I could only feel successful, if I achieved that outcome, think about the process of creating this event. I would've been miserable, because I would've been delaying feeling good, feeling proud, feeling excited about the event. So, I put the intention out there of like, "This is what I want to achieve." Then I let it go. Then I focused on what do I need to be doing every single day to know that I'm going all in on getting to that outcome and creating an epic event? I wanted to focus on what I could control. I can't control how many people sign up for the event, but I can control how often I talk about it, the energy that I talk from.

I can definitely control the experience. I can control the material that I'm working on, and the energy I'm putting in that. I can control the types of speakers and the entertainment and the food and the ambience where we choose to have the event. I can control all of that, but ultimately, I can't control how many people come. So, to me, success is having that outcome and that aim, and knowing what you want, and then letting it go, and then letting your success, that feeling be determined by how you go all in on what you want. Are you with me? I'm going to pretend that you're saying yes. So, knowing what you want and then letting it go, and being delightfully surprised as to how it happens, or if it happens, because sometimes you're not going to reach your goal, especially if they're big goals is what I tell my women within the membership. I'm like, "Listen, when you're setting big extraordinary goals, they may not happen, but I think you're so successful in going after it." Think about who you become in that process, and think about how much you have created and how close you've gotten to that extraordinary outcome.

Now, we have a lot of women who do reach their extraordinary goals because of what we teach within the membership, but sometimes they don't. But what I tell them is, "Listen, if you set that goal, and you went all in and you grew, and you expanded, and you learned, to me, you are a huge success." That's how I like to measure my success. Not whether I hit the goal or not, but did I go all in? Did I give it all I had, and did I learn and grow, and did I have fun along the way?

Because if we're not having fun, what are we doing? When I think about a successful life, that version of me, she's having fun, which means I can't make myself miserable on the way to my goals.

But some of you all have associated success with working really hard, being hard on yourself, pushing yourself to exhaustion, and then to having something completed.

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Then you wonder why you don't feel successful, or you're afraid of success. I would be too if that was my experience with it. I would be afraid of it. I wouldn't want anything to do with it. If I thought I had to suffer and work myself to exhaustion to be successful, I'd be afraid of it too. This is why you have to define success for yourself in such a way that makes you excited about pursuing it, and allows you the space to feel successful every day, and to have fun along the way.

Because if you don't, it's not going to be something that you want to continue doing. So, I want to share what is success for me. Now, this does not mean it's for you, but if it resonates with you, use it. There are several parts to success for me. This is something that we apply to all areas of our life, because you can be successful in one area and not successful in another. You can have financial success, but have terrible relationships, or you can have success in your relationships, but your health is deteriorating. I like to think about success in a holistic way and looking at the different areas of my life, and asking where I feel really successful, and where maybe I'm not feeling so successful so that I can apply these principles to the areas where I want to elevate my success.

So in any of those areas, the first thing you have to ask yourself is What do I want? How are you going to have a successful life? How are you going to be successful if you don't know what you want? This, as I said earlier, is often the hardest step, because some of you all have want shame. You have a lot of shame around what you want, so therefore you don't allow yourself to want it. You repress it. You ignore it, and all the while, you're feeling miserable. You feel like, "Oh, I'm not living an authentic life. I'm not living fully expressed," because you're not being honest about what you want.

You're afraid of what people will think. You're afraid of being judged. Listen up. They're going to judge you. They're going to have many thoughts about what you want. Why not let them? Why not let them judge you for what you want unapologetically, because they're judging you now? You're judging you now, so you might as well be judged for living an authentic and unapologetic and audacious life. So, asking yourself, "What do I really, really want?" That is the first step to success in my opinion.

The second step is knowing what you value. Because if what you want is going against what you value, you're going to be in war with yourself. You got to get everything lined up. Let me give you an example. I was working with a woman one time. What she wanted was to travel the world for a year. That was her big desire. One of her core values, however, was family. Part of her family was her husband who had a job that did not allow him to travel the world for a year, so her desire and her core value were in

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conflict with each other. We did a lot of work of really digging deep in figuring out, "What is the real desire here."

She wanted adventure in her life. She discovered that she didn't need to travel the world for a year right now. However, she wanted to keep that as a desire down the future, and plan for it, and be able to bring her family along. So having that desire, and being true to it, and having a plan for it for down the road was part of the process. But then she also asked herself, "How can I have more adventure in the next few years, so I can honor that part of me as well?" It's important that what you want is aligned with what you value, so you're not in conflict with yourself.

Then the next thing is, for me, success is having the courage to go for it, having the courage to go for what you want. Now, listen, you all, courage feels awful. It feels so frightening and terrifying, because courage is your ability and your willingness to feel discomfort. It's your willingness to do things even when you are afraid. I was talking to one of my friends who spoke at my event. She is amazing, and she killed it, but she was talking about how nervous she was getting up on stage. I'm like, "Yes, and that's what's required."

I remember the first time I got on stage to speak, you all. It was a mess. I had spaghetti legs. Do you know what I'm talking about? When you're so nervous, you feel like you can't even stand up. I had to request a chair. I'm like, "Can someone please give me a chair, because I feel like I'm about to pass out?" I got through that talk, but I grew. I had the courage to go for it because for a long time, I've seen myself as a speaker. I saw myself on stages speaking. Guess what that requires, getting up on stage and speaking even when you are afraid.

A lot of you all don't want to do this step. You want to skip over it. You want it to feel good and luscious and divine and great, like butterflies and daisies. It doesn't. It feels awful. Especially the bigger the desire, the bigger you that will be demanded, and you have to catch up with yourself. I had to catch up with that desire.

I had to catch up with that version of me that I saw in my head who could get up and speak on stages, but she had so many limiting beliefs about herself, about how it wasn't going to be good enough, how nobody was going to like it, how she was going to make a fool of herself.

You know what? I did, and I survived. No one died including myself, and that grew me. I've been doing it again and again and again. Now, I get a little nervous, but not like that. Why? Because I exposed myself to it over and over again. I had the courage to go after what I wanted. To me, that is a requirement to be successful and to have a

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successful life, but that's my version. I'm just sharing with you all what my version is. So, what is success? For me, it's knowing what you want. It's staying true to your core values. It's having the courage to go for what you want.

Then the next thing that feels like success to me is pursuing what you want with your strengths. Let me tell you what I mean. Many times, we overcomplicate things. You all know who I'm talking to, probably you. I've definitely done this. We think that we need to become someone that we're not to be successful, and there is some truth to that. You are going to have to grow in big ways. Your beingness is going to have to be bigger for that next level. You are going to have to become someone else to create what it is you want. That's why I do all of the self-image work.

You're going to have to see yourself on a completely different level to create what it is that you want, especially if it's a really big goal. But what I'm talking about are your gifts. A lot of times, we ignore our gifts that come natural to us, that are easy for us, and we overcomplicate the road to success. We try to do it like other people. We try to be like other people. Let me break this down. When I talk about your beingness, I'm talking about your energy, your belief in yourself. How you see yourself is determining everything that you're experiencing in your life, but what I'm talking about right now is trying to do things like other people.

Let me give you an example. My business image Mastermind, ladies, by the way, love you all. I'm so proud of all of you. But sometimes, they'll come to me, and they'll be like, "Can you tell me exactly how you did that launch? I want to know every detail." I give them everything. I give them swipe copy. I give them all of our stats. I literally pull the curtain back, and explain every single detail of our launch, and give it all to them. I'm like, "Here, take it. Use it. I hope it works for you." However, what if that's not true for you? What if the way I do something to create success isn't what would come naturally to you?

For example, maybe you like to be on video. Maybe that's where you shine. If I'm handing you a launch plan that includes no video, it's just a bunch of copy, then you're not leveraging your unique gifts. You're not leveraging what's easy and natural for you. You're not leveraging where you shine. Let me give you a personal example. I have hired consultants and mentors in the past to help me be a better marketer. They will tell me things to do that when I try to do them, it feels icky and awful, but I'm also a really good student. I'm like, "Listen, I'm going to try it, because I'm willing."

I'm willing to be wrong about this. I'm willing to let you be the expert. Inevitably, I do it, and I'm like, "That was awful. I will never do that again," but I wanted to experiment with it, right? Versus when I'm true to me, and I just show up, and I share, and I talk



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from my heart, that's when I always do the best with marketing. I've also noticed that some people do really well with very scripted videos. They have a teleprompter. Everything is word for word, very, very scripted. I don't do well like that. I have tried it before, but it doesn't come naturally to me.

What comes easiest for me, honestly, is just to get on a call with my community, and answer their questions, jam about a certain topic, something that I'm being called to share, going totally off script. That's when I feel in flow and in alignment. That's what works for me the best. So if you are someone that you do best with a very scripted outline or video, you trying to do it my way will never work. Your gift is probably coming up with those very tight points, and making them in a beautiful way. There is nothing wrong with a good script. I wish sometimes I could do it, but my team knows, "Oh, she's going to go rogue," so we just don't even do that.

I have my bullet points. I know what I want to cover, and then I trust that whatever flows through me is what's meant to be. That is my gift. It's easy for me. It may not be easy for you, which means maybe that's not what you should be doing. You need to leverage what comes easiest to you. Here's what I've noticed. When we believe that success has to be hard, and we look around, and we trust other people's way to success better than looking within and finding our own, number one, we give our power away. But number two, we end up making it so much harder than it needs to be. Here's what I want you to do. Whenever you decide on your goal, what success is for you, what you are pursuing, take a step back, and ask yourself, "What comes easily to me? What is natural for me, and how can I utilize that in support of this goal?" Don't let your brain go to, "Well, there's nothing about you that's comes easily, or it's going to help you." That's not true.

There's something within you that you already do so easily that you probably even see it as a gift. For example, people are always telling me how feminine I am. I was like, "I know I am, but is that a gift?"

But then I think about those qualities and how I can use them for me, how I can make the journey to my dream so much easier by leveraging what already comes easily to me. You have that within you too. You need to figure out what that is. Maybe you are super organized. Maybe you are really good at reading people. Maybe you are an excellent speaker. Figure out what your gifts are, and use them to help you create your success. You may find that you don't have to work as hard when you're not working against yourself. Now, there will be skill sets that you'll probably need to learn. Maybe you've decided you want to be a great speaker, and you haven't been speaking.

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Go learn how to speak, but also figure out your style of speaking that comes easily to you, for example. Work with yourself. Don't make it harder than it needs to be. That leads me to my next point. What is success? To me, success is having fun on the way to your goals. If you're not having fun, then what are you doing? What is wrong? What I love about this is all it takes is a shift in your thinking to start having more fun. You don't have to do anything differently. You just have to start thinking differently about what you're doing to create more fun.

It's the shift from, "I'm a loser if I don't accomplish this," to, "Oh my goodness, I am so proud of myself for showing up. I'm so proud of myself for having the courage to go and do this. I'm learning so much along the way. Isn't this fun?" Versus, "Oh my goodness, this is so hard. This is awful. It's taking too long." That kind of thinking is why you all aren't having fun. Listen, I know it's hard, especially if it's a big goal, but sitting around talking about how hard it is isn't helping you get there any faster. If anything, it's probably slowing you down, and it's definitely taken the fun out of it.

So, I just love to ask myself, "Am I thinking fun thoughts about this process?" Because if I want to have fun, that is where it starts. How can I think about this in a more fun way? The way I like to think about it is all we are are kids on the playground, learning how to play kickball or dodge ball, or we're learning how to climb those monkey bars. When you think about it as a kid learning something new, do you remember how fun that was? Even though if you were falling and falling and getting hurt, you wanted to play so much you just kept getting back up.

Every time you got back up, you got stronger, and you got better. It was fun to play. I want us to have fun playing towards our goals, towards our dreams. Because remember this, at the end of the day, what you're always after is a feeling.

So, why not feel the way you want to feel now, instead of delaying it until you've reached some outcome, therefore, making it harder to meet the outcome, because the outcome requires that you feel a certain way to meet it. Like attracts like. If you want to meet the outcome, you have to be the woman in the outcome.

When I think about all of us and our outcome having achieved our goals, she's having so much fun. She's enjoying her life, which means we need to enjoy our lives now. To me, that is what it means to be successful, going after what you want, and having fun doing it. Then the final thing that I want to say here, what is success? It is growing. The growth that happens when you go after something extraordinary, whatever that looks like for you, is something no one can ever take away. Whatever that growth is, you will apply it to the next thing and to the next thing.

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That growth will just start to compound, but a lot of you all aren't focused on the growth. You're focused on hurry up and getting there versus stopping and being like, "Whoa, look at how much this has grown me." To me, that is the best part. I had a woman within the membership who achieved a truly extraordinary goal. Upon achieving it, she realized that it wasn't what she wanted. That's happened to me. Has it ever happened to you? You're like, "Whoa, this is not what I thought it was going to be." She was feeling really discouraged. She was feeling like a failure, and I was like, "Whoa. First of all, you actually achieved it. Second of all, look at how much you've grown through this process."

To me, that is the best part. So what? You don't like it, and you want to do something else. Welcome to life. How are you going to know, unless you experience something, what it is that you want and what you don't want? Life is about the contrast, and we have to experience both. We have to do things, and be like, "Oh, that's not it. Let me try something else." But to go after something, and grow in the process, and then see yourself as a failure because it didn't turn out the way you thought, I think, is such a misguided perception of yourself. It's not giving yourself credit.

It's not acknowledging the growth that you had, which is the best part of going after any extraordinary goal. The growth for me is the success, because I know that whatever I've learned, and the growth I've experienced, it's only going to better my life. I tell people all of the time, especially my ladies who are going through divorce, they start to run this story in their brain of how they're a failure, and their marriage was a failure. I'm like, "Why? Just because something ends doesn't mean it's a failure." Look at who you became. Look at what you've learned.

Look at what that marriage, that relationship taught you, and knowing all of that, how it's going to make your next relationships even better.

I view all of it as a huge success because of what I learned. Now listen, if you don't learn the lessons, that's a different thing. But if you take what you've learned, and you apply it to the next chapter of your life, what an amazing success. What if success really is just growth? Notice, when you think of success that way, it is something that is accessible to you today, not when you've reached some outcome. The more you feel successful, the more success you're going to create. Each day, we can ask ourselves, "What did I learn today? How did I grow today?"

With that kind of questioning, you're programming your brain and your spirit for constant expansion, constant growth, because now we're looking for ways to grow. We're looking for evidence that we are growing, and whatever you focus on grows. So as you focus on your growth, guess what's going to happen. You're going to grow

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more. So, I want you to spend some time asking yourself, "What is success to me?" Make sure whatever your answer is, it is an answer that you can live and experience each day.

Do not create a definition of success that holds you hostage until one day when. Instead, create a definition of success that you can live into, and experience every single day, that allows you to feel successful, not someday in the future, but today. Because the more you feel that emotion, the more you're going to have the world mirror it back to you. Have a beautiful, beautiful week, my friends. I cannot wait to see you on next week's episode. Cheers. 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](http://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.