



EPISODE NO. 320

Six Habits That Changed My Self-Image

There have been habits on my self-image journey that have changed my identity, and I'm sharing those with you in today's episode. 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. Today's episode is a little bittersweet because I just realized that it's going to be the last podcast episode that I record in my apartment in Denver. My mom is in town. She just flew in a few days ago and we've been packing up and in two days I fly to Charlotte, North Carolina, which is where I'm going to call home for a while. So it's exciting, but I'm going to miss Colorado. Colorado is a state that has witnessed Tanya transform so many times, and Colorado is such a beautiful energy and the people here are incredible, and it's a place I'm going to come back to a lot. So even though I'm leaving, I will still get to visit often. This has been such a full week. I try not to use the word busy because my future self doesn't use that word, and so I'm very mindful to speak the language that I'll be speaking in my future in my present.

But she does have full weeks, and this has definitely been one of them. As I said, we are packing up and I'm flying out in a couple of days. I've also been running the live like an editor workshop, and if you did not join that workshop, what in the world? It is so much fun, and I've had women tell me they, in fact, a woman emailed me yesterday and she was like, listen, I've done a lot of these challenges. I've done a lot of webinars.

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She was like, I've never, ever experienced something so powerful as what you're doing this week. And it's just a sample of what we do within the School of Self Image in the membership. And I don't know if you heard, I don't know if you've saw, but the doors are open right now, but they're going to be closing soon.

So if you want to dive into this work this year, if you want to make focusing on your self-image a priority, and I highly recommend you do, and the reason being is it's creating everything. How you see yourself is determining how you show up, what opportunities you say yes to, what opportunities you attract. It's determining how much money you make. It's determining the quality of your relationships. It's determining the state of your home. It's determining your wellbeing. Your self-image is the key to everything that you want. I have women who join the membership who share with me that they can't believe how they are creating results that they've tried to create for years. And suddenly they get it. They understand why they've struggled, and it's never because anything's wrong with them ever. It's just no one teaches us this. And so we chase things outside of us.

We chase our goals, we chase the things that we want, but we don't become the person who has it. And so we are not a match for it. And this is why self-image work is the most important work you will ever do. I have had women who have come into this membership who've been in therapy for years and they felt stuck and they start doing self-image work and suddenly it's like the light bulb goes off and they start getting momentum in their lives. Now, this is not a replacement for therapy. Therapy is a beautiful tool, a beautiful resource for some people and for some people, therapy keeps perpetuating an identity, a self-image of something's wrong with me and I'm broken. And so what we do within the school of self-image is that we don't see ourselves as broken, number one, no one is. We're all amazing, beautiful humans who have limiting beliefs, who have our own challenges that we get stuck at.

But when you can think beyond them, when you can feel beyond them, when you can dress beyond them, when you can create an environment beyond them, that future will begin to pull you towards it. And that is exactly what we do. So if you want to join us, and in my opinion, if you are wanting to live an extraordinary life and you're stuck, this is a no-brainer. The doors are open for a limited time. What I know to be true is that the women within the school of self image who commit to this process are going to be blown away in 2023. They're going to end the year thinking, oh my goodness, I cannot believe that I did that this year because we are going to become the women who do that. So go to schoolofselfimage.com/join and let's do it. Let's go. I cannot wait to see you inside.

Now, today I want to share with you some habits that have changed my self image. So first of all, what is a habit? A habit is anything that you repeatedly do.

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It's brushing your teeth, it's looking at your phone, it's making your bed, it's drinking coffee every morning. The things that you do every single day without even thinking, it's just like installed software of how you run is a habit and your habits are creating your entire life. And the reason why they're creating your entire life is because your habits confirm your current identity and you will always take action to prove yourself true. You will always take action subconsciously to live in harmony with your current self-image. So it's the situation where your habits are reflecting your self-image back to you, and your self-image determines your habits.

So we need to change our habits to change our self image, and we need to change our self-image to change our habits. So what do we do first? And the simple answer is you must work on both. But what usually ends up happening is we start the new year and we're like, you know what? This is the year I'm going to work out every single day so that I can finally lose weight. And you leak the habit to the outcome that you want, and this is how we get it wrong. When I started to practice habits to create a new identity versus focusing on the outcome, that's when I was able to gain crazy massive momentum in my life. And the outcome is a result of the changed identity. But whenever I go about creating a new habit, I am doing it for the sole purpose of changing my self image, changing my identity.

And I know because I've done it enough now that when I do that, the result will come because I will subconsciously be working to prove myself true. So let me give you an example. This year, the habit that I am practicing is I have committed to walking slash run a minimum of one mile every single day. And I have a couple of exceptions that I've already stated ahead of time. Now, I could easily link this habit to an outcome, to a goal that I want to achieve in the future. So let's say, for example, I want to get ripped this year, although I don't know that walking just a mile a day will get you ripped. But let's just say for the sake of this example, that's the goal. If I wake up every day wanting to walk or run a mile to get ripped, there's a problem with that.

And the problem is, if I don't see myself as a fit woman, I will always be working against myself. And so what I'm doing is I am doing this for the purpose, the outcome I want is to have a self image of a woman who is active every single day. I am active parts of the week, like I go to the gym, but there are days when I'm working that I just don't really get up and move a lot, and that will not be this year because my word of the year is energized and I want to be physically, emotionally, mentally energized. And so part of that for me is a movement getting into motion. So I am practicing this habit to change my identity to that of an active, energized woman. And I know when I really begin to feel it embody it, me getting up and walking, running a mile will be the easiest thing ever because that will be my identity.

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And that is the secret to changing habits. Do it for the purpose of seeing yourself differently and trusting the outcome will come. Another example is let's say you want to create a net worth of a million dollars. That's the outcome you want. So you're like, okay, this year I'm going to save money. And you start putting money away for the sole purpose of reaching that goal. I want you to have a net worth of a million plus, but changing your focus from the million dollars to I want to practice this habit to create a wealthy self-image. And every time you save that money, you're like, I'm wealthy. I am wealthy. What I know to be true is that when you see yourself as wealthy, you're going to create that result with ease in the external world. And this is why focusing on self-image habits is so powerful.

And for those of you within the membership, there is an incredible class in there called self-image habits. And the workbook takes you through creating your plan. It takes you through a habit inventory, it challenges you to set up your life with these habits that will change your identity. So make sure that you find that class within your membership and go through that work if habits is something that you know need to focus on. In addition, there's a class that we're currently in for the month of January that's habit focused, which will be a great support for you as well. I'm really focused on habits this year because I know the habits, that's what's creating your life, the good and the bad. And so as we begin to elevate our habits and do so in the aim and with the intention of changing our identity, that's when we start to get momentum in our lives.

And so when I was prepping for this podcast, I was thinking about the habits that have changed my self image the most, that had a big impact on how I see myself. And so I thought it would be fun to share some of these habits with you. So the first one that has had such a big impact is the habit of speaking kindly to myself. Years ago, I realized that I wanted to be a woman who was confident, who had her own back, who was her own best friend because the other way was not working, beating myself up, tearing myself apart, extending myself absolutely zero grace was not effective. And so I drew a line in the sand with myself and said, listen, this is no longer allowed. I want to practice the habit of speaking kindly and lovingly to myself. And with any habit, it's not easy at first, especially when you've been practicing another habit that's an opposition of it for so long.

And for me, the words that I had used against myself for years was very unkind. And so those neural pathways and that default mechanism was in place. Without me even trying, my brain would go to, you're a loser. You're not good enough. That's just where my brain would go. And so I had to constantly redirect my brain. I'm like, oh, nope. That's not who we are now. That is not what we are practicing. That is not the habit of the woman that we're becoming.

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And I practice that habit so much for the purpose of having a self-image of a woman who loves herself and has her own back. And now it's so rare for my brain to go to the dark places that it used to go in terms of how I speak to myself. Now, I can visualize some crazy stuff for the people I love, always worried are they okay?

And every once in a while, the thought will come up. Well, you're a loser. You're not good enough. But it's not as often, and I just don't go there. When it pops up, it's so easy for me to redirect because I've been practicing a new habit for so long, and this is a habit that I recommend for every single one of you. In fact, when you come into the school of self image, one of the rules that I have is that you are kind to yourself. I have very few rules for the membership, but one of them is you must be kind to yourself. And if I ever hear you not being kind to yourself, I'll often say, don't speak to my friend that way. I'll become a bodyguard between you and you because I know that the results that you're trying to create in your life, whether it's to grow your business, to have a better marriage, to lose weight, to get your house decluttered and organized, whatever it is that you want, I know without a shadow of a doubt that being kind to yourself is the key.

Now, some of y'all mistake kindness for just not caring and letting yourself get by with some crazy stuff. That's not it. Sometimes the love we extend to ourselves is tough love because you want the best for yourself. So I'm not talking about just being apathetic. What I'm speaking about is practicing the habit of love and grace and kindness towards yourself. Probably the kind of energy that you bestow upon almost everybody else in your life but you. What if you just made this the year that that is no longer how you operate, and you created a whole new habit of being kind to yourself? If you just did that, your life would change in the most beautiful and magical ways. Okay, so that was one habit that really, really changed my self-image. Another habit that changed my self-image was practicing the habit of eating until elegant satisfaction, or another way of saying that, not overeating.

And listen, for years I tried not to overeat and it would backfire. Before you know it, I was going back for seconds and for thirds, and I was so frustrated because all I wanted to do was to lose weight. I wanted to feel good in my body. I was tired of this struggle, and now I can look back and I can understand it. I was trying not to overeat within an identity of a woman with a weight problem. Can you all see how that doesn't work? But when I started to practice the habit of eating until elegant satisfaction with the sole purpose of changing my identity to be that of a naturally slim woman, then it started to stick the habit. So if we go into my mind and just watch my brain, I imagine that this is what was happening.

Before when I was trying not to overeat, I had my brain saying, but you have a weight problem. You're fat. You have always struggled with this, all past focused thinking.

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But when I started to practice the habit with the intention of changing my identity, my brain was like, or I was telling my brain, no, this is who we're becoming now. We are practicing being a naturally slim woman. And there was less resistance because my intention was not to lose the weight. In that moment, my intention was to have the identity practice, the identity of being a naturally slim woman. And my brain could buy into that. My brain was like, yeah, this is I guess what we're doing. We're practicing what it's like to be a naturally slim woman, not you're so fat, you're overweight, you have a weight problem. And then me trying so hard to not overeat. So I really began to align my energy with what I wanted by practicing the identity of who I wanted to be.

And then as you can guess, the result eventually became. And it wasn't so hard then because I had changed my identity in the process. Another similar habit around my weight loss journey and becoming a naturally slim woman was I started practicing the habit of only eating quality foods. So what that looked like is I didn't go through the drive-through at Taco Bell any longer and get Nacho's Bell Grande, because when I imagined the naturally slim version of me that I wanted to be... Now everybody's going to have a different version. But she really was a food snob, and I wanted to be her. I wanted to be the kind of woman that looked at her body and loved her body enough that she would look at certain foods and just be like, no, there's no way that that is going into this temple.

Now, think about this, I was also practiced being kind to myself, so I wasn't beating my body up all of the time with negative words. I was practicing being a woman who's kind to herself and also practicing being naturally slim. And so you put those two together and I was being loving to myself. I was practicing that. And the result, it's just like you can see this momentum building because my identity was shifting. Even walking through the grocery store, I would try on the identity of a food snob, and where is she shopping? Guess what? She's on the perimeter of the grocery store. She's shopping where there's fresh fruits and vegetables and little bit of cheese. She's like on the outskirts of the grocery store. She limits her time down the aisles where all the processed food is. And so I practiced those habits to prove to myself that this is who you're becoming.

Now, as you can imagine, the brain loves to remind you of the past as well as probably your family, right? Oh, wait, this is who you've been. What's happening? And I just had to remind myself, oh, no, no, no, no. We're not living back there. We're living here and over there in future land. So the question really boils down to are you going to feed your past or feed your future? Because both will present themselves to you. In this moment, you can spend time feeding the past and thinking about it and ruminating on it and talking about it. Or you can feed your future in practicing habits of your future self.

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Another habit that had a huge impact on my self-image, and when I say huge, I'm talking about massive. And it was the habit of getting dressed on purpose every single day.

I wanted to see myself as a worldly, sophisticated and self respectful woman. And when I thought about that version of me, she was not hanging out in her PJs. She wasn't wearing oversized clothes, trying to hide her body. She wasn't just reaching for any old thing in her closet. No. Her closet was full of clothes that look good on her. And when she woke up in the morning, she woke up with purpose. She woke up with an intention, and she dressed for it. She dressed for her days like she meant it. And so I began to practice that habit because that's how I wanted to see myself. And then the craziest thing started to happen, you all, people started to treat me differently. Opportunities started to show themselves. And I was just reading from one of the School of Self-Image members how she's had the exact same experience by changing her style and showing up on purpose.

She's making more money, she's attracting opportunities, and she feels so much better about herself because when we respect ourselves, we just feel better about ourselves. And how you appear to yourself, how you dress, how you treat your body is a form of self-respect. So for me now, it's crazy to visit old pictures of myself. I look at them and I'm so far from where she was that it's almost like I'm looking at someone I don't know. But then when I really think about it, I can get into her mindset and I'm like, oh yeah, girl, I remember how you used to think and feel about yourself. But now I see myself as someone who has style, as someone who dresses well, as someone who... I just expect certain things from the world now that that version of me did not expect, and it's because I practiced self-image habits, and this was a big one.

You think about it like you're with you all day. You're looking down at what you're wearing, or you're looking at a reflection in the mirror. And that reflection is confirming a self-image that you hold about yourself. So as you begin to change what you see in that mirror, you begin to change the dialogue in your head. Now, this only happens when you are practicing things with the purpose of changing your identity, because there are people who change the exterior and never change the interior, and that's not what we do within the School of Self-Image. Our actions are always in support of our futures that we want, and therefore, in shaping our self-image on purpose and style was huge, huge for me. Another habit that had a really big impact on my self-image was investing money. So I know that some of you all listen to this, you struggle with money mindset.

You have a lot of fear and scarcity around money. And listen, I get it, especially for those of us who grew up poor. It's a thing, and it's not easy to get out of that.

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But one of the things that my brain was always telling me is like, I don't have enough money to invest. That's something that only really wealthy and rich people do. But when I thought about the wealthy and rich version of me, she invested her money. And so years ago, what I started to do is I started to put away a hundred dollars a month. Now, in that moment, that felt like a lot of money, and it was, I love a hundred dollars, but I also know that we recalibrate our lives to what's important. We will figure it out. And when I started to do that with the purpose of seeing myself as wealthy and seeing myself as someone who I can trust with money and who invests money, when I started to practice this habit for that purpose, it started to have this bigger effect that began to spill over into other areas of my life.

Because what I was really doing is I was practicing the art of discipline, which by the way, there's a whole workshop in the membership on that. If you have not watched it, go watch that class. It's really, really good. But I was confirming to myself that I'm a disciplined woman, and specifically in this area around money, but feeling disciplined around money helped me to be more disciplined with my food, more disciplined with my exercise, more disciplined eventually when I started a business with my business. And the result is over time, that money has compounded. And now I have physical evidence for the identity that I practiced years ago. Now, just like with the food, imagine if I had been saving money to get rich in that moment, I would've been frustrated because I was thinking like a poor person. Because that's what poor people do, just like overweight people, when you have that identity, you want to lose weight fast.

And if you're not seeing results fast enough, then you give up because you still have an overweight mentality. But when I was practicing this habit with the intention of creating a wealthy identity, then I could just slow everything down. I wasn't in a rush. I just wanted to do that a hundred dollars savings investment every month to prove to myself and to collect evidence that this is who we're becoming. We are becoming a wealthy woman. The other habit that had a big impact on my self-image that not many people saw, in fact, only a few people have seen, but it changed my life. And this is around style, but this is deeper. It's underneath. It is your underpinnings. I started to only wear well-fitted and beautiful lingerie, and I have been preaching this for years. In fact, for any of you all who took my program back in the day called Slim, Chic, and Savvy, this was one of the things that I required you all to do.

Go get fitted properly for bra and refuse to wear janky, holy old underwear and bras that are stretched out and falling off your shoulder. And I did this because when I went to France for the first time, I noticed that there were lingerie stores that felt like on every corner.

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And I started to be curious about French women and who they must be to really honor and cherish lingerie to the extent that they apparently did based on the supply and demand. And if you all have been around for a while, you know that I went through this period of just being in awe of French women. Now I'm just in awe of all women. I think we're all amazing, but that was what I needed to go through. I just thought, oh, they symbolize who I thought I wanted to be at the time, especially their sense of style and their sense of femininity and their sense of allure and mystery.

That was something that I felt was so far removed from who I was at the time. And so I was like, lingerie must be the key. That must be the secret that no one has told me about. So I went to Chantal Thomass in Paris when I was there, and I bought my very first set of beautiful lingerie. And that just set off this chain of energetic events within myself. By wearing that lingerie, I started to see myself as feminine and as worthy and as respected to myself. And it really did change how I saw myself because no one else was seeing it except for my now ex-husband at the time. But I saw it, I felt it, and it mattered. And that's what really happened. Putting on beautiful, well-fitted... Because we don't need to be uncomfortable, but well-fitted lingerie was a way to confirm this identity of you matter.

And when you know that you matter in the world because you matter to yourself, other things start to happen, you start putting up boundaries, you start giving yourself permission to go after things. So it was about so much more than the lingerie, the last habit that I'm going to talk about today because I have more. But this one had a big impact on my self image, and that is the habit of having fresh flowers in my house at all times. Years ago, I went to Madam Clement's house. This was this lovely French woman who lived in the south of France, and she had these gorgeous bouquets of flowers all around her house. And I was just in awe, and I was also taken back. I'm like, this is wasteful. Why would she do this? That must be expensive. So it was a lot of money scarcity around this.

But if I were being honest with myself, I wanted that. It was so beautiful and thoughtful. And so I came home and I bought an \$8 bouquet of tulips from Walmart. That is where my flower journey began, in Walmart, which means it can begin anywhere, my friends. But that became a habit, and I did it because I wanted to see myself as a woman who took care of her beauty. And when I say take care of your beauty, a lot of people go to how you take care of yourself. And that is one aspect, but it's also how you take care of the beauty in your environment. And every time I looked at those flowers, it was reconfirming this new identity. Number one, it was reconfirming a wealthy identity because when I thought about the wealthy version of me, she's not so scared of not having money, that she's not willing to pay \$8 for a bouquet of tulips.

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But it also confirmed to me that I am a woman who creates beauty. I am a woman who cares about her surroundings. And again, just like with all of these other habits that I've shared with you, there was a compound overflowing effect on the other areas of my life. Because as I stepped into this identity more and more, I started to create more evidence for it. And so now it's artwork. Now it's taken the time to wash my face properly at night. It's like all of these other habits came from that one habit because it changed my identity. And we will always, always work to prove ourselves true. However we see ourselves, whatever our self image is, we're always going to be undercover working to stay in harmony with that.

So when you begin to practice habits with the purpose of changing your self image, don't be shocked when other amazing things begin to happen in the rest of your life because you're going to start working to prove yourself true. And this is why I love this work so much. It's why I love working with women around their self-image, helping them to elevate their style, helping them to elevate their environment, and therefore elevate their mindset. Because I know that when you begin to see yourself as that version of you that's in the future, you'll begin to create that future with so much ease and fun and excitement. So what are habits that you are being called to practice this year? And if you want the support of me and the incredible School of Self-Image community, come and join us. Here's what I'll promise you. It'll be the best investment that you make in 2023. Go to schoolofselfimage.com/join, and I cannot wait to see you inside. Cheers, my friends. I'll see you in the next episode.

Hey, have you grabbed your free copy of the School of Self-Image manifesto? If not, what in the world? Head over to schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto 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.