

EPISODE NO. 327

Pain Pushes

(AKA The Power of Being Fed Up)



Do you struggle to take action? Do you find yourself sabotaging your efforts even though you have these amazing, extraordinary goals? If so, maybe what you need is a good old pain push, and that's what we're talking about 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 beautiful friends. I wish you all could see me right now. I am fully clothed, under the covers in my bed, recording this podcast. My new setup at my townhouse that I'm renting is an interesting one. I actually love my new office. It's on the bottom floor, and it's open and it's huge. It's so big.

The problem, however is that there's no way to close it off. You walk in and there's the office, and then you go up some stairs, and the middle floor is the living room and the kitchen. Then on the top floor are three bedrooms.

Right now, I have quite a few people in my house, and they're trying to be quiet, but they're not. I finally got fed up and decided to record my podcast in my bedroom, in my bed.

Speaking of being fed up, that's what today's episode is all about. What are you fed up with? What are you tired of tolerating with yourself?

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Now, I know we can answer this when it relates to other people, probably very easily, but the ability to be honest about what you're fed up with yourself about is so powerful. It can be an amazing catalyst.

I shared a story in the edit that came out the same day as this podcast. The edit is a weekly newsletter that we send out that, is so good. If you are not getting it, what in the world? Head over to shoolofselfimage.com/edit. Get on the list. We send it out every Wednesday.

I talk about me being fed up, and I've had many moments in my life, where I reached a point where I was like, "Something's got to change. I just cannot continue like this." Usually, it's those moments when you've hit rock bottom.

I like to call these pain pushes. You get pushed because of the pain. The pain, literally can push you out of it because we are wired to avoid pain and to pursue pleasure. Most people will choose to avoid pain before they will choose to pursue pleasure. Pain can be a very powerful catalyst.

For me, the story that I shared in the edit this morning, and it's one of those pain pushes that I needed, and it was definitely a rock-bottom moment.

I was driving home from dropping my daughter off at school. She was probably around, I don't know, seven, eight. I was battling with my body and food. I had bulimia, and I was constantly obsessed with my weight, with food, with my body, with trying to be perfect. It was so consuming and so overwhelming, and I did not know how to get out of this cycle.

Many mornings a week, I would do this. I'm not proud of it, but now I can tell this story and hope that it inspires someone out there who might be dealing with something similar.

Many mornings, I would drop her off and I would go buy Dunkin' Donuts. It was halfway between her school and my home, and my husband at the time, he would be at work. I looked forward to this time. It was almost an escape from the world.

I'd stop at Dunkin' Donuts and I would get a dozen donut holes, an apple fritter and a glazed donut. I would get a God awful amount of food, and I would drive home and I would start eating it before I got home, and I would get into the house and I would just eat.

There would be such an excitement to this behavior, followed by this sense of deep shame and sadness because I would eat and then I would purge, and then I would feel so bad about myself, but I did it in my own little secret world.

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I'll never forget this particular day. I dropped my daughter off and I was in the process of eating my donuts. She calls me from school and says, "Hey, mom. Do you think you can come have lunch with me?" I told her, "No."

It's like, I chose to date my sugar and my fat instead of going on a date with my daughter. I'll never forget, that was a rock-bottom moment for me. I looked at myself and said, "Girl, you're missing time with your daughter. You're missing time with your life. You are destroying your health. This has got to stop."

That was a defining moment. That was a moment I made a decision that I was done. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, as my grandmother used to say. That, what I call a pain push was the catalyst to get me to create so much change in my life.

I've been thinking about that moment a lot because I've had several big moments like that, where I felt like I was at rock bottom. Maybe some of you all are listening right now and you're thinking, "God, I feel like I can't go any further down."

This could be a blessing in disguise. This could be the catalyst that you need, to get you moving in a different direction. The way I like to think about it is, when you're down, you got two choices. You can stay down or you can get up. Right?

That was a moment where I was like, "This is low. I'm at one of my lowest points. I'm down. Am I going to stay there or am I going to get up?" Then the work comes in. It was a decision, but then I had to practice living out that decision every single day, and that's a lot of the work that we do within The School of Self-Image.

Talking about self-image, when I thought about myself, that's not how I wanted to see myself. Now, the crazy thing is, the outside world, they didn't see that side of me. I was really good at pretending. I was really good at putting on a happy face. I was really good at looking like everything was okay, but I knew that I wasn't okay.

It is hard living a double life. It's hard having that lack of congruence, that misalignment. Not only are you battling yourself, you're battling this double life that you're living, and it's exhausting.

For me, I had hit rock bottom and I needed that pain push to get me out. However, I want to believe that we don't have to hit rock bottom in order to make changes. I've been playing around with this idea of pain pushes before the pain.

This came to me when I was actually at dinner with a girlfriend of mine right before I left Denver. She was sharing with me how she's been feeling guilty about spending time with her husband and her son, and she'd rather work, but she knows that, that's not what she really wants to do. When she thinks about her life and her future and her legacy, she wants to put more time and focus on her family. She's just really torn.

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Even though she wants to spend more time with her husband and her son, she finds herself working a lot because that's very familiar and that's what she's used to doing. She was trying to figure out how to break the cycle.

I said to her, I'm like, "Listen, I'm not going to coach you right now. I just want you to think about this." I'm like, "Think about, if you continue this behavior with your husband specifically, what do you think's going to happen? The behavior of ignoring him, not going out with him, neglecting the relationship. What do you think's going to happen over time?"

We started to talk about it, and she was like, "Oh, my God. I could see him, maybe having an affair. I could see him, maybe leaving me. I could see him finding someone who values him, and treasures him, and gives him all of the love that he deserves."

Then she started to see her son spending time with her then ex-husband, and maybe his new wife, and her being all alone in her little house feeling bad because she didn't make the decisions to keep the family together.

Her visualizing the potential pain of what could happen has inspired her to make all of these changes in her relationship. I actually used a imaginary pain push to give me the courage to leave my last relationship, because I was afraid to leave. I had a lot of guilt about it, but I, literally visualized my life, living in that little mountain town of only 100 people in the winter, snowed in, five years from now, and it was so painful to think about.

Now, equally, I started to visualize what my life could be. I was simultaneously using pain and using pleasure to give me the courage to walk away from that relationship, but it was the pain, the pain push that was most effective.

Now, I don't want to spend the majority of my time imagining and thinking about pain. That's not what I'm suggesting, because if we focus on pain too much, we will create pain. What we focus on, grows. I do think it's so valuable to use a pain push for the sole purpose of getting you moving away from the pain and then focusing on the pleasure of what you're moving towards, because a lot of people just sit around and focus on what they don't want. They focus on the pain and they just keep their focus on that, so that becomes their experience.

What I'm suggesting is that you focus on that just enough to get you moving in the opposite direction. Are you with me? This can be so effective when it comes to achieving your goals.

In fact, I see this happen a lot of times with some of my weight loss clients. They will start to think about where they're going to be a year from now, five years from now, 10

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years from now, if nothing changes. What they see is so disturbing and so painful that, that gives them the oomph that they need, to start making changes.

Then, what I want them to do is start to look ahead into their future, and getting excited about the woman they're becoming. Getting excited about, how taking care of themselves and eating well is going to give them energy, and how that energy is going to help them create other dreams that they have.

How they're going to be able to play with their grandkids, and how they're going to be able to fit into that dress, and how they're going to feel so proud of themselves. We do focus on the pleasure, but sometimes, my friends, it takes a good old pain push to get you going.

If you find yourself, not taking the action that, you know, deep down you want to be taking, but you just keep sabotaging yourself and procrastinating, think about how you can use pain as a way to motivate you, to get the momentum going. How can you use pain as a way to get you into action?

I think about people who smoke, and I saw this a lot when I worked as a critical care nurse. You would have someone who smoked for years, and they would try to quit and they were unsuccessful. Then they get a cancer diagnosis and they can quit just like that. It took a pain push, to get them to quit. Knowing that pain can be a great motivator to get you going, to get you started.

Now again, I don't think it's a great fuel to keep you going. Some people are constantly taking action out of, fear of pain, and that isn't good at all. However, if we know that we are wired to avoid pain and pursue pleasure, the question becomes, how can we use that for us?

The other thing that you have to understand is that the brain doesn't know real from imagined. You can think about something and the brain's like, "Oh, we're in trouble," just from visualizing it and thinking about it.

Knowing this, how can you visualize pain in a way, to inspire you to take action? Now, this may go against what is out there and what a lot of people say, and I think I've probably even said in the past, "You don't want to fuel your action with negative emotion." However, if it helps you to make the change that you are wanting to make, is it a bad thing?

What I've come to learn in this world of personal development with myself is that there is no one truth. There are nuances to everything. There's no one formula. I think everybody's wanting the formula. They're wanting the model, they're wanting the

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method. They're wanting the A to Z. They're wanting the step by step to living an extraordinary life, and there's not one.

I teach the self-image method and I think it's brilliant, but there's even nuances in that, that I always tell my clients. I'm like, "Listen, take what serves you and let go of the rest. The wisdom is within you. Don't outsource that to me or anybody else. You have a brilliance within you, and I'm simply here to help you figure out what that is. So, if a pain push helps you to take the necessary action, if that's what you need to start moving away from the thing that keeps hurting you, and point you towards the pleasure of, the possibilities of your future, I am all for it."

Why not? Why not use whatever works? I want you to think about something that you deeply, deeply want. What is a goal that you have? Within The School of Self-Image, I have everyone choose an extraordinary goal. I want you to play around with this concept of using pain to get your butt into action, to get you going.

Maybe you want to visualize the pain, if you continue to do what you're currently doing that's causing you to create results that are painful, that's causing you not to live the life that you know you're here to live, and allow yourself to sit in that for a moment. Allow yourself to marinate in it.

Allow yourself to be with that painful vision just for a moment or two, or however long it takes for you to be like, "I am fed up. I am fed up and I am ready to make a change," because this could be your defining moment. This could be the moment where you decide, and everything changes.

Don't be afraid of a good old pain push. Have a beautiful, beautiful week, my friends. I cannot wait to see you in the next episode. Cheers.

Hey, have you grabbed your free copy of, The School of Self-Image Manifesto? If not, what in the world? Head over to schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto and get a copy that teaches you how to think and show up in the areas of mindset, style, and surroundings so that you can transform your self-image.