



EPISODE NO. 333

Valuing Your Own Opinion

Did you hear, the School of Self-Image membership is open for enrollment. If you're not in there, what in the world? Come and join us. It is my very strong opinion that this is the best membership on the planet, and we would love to have. You can go to schoolofselfimage.com/join and get in there. And speaking of opinions, do you value your own? Because 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. How's everybody doing? How are you feeling? Tell me something good. I ask my family that every day, I'm like, "Tell me something good, I want to hear what's good in your world." I just spent the last hour on Pinterest and I came up out of that hole wondering, where did that time go? Does that ever happen to you? You go on there to look for one thing and next thing you know you are looking at all the things. But right now, it's so interesting, I am dealing with three obsessions. And when I become interested in something, it's not just a slight interest, it is an obsession, I cannot stop thinking about it, I want to research it, I want to learn everything about it. And for me right now, obviously one of them is pickleball. If you look at my Instagram feed, it's all pickleball videos, and I sit there and just watch them, trying to learn through Instagram.

And then the other obsession that's now showing up on my Instagram feed is, well this one I've always been interested in, but because I'm teaching the style experience I'm

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more interested than usual in the world of style, and so lots of style stuff on my Instagram. And then because I'm building a house I have been diving deep into the world of interior design, and you all, I cannot get enough. I am loving learning all the things about color and skill, and it's very similar to styling yourself, it's just taking a lot of those same principles and applying them to your home. But I've just been looking at interior design ideas on Pinterest literally for an hour. I'm going to have to schedule myself so that I only have certain days that I'm allowed to work on my house stuff because it's so much fun. And it's the first time I've had my own house, so of course I am just obsessed, and I'm so excited to share this journey with you all, it's going to be fun.

Now, one of the things that I have noticed, because I've hired an interior designer and I'm working with my builder, is that I am being asked to make a lot of decisions. I am being required to have an opinion about what I want and what I like. And I was thinking the other day when they were coming at me and they were wanting the answer to 10 different things, I remember a time in my life where my response would've been, "I don't know, tell me what you think." Does that sound familiar to some of y'all? "I don't know what color I should paint my walls, what do you think I should do? I don't know what kind of doors or windows that I want, what do you think? What do you think I should do? What should I pick?"

And listen you all, I see this so often with women especially. I don't see this as much with men, men seem to have an opinion about everything, and that's not a bad thing. But what breaks my heart is when we, as women, don't value our own opinion, and we value others' opinion way more than our own. And that affects us in so many ways, it keeps us small, it keeps us dependent on other people, and it really does keep us from living our best lives. Because to live your best life you have to be willing to know what you want, you must know what you value, and you must have an opinion about the world, and how you want your world to look and feel.

I see this a lot in entrepreneurship as well, I see women starting their businesses and they want to be saved, they want someone to tell them what to do. They want the blueprint, the formula, they want the step by step play of how to build a successful business and what I can tell you is that that does not exist. Successful businesses are built off of a lot of failures, and those failures came from having an opinion, trying something out, and it not working, but keeping going until you stumbled upon what works. And so I was thinking about why is it that we don't value our own opinion? Why is it that we ask other people their opinion and value it over our own? And I'm really curious what you think, what is your opinion about this? You can find me on Instagram and let me know and let's have a conversation about it.

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But the first thing that came to me, and I was thinking about the years where I did this, because this was a big pattern for me, "I don't know, what do you think? What should I order? What should I wear? Where should I go? What should I name my business? What should I name my program? What should I charge?" Right? I went through this whole same process, and it just kept me super small, it did not lead to a favorable outcome.

So one of the reasons why I think we do it is because we're afraid of making a mistake. That's a big one. So let me find someone that I think has done it well and let me ask them what they think I should do. And the problem with that is listen, I'm all about learning from others and asking questions and getting advice, but never, never at the expense of discounting what you think, of discounting your own opinion. And the thing is, because something worked for someone else does not mean that it's going to work for you.

There's this thing called energy involved, and I believe in energy more than strategy, and one way to increase your energy, to be more high vibe, is to have strong opinions and stick by them. But if you're so afraid of making a mistake you'll never do that. So you have to make peace with the fact that you're going to make mistakes, failure is part of this process, and failure, I think, is a beautiful thing. We have to change our relationship with failure in order to embrace it, because the moment you embrace failure, that's when you are opening yourself up for success.

The other reason why I think we don't value our own opinion is because we don't trust ourselves, and trust is something that you have to create with yourself. When you think about how many times we tell ourselves that we're going to do something, and then we don't do it. How many times we break commitments to ourselves. And so it's hard to value the opinion of someone you don't trust. So to fix that one, start keeping your promises to yourself. Make tiny commitments and follow through on them, and prove to yourself that you are trustworthy to you.

The other reason why I think maybe people abdicate their power and value other people's opinion more than their own is that they get to blame others if it doesn't work out. Have you ever known someone that does that? They come to you and they ask you what they should do, and you give them your opinion and then they do it, and then it doesn't work out and then they blame you. "You told me this is going to work, you told me this was how to do it, you told me to leave, and that wasn't the answer."

I had that happen to me one time and I was so taken back by it. I was like, "Listen, you were just asking for my opinion, now you're blaming me because you did it and it didn't work?" This was a friend, and that's why as a coach you don't tell people what to do, you help them to discover their truth. Because we don't like to be accountable sometimes, and it's so much easier to blame others like, "Hey listen, I just did what

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Steve told me to do, it didn't work out, Steve's fault, I would've done it this way." I'm like, "Why didn't you do it that way instead of asking Steve and doing what Steve told you to do?"

And then the final reason, sadly, that I think we do this is that we've become mentally lazy. Figuring out your opinion takes time, it takes reflection and introspection, and it might even take research to figure out, what is my opinion on certain things? What kind of paint color do I want? What style of home do I want? Those kinds of questions require that I set aside time to really think about, let's just take, for example my home that I'm building, but to think about what it is that I want this home to express and to feel and to embody, and that's some deep work. It is so much easier to turn to someone and say, "Hey, do you think I need a colonial home? That's what you see? Okay, let's do it." And then you get in the home and you're like, oh, this doesn't feel right, this doesn't match my soul. And you can begin to see why, because you didn't do that soul-searching and you chose the easy path.

And so in order to start expressing your opinion, you have to spend time figuring out, what is my opinion? And the reason why I think it's hard for women to do this is that our opinion probably growing up for a lot of us wasn't really encouraged or valued. We were told to be quiet and to listen to what everybody else says, and we began to just be a sponge for everybody else's opinions without being encouraged to come up with our own. And that is exactly why when clients come to me and they'll ask me a question I will be like, "I don't know, you tell me, what do you think?" And it forces them to come up with an answer, it forces them to have an opinion.

If you want to value your own opinion you have to start formulating one and expressing it, and the best way to do this is to begin to answer your own questions first. What should I wear? What should I order? What should I name my business? How much should I charge? Should I go on a date with this guy? Start answering those questions first, before you ask anyone else, what is your answer to that? Now that does not mean that you don't run your answer by someone, or even ask them their opinion, but you never do it without answering it for yourself first.

The second thing I encourage you to do is to practice expressing your opinion, especially if you are someone who usually is in the back of the room, and you stay small and you stay quiet and it's really uncomfortable to express your opinion, this is your work, your opinion matters in the world, and it matters more than anything to yourself. You have to show yourself that you are worth it, you have to show yourself that you matter, and as long as you are holding your opinion back and not expressing it, you keep confirming a self-image that doesn't serve you. You keep confirming that you don't matter, your opinion doesn't matter, no one listens to you.

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But I want you to see that you're the one that's creating that cycle, and the best way to break that cycle is to begin to speak up, begin to express yourself, begin to value your own opinion. Because again, it's unique to you, it comes from your unique circumstances, your values, your perspective on the world, your loves, your dislikes, it's like a fingerprint to you. So if you're so busy just soaking up everybody else's opinion, you're not getting to the truth of you, and you're not allowing us to see that.

One of the things that I want you to do, and if you're at home right now you can do it, don't do it if you're driving, but take out a piece of paper, or your journal, or you can even pull out your phone and open up to the note section, and I want you to come up with three strong opinions that you have and just write them down. This is the first step to valuing your own opinion, is to begin to be curious and figure out what are my opinions, because you have them.

For me, one of my strong opinions that sometimes people disagree with is that what you wear matters, it matters a lot. And people will tell me, "Oh no, Tanya, it's what's in your heart that matters," and I'm not going to argue with that one, obviously. But when you're standing across the room from someone, I can't see your heart, I see what's on your body, and it matters. Now, that's my opinion, and some people will disagree, and that's okay. They have strong opinions, and I respect that. But from my experience in my life, this is an opinion that I hold strongly.

Another opinion that I have is that coaching is one of the best investments you'll ever make in yourself. I think it's more powerful than investing in your 401(k), and people have argued with that. They're like, "Obviously you would say that, you're a coach." No, I say that, and I am a coach, because I believe that to be true, it's changed my life, and now I get to support other women using these tools.

I also have a very strong opinion that sometimes the best way to change yourself is to change your environment. Now you may hear that and think, yeah, obviously Tanya. But there are people who will argue that you shouldn't change your environment, you shouldn't change your circumstance, you should figure out how to be happy where you are, and there is some truth to that. But as someone who has changed my environment a lot and I've seen the result of that, I do deeply, deeply believe that sometimes moving to a new city, getting out of the relationship, getting into the relationship, changing jobs, can be one of the best gifts that you give yourself if, and this is big if, if you are doing it for the sole purpose of giving yourself a shot at thinking better thoughts. That's the only reason. If you're doing it thinking that where you are is the reason why you feel so bad, then you're probably just going to recreate it in the next place, because you're blaming the environment. But if you're doing it knowing if I place myself in this up-leveled, high vibe environment, it is going to be so much easier for me to think better thoughts.

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And so those are three strong opinions that I have that people have been upset with me over. But these are opinions that I'm willing to fight for, and I want you to figure out what those are. But then there's just the little opinions about what should I name my program? I don't know, you tell me. Come up with a name, test it, see if it works, see if people like it. If not, come up with another one. And that's the kind of stuff that you can begin doing in your daily life.

And that leads me to the third thing that I encourage you to try so that you can start to value your own opinion. In order to value your own opinion you must make decisions. No more indecision, no more asking other people what you should do, and begin to decide for yourself. What do you want to order? You decide. Where do you want to go to eat? You decide. Where do you want to go on vacation? Decide. Begin to get in touch with your unique opinion, what you want, what you don't want, and value it.

We're going to be talking about queen energy over the course of the next week, we're actually right now in the middle of the royal treatment, and so that's all about living in that queen energy. And one thing that a queen doesn't do is she doesn't abdicate her power. She doesn't put other people on a pedestal where she looks at them and thinks, oh, their opinion must be better than mine so let me ask them, and devaluing herself in the process. I want us all to see each other equally. No one's better than or less than, and we all have different opinions. And again, this does not mean that you don't come to someone like me who's been in business for a long time and say, "Hey, here's what I'm thinking about doing, here's what I've decided, what do you think? Do you see any holes in my plan? Do you see any red flags?" That's very different.

Presenting to me what you've already decided, what your opinions already are, is very different than saying, "Hey, I don't know what to do, tell me what you think."

That's what I want you all to practice, coming up with your own ideas, your own opinions, and then presenting them and letting people support you. But don't put me or anyone else on a pedestal and thinking that we know what's best for you. I'm over here trying to figure out what's best for me, and sometimes that is challenging. How am I supposed to know what's best for you and have an opinion about your life? Now trust me, everybody's going to have an opinion about how you should live, but your opinion matters the most, don't give that away. Let other people support it, because sometimes their opinions can be a little off, and so having people around you that's like, "I don't know about that opinion, there's some holes in that logic," I think is a beautiful thing, but at least you have the courage to have your own opinion.

So what is your opinion? Come up with three strong ones, and I would love to hear them. Come find me on Instagram @TonyaLeigh, share them with me, and have a beautiful week, my friends. I love you, and I will see you on the next episode. Cheers.

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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.