



EPISODE NO. 351

# How to Chill Out

Do you find yourself tensing up? Maybe clenching your jaw? Worried and stressed 24-7? If so, this episode is for you, my friend. We are talking about how to chill out. 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 Lee.

Hello, my gorgeous friends. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. Today I want to talk with you about how to chill out. How many of you are desiring to relax, to enjoy life more, to not be so tense and serious? By the time you listen to this, I'll be right in the middle of teaching a week of calm, which is one of my most beloved trainings that I've ever done. Not only for other people, but for myself. Because I'm not naturally a calm person. I tend to worry. I tend to be anxious.

Now granted, with the tools that I've been teaching and practicing for so many years, it's definitely way better. But even still, I notice a tendency, especially in a couple areas of my life, to be really intense and controlling. And I've been thinking about it a lot. I've been thinking about, is it serving me? And do I want to change it? I had a conversation with Sarah and her boyfriend and some friends around this topic. They were talking about anxiety. And it was really interesting to hear their perspective because I can

## How to Chill Out

relate to it. They're young and they're trying to figure life out. And her boyfriend was saying, anxiety pushes me. Anxiety keeps me going. And I definitely can relate to that because it almost feels like you're running from something.

Something's chasing you and you've got to get away. And that feeling can drive you to actually go out there and make things happen. I'll never forget sitting beside this gentleman at a mastermind that I was a part of who's very, very successful. And we were talking and I was asking him a lot of questions. And one of the questions that I asked him is what drives you? And his answer was, what drives me is I don't want to end up like my parents. And he was like, that's been driving me my whole life. I don't want to be broke. I don't want to have trouble paying for my kids' college. I don't want to have trouble putting food on the table. I just don't want to be in the position that my parents were in. And so if you think about that energy, it's really fear-based energy driving his success. And I can relate because when I first started on this journey, I was running from things. I was running from my childhood.

I was running from the fear of not being able to take care of my daughter. I was running. And that energy actually helped me to create some pretty incredible things. But we can only run so far, my friends, before we need to chill out. You take a break. And I now can see how we can also be pulled. If you think about it, we're driven by pleasure and pain. And most people will do more to avoid pain than they will to pursue pleasure. And so pain can be a big motivating factor to get us up and get us going. But it's not a fuel that I think is sustainable for a really well-lived and beautiful life. And so for me, my work over the years has been to learn how to chill out.

Now, fortunately, I have my father, who has been a great example of how to chill out. He's the chilliest man I know. He is always calm. He is always cool. He's always collected. I've never seen my father lose emotional control. I've never seen my father angry, which I'm finding is so rare. My father always just had this perspective of the world of this is all just small stuff. Even in the serious stuff, my dad was like, yeah, nothing serious really happening. It's just life. And so he's been a great example of the energy of chill for me. And yet when I think about how I grew up in a high anxiety environment where I literally was afraid of a rapture happening every single day and being left behind, I grew up very tense.

I grew up always being on the lookout. Is something about to happen? And because of that, I trained my mind and my body for this tense emotion, fear, anxiety, worry. We can just put them all together. We'll just generalize them for the sake of this podcast.

## How to Chill Out

And so it's like I was trained from a very young age to be tense, to be vigilant, and to be ready. Now, that's not necessarily a bad thing. Again, it can serve you, can keep you safe when you're young. But over time, our bodies aren't designed to be in a state of tension 24-7. And I just find from coaching women for, gosh, almost 15 years now, the majority of people in our culture is stressed most of the time. It's keeping the foot on the gas pedal at full speed 24-7. And we aren't designed to run like that.

We're designed to put the foot on the pedal, get to where you need to go, and then release it. But because we're running, we don't even know what we're running from half of the time, it's like we are exhausting our bodies. We're exhausting our spirits. We're exhausting our minds. And I think this is why it's so important that we learn how to chill out. And we learn the appropriate areas where we want to chill out. There are some areas of my life where I don't want to chill out. It serves me to be intense. It serves me to be ready. Take my business, for example. I don't want to be intense, intense all of the time. But that tension, it's like creative tension, that drive, that focus, it's actually the opposite of chilling out. And it has served me.

Now I do think you can have that tension and that drive from a place that's not worry and not fear. And I feel like that's where I've gotten in my business, but I'm still not chilled out to the point of like, ah, just whatever happens, happens. It's fine. No, it's like I'm focused. I want to help my clients create amazing results in their lives. I want to take great care of my team. I want us to build something that's extraordinary. And so that requires a level of intensity that is not in the category of chilling out. Now I will say there are moments in my business where I'm like, I've done all I can do. Now it's time to chill. Now it's time to trust. And I talk about this during the week of calm, if you all are attending and it's not too late, you can go to [weekofcalm.com](http://weekofcalm.com) and join. Or you can go to [schoolofselfimage.com/forward/slash/calm](http://schoolofselfimage.com/forward/slash/calm). Either way, you'll get there. But I talk about focusing on what you can control and I walk you through my process. And so when I'm focusing on what I can control, sometimes there is a creative intensity to that. That's a beautiful thing. But I'm talking about the intensity of worry, fear that just keeps us feeling this pressure 24 seven that doesn't serve us. But it can be hard.

Chilling out can be hard for many reasons. Number one, we have busy lives. We have lots of things to do like work and chores and responsibilities. And it can feel as if we don't have time to relax, which is a lie. In the school of self image membership this month, we are talking about play. Let's spend our focus every month. We have a focus and this month is about focus. And I talk about how we need to have a harmony of work, play and rest. Like I feel like life can fall into those three categories and different

# How to Chill Out

seasons of our lives. We might be working more. We may want to play more. But I think at all seasons during all seasons of our lives, we need to make sure that we are doing all three. Now it's not going to be equally balanced all of the time. And I think striving for that creates more stress. Sometimes maybe you're in that season of work and you're working a lot, but you still need to create time to rest and to play. But your brain will convince you that you're too busy to chill out, to relax.

The biggest reason I think we have a hard time chilling out is because of our constant worry. We have worries that keep our minds running fast and these thoughts make it hard to relax. The brain will tell you if you relax, something bad is going to happen. And if you listen to that part of yourself, then you will not be able to relax. But I want us to replace that. If you don't relax, something bad is going to happen. Because if you don't relax, eventually your body carries the score. Your body will eventually create a situation where you're forced to relax. And I don't want that for us.

Let's start relaxing before that happens. Because again, the body is not designed to be in a state of stress 24-7. It's unsustainable. I think also technology makes it very hard for us to relax and chill out. And it can be exciting. But they also make us busy all of the time. And it's hard to chill out when you're always staring at a screen. To me, chilling out is not sitting on the sofa staring at a screen. To me, chilling out is having time with myself and quietness. It's having time out in nature. It's hanging out with friends and laughing. It's playing. It's not staring at a screen. I think a lot of times we stare at screens to escape our lives, not to relax and enjoy our lives. And chilling out to me is enjoying your life. I also believe the pressure that we feel to do well, to perform, to provide, can make it seem as if it's very difficult for us to relax and take breaks. The uncertainty, not knowing what will happen in the future can keep us on high alert and trying to control everything. And trust me, as someone who can be a control freak, it's very hard to chill out when you're trying to control the world.

Number one, it's impossible. And number two, it just drains you. And the crazy thing is everything is uncertain. There's nothing that we can do that creates certainty. The only thing we can have certainty in is ourselves and that we're going to show up and we're going to do what we say we're going to do. But everything else is uncertain. And even that, we don't know what may happen that prevents us from showing up and doing what we say we're going to do. And so we have to learn to embrace and make peace with, hey, we're on this adventure and it's all uncertain. So let's go. And then the final thing that I think makes it very hard for us to chill out is our body conditioning. And what I mean by that, I was mentioning it earlier, but when you have been tense most of

## How to Chill Out

your life, when you have trained your body to expect constant cortisol being pumped throughout it and you have literally lived a life where you're not only physically or emotionally tense but it's created physical tension, it's a conditioning that becomes a set point. And this brings me to the topic, my favorite topic of self image. It's everything folks, really is. Because you think about it this way, years and years of you seeing yourself as stressed, seeing yourself as controlling, seeing yourself as anxious, seeing yourself as a worrier and identifying as those things.

Now you've got deep neural ruts in your brain that you're constantly looking for things to prove to yourself that this is who I am. And now not only are you doing this in your mind, your body has also created this set point of how it shows up. Is it relaxed or is it tense? What's its normal mode of operating in the world? And this is why working on your self image, elevating your self image, training your mind and your body for a new identity is some of the greatest work you'll ever do. And it's exactly how I've been able to go from super stressed and worried all of the time to being worried maybe 20% of the time. My worry hasn't vanished. I still have worries, but I will tell you what has changed even in that regards is how I see myself with my worry. I trust myself even when I'm worried. I don't make my worries mean that, oh my God, something's gone wrong. It could happen. I just know that I'm thinking thoughts that create worry for me. And so my self image has changed to a point where most of the time I'm more like my dad now. And it's doing this work with self image because the self image cycle is always proving itself true.

So let's go with an identity that I hear a lot, especially when we were running ads for the week of calm. I heard so many women say, I am a worrier and I am are the two most powerful words you will ever, ever speak. You will always prove it true and you will think that's just who you are. You won't understand that you're the one creating that. But when you identify as a worrier, then your reticular activating system, the part of your brain that's filtering through billions of data every single day from all of the potential inputs, it's looking for things to confirm that identity. It's looking for evidence. And so it's going to cause you to focus not on what's going great, not on what is abundant, but it's going to cause you to focus on all of the little things that you can worry about. So be like here, let's feed this identity. And so in order to chill out, you're going to have to start identifying as a woman who is chill. And this is not easy work. It's great in theory.

I don't understand it in theory, but what I love within the membership is we have tools to help you during this process. And I just realized I haven't even mentioned that we're

## How to Chill Out

open right now for enrollment. And if you've been thinking about doing this kind of work, if you know that your identity, your self image is what's holding you back, or maybe you don't know that, but you're having a lot of problems reaching your goals, I can tell you it's self image. It's everything. I have watched women struggle in areas of their life for years, and they have tried their darndest to get over it. They've gone to therapy, they've read self help books, and they come into the school of self image and within months, they tell me I'm blown away of how this is the missing piece that I just did not understand. We had a woman post in the group yesterday. I just sent it to my team. I'm like, ah, I love this is why we do this work. But she was like, I had a woman that I've known for 25 years, see me yesterday. And she asked me what was going on.

Have you completely reinvented yourself? And the answer is yes, that is what we do within the school of self image. And we do it not just through thought work. Thought work is a beautiful thing. But I think if you just focus on thought work, you'll slow yourself down. is you're just trying to change your thoughts and environments that are aligned with your old thoughts. And so we focus on elevating our surroundings, our environment, and we also use style, how you show up and how you dress, how you carry yourself, how you communicate. We use those two areas to help you to think higher level thoughts and to completely transform your self image. And so the doors are open. Now we open a few times a year. And if this work is something that you want to do, and you're ready to create your after story, which by the way, that is my goal. I want to help 5000 women create an extraordinary after story. And we are we are well on our way. It's so fun to see the submissions that come in.

But if you're ready to create that kind of change in your life and have fun, someone told me the other day, they're like, this membership is not only life changing, it's so much fun. Because the way I see it is our future selves are having fun. And so why would we try to make ourselves miserable? That's not in alignment with who we want to be and what we want to create. And so I really do try to make the membership fun and extremely, extremely effective. It's a unique method, the self image method. You get it as soon as you join.

You also get access to the entire School of Self Image Library. I think we have over 100 classes in there at this point. It's life changing. And I would love, love, love to have you in there. I would love to support you so you can just head over to school of self image dot com forward slash join and let's go. Let's do this work. And maybe the work that you want to do is learning how to chill out, learning how to be a woman who enjoys her life, learning how to be a woman who is vibrant and magnetic. And that is the opposite

## How to Chill Out

of stressed. So again, come join us. School of Self Image dot com forward slash join. So when it comes to chilling out, I've been thinking about it a lot in my life and in many areas, I'm chill now, super chill, laid back, relaxed. And I can say I enjoy my life. I relax a lot. I play a lot. And doing those two things has helped me work in a much more effective manner. I'm more productive than I've ever been. And I'm working less. And it's because during these moments of chilling out and enjoying my life and relaxing, that's when we have our best ideas.

That's when we are our most creative, because it's very difficult to be creative when you're running off of adrenaline, when your brain is trying to convince you that you're about to die and that something bad is going to happen. You can't tap into creativity and possibility and ideas. You're just trying to survive. And I have been there, my friends. I know what that feeling is like. And some people will say to me, but Tanya, it's so easy for you now. Like, look at your life. Listen, here's what I got to say. If that's your excuse. I started doing this kind of work when I was a single mom working full time as a nurse. That's when this journey began. And all I can say, if I could learn how to start doing it then, so can you. Because it's an internal journey. It's not you having to change the world. It's you changing yourself and knowing that over time, the world will reflect that change back to you. And that's exactly what's happened in my life. But there's still some areas where I'm not chill.

One of them being my business. Now, it's not a worry based intensity anymore. It used to be when I first started. I had a lot of doubt. Oh my God, is this going to work? What will people think? Am I a terrible coach? Like I was asking terrible questions and I was stressed a lot and it was a different kind of intensity. Now it's driven by excitement and joy and fun and determination and just an inspiration that drives it. But it's intense. It's not chill. And I want to keep that. That serves me. But I was thinking about some other areas of my life where I'm very intense, I'm not chill and I'm like, OK, do I want to change it? One of them being when I play games. And I've watched how my friends describe me when I'm playing games and I don't even recognize the description that they're making about me. I'm like, are you talking about me? Is that really who I am? And one day I paid attention to me playing games and I was like, oh God, they're right. I literally shape shift when we're playing games.

I turn into someone who is definitely not chill and I ask myself, do I like that? And the answer was actually no. But I think I have equated being intense with being competitive. And so I've been playing around with this question. Can I be competitive and chill at the same time? And I'm living out that question. I'm experimenting with it

## How to Chill Out

because there is a level of intensity that comes from being competitive and I'm very competitive. But I also I was talking to Fonz last night because another area where we're both intense and it's not pretty is on the pickleball court. Like we are out there acting a fool. I would be embarrassed for my associate ladies to see me playing pickleball. They'll be like, wait, is that Tonya Leigh? Because we are out there like not being nice. And not to other people, I'm always kind to the other people, unless they make a bad call. And then I'm like all on them. I'm like, what are you talking about? Like we all clearly saw that that ball was in.

But me and Fonz when we're playing together because we're both competitive, we go at each other like, what are you doing? Like, didn't you see that ball was going out? Like, and people are watching us. And for us, we are not fighting. We're just being intense and competitive. But I've realized I don't want to be that way anymore. And I was telling him last night, I'm like, you know what? I want to practice being a Federer, not a McEnroe. Right, because I always see Federer as competitive with himself, but he has a way of having self-control and just a spirit of civility about him. Whereas McEnroe would just lose it. And people who love McEnroe, they love that about him.

But I'm like, who do I want to be instead of just reacting to my emotions and being the way my emotions tell me I am in that moment? What if I decided ahead of time and I constructed this version of me who plays pickleball in a way that's competitive and chill? Who would she be? What would she look like? And what does she have to think and feel in order to be that? And I'm playing with that right now. But I do want to chill out when it comes to playing games, because I can get very, very emotional. Another area I'm just is a tell-all podcast you all. But another area where I am not chill and it is not pretty and I'm not proud of it. But it's me in the passenger seat of a car. Not chill, y'all. God bless the person in the driver's seat. And I watch myself and as I'm watching myself myself, I'm like, oh, this is not sexy or cute.

But it's like it takes over me this need to control. And that is definitely driven out of fear. I was in a car wrecked when I was really, really young. And I think ever since then, I just have this intense, like subconscious fear of getting in an accident. And so I'm always controlling the other person driving. And these days, that other person is Fonz and he's from California. And y'all know California drivers are different. We argue who are the better drivers, East Coast or West Coast? Of course, I think I am the superior driver, but I always let him drive because I love to be driven. So it's on me. I'm like, if you're so worried, then why aren't you driving?



## How to Chill Out

So it just lets me know it's a control thing. It's feeling out of control. It's the uncertainty. It's the unknown. And the truth is, whether I'm driving or whether he's driving or if I'm just walking down the street, there is unknown of what could happen. And I'm trying to control that. And I just realized the other day, I'm like, I'm done. I'm done with this. And I've since I made that decision, I notice how I want to micromanage him. Slow down, slow down, turn on your signal, turn on your signal. He doesn't believe in a turn signal. And that drives me insane. And I'm trying to control him in order to feel safe. And listen, I'm emotionally outsourcing.

I have a whole podcast on this and I had this big epiphany. I'm like, oh, I need him to drive a certain way in order for me to feel safe. And the reality is, anytime we choose to get in a car, anytime we choose to go out in the world, there is a level of risk involved. And so I'm learning how to chill out in this area. And I'm doing this by calming that part of myself down who is afraid to die. Which is going to happen one day. And that is just the realities of life. Now, we don't want it to happen anytime soon, but we have no control over when that date will be. And so I've just been trying to love and nurture that part of myself that's so afraid. I'm like, girl, I got you.

Even at the end, I'm going to be right there with you going nowhere and just giving myself so much love and compassion and reminding myself in this moment, I am OK. And I will tell you that one thought has allowed me to take some deep breaths and look at the reality of my life. In this moment, I am OK. It's only when I fear the worst. It's only when I fear losing control. It's only when I fear something bad happening. That I tense up and that's just my imagination being misused. And so, you know, I used to be very afraid of flying and now I'm not that afraid. And I don't like turbulence, but I educated myself about turbulence. And whenever I get on a plane and even when I am in the middle of some terrible turbulence, I imagine landing safely. I imagine all is well in this moment. I am OK. And this plane will land safely. And I've been practicing doing that in the car. Like in this moment, I'm OK. And we will arrive safely because listen, if I'm going to imagine something, why not imagine the best? Why not imagine something that allows my nervous system to chill out, take a break, to be calm, to be relaxed.

So to wrap up this episode on how to chill out, I wanted to offer you some practical things that I personally do to chill out more in my life. And the number one thing is to monitor my brain and to question its assumptions. For example, we're going to die in the car when Vance is driving. He's proven time and time again that he can drive well. He's never been in an accident. He always gets us there. And so question a lot of these

# How to Chill Out

scary tells that your brain loves to offer you. But then there's some practical things because I'm a big advocate in really paying attention to your environment. I talked about this last week where we talked about consumptions and what we consume can either heighten our emotions. And sometimes those heightened emotions are intense, beautiful emotions like bliss and ecstasy and excitement.

But oftentimes it heightens the emotions that we don't want to experience as much. The anxiety, the worry, the fear. And so for me, some of the practical things that I've been doing in my life recently that's been super helpful is spending less time on technology. And this is an experiment that I'm doing and I'm not quite ready to talk about it because I'm still in it, but I've been creating this routine around my phone and around technology in general. And so far I've just noticed my nervous system calming down in the most beautiful ways, spending time in nature. Always helps me to chill out and to relax. The other thing that is super important when it comes to chilling out is the company you keep. We just by association, by nature, tend to take on the beliefs and the emotional states of the people that we spend the most time with.

So for example, I've noticed that when I'm with my dad, I just naturally chill out just by being around him. And the same with Fonz. Fonz is very chill. So when I hang out with people who are more relaxed and more chill and calm, it rubs off and I want to be that for other people. And I have noticed that the more chill I become in my own life, the more I attract people who wanting that quality in their lives. And I think right now that's most of the world. Most of the world is running on stress and anxiety. And I think deep down, we just know it's not sustainable. And so we're looking for people that we can be around that will inspire us to show up in a more relaxed way. And so pay attention to the people that you surround yourself with.

Did they increase your negative tension or did they inspire you to take a deep breath and to chill out? And lastly, just for this episode, there are other things that you can do, but I want to just give you a few tangible things to think about. What you consume in terms of food and what you do in terms of exercise, healthy lifestyle choices can help you to relax and chill out. If you've ever had a day where you ate well, you ate good, whole, delicious foods, and maybe you were outside in nature, walking, hiking, you know, the feeling of that it's a feeling at the end of the day of just being relaxed and feeling whole. And I do believe one of the big reasons why it's so hard for us to chill out is that we don't trust ourselves. And so when we make choices that hurt us, that sabotage us, there is a level of anxiety because we can't trust the one that we're with literally. And so I've just noticed when I'm making really good, healthy choices for

## How to Chill Out

myself, I can relax and chill out. Another thing that's very simple that I do often, especially when I can fill myself tensing up is going to the breath.

Yes. Taking nice, deep breaths. And there are many different types of breathing exercises that you can do. And you may be thinking, Oh, Tanya, that's so basic. But oftentimes it's the basics that if we master, make our lives so much more fulfilling. And so if you're feeling any kind of tension right now, if you're feeling stressed, if you're feeling worried, I just invite you to take some nice, deep breaths and remind yourself of my favorite, favorite mantra when I'm feeling stressed. Well, I have two.

One is there is no hurry because usually when I'm stressed, my brain wants to freak me out, tell me I need to hurry, hurry, hurry. And I'm like, no, there is no hurry. And then the second one is in this moment, I'm OK. And guess what, my friend, in this moment, you're OK. Take a deep breath, give yourself a hug and know that chilling out is a practice and you get good at whatever you practice the most. And so if you're someone who wants to practice being chill or maybe you want to practice being confident, maybe you want to practice being vibrant, magnetic, wealthy, whatever it is that you want to practice, it involves you recreating yourself. It involves you changing your self-image. And I would love to support you in doing so. And so if you are called to this work, let's go come join us. School of Self-Image dot com forward slash join. I'll see you all in the next episode. Have a beautiful, beautiful week, my friends. Cheers.

Hey, are you ready to transform your self-image but lack direction and support? If so, I'd like to invite you to join the School of Self-Image. This is an exclusive monthly membership where you'll create your own powerful before and after story through weekly classes and coaching. You'll learn powerful techniques on how to elevate the quality of your mindset, style and surroundings to change how you see yourself and create extraordinary results in your life. Head over to school of self-image dot com forward slash join to learn more.