



EPISODE NO. 365

Slow Growth

It is that time my friend, one of our favorite events of the year is happening very soon. It is called Your Extraordinary Holidays and it's absolutely free to you. I'm going to share with you a proven process to help you create your most fulfilling, most magical holiday season yet. All you need to do is head over to schoolofselfimage.com/holiday. Get registered and I will see you at this fun and festive party. Again, it is schoolofselfimage.com/holiday. Come join us.

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. Let's just jump right into it today. I'm really excited about this episode because I have a sneaky suspicion that this is going to be an episode that resonates with so many of you. If I had to give a theme to the content that I've created this month, I would say that it's all about embracing the slow life. A couple of weeks ago I did an episode called Savoring the Slow Life and I like to think that this episode is a beautiful sequel to that particular episode because one of the things that I often see, and I have personally experienced it myself is this hurry to get to our goals.

I've been thinking a lot about why is that? And I said in the previous episode, it's because many of us think that over there is better than here. But there's also this running that we are doing from our own lives because of the story in our head. We are trying to outrun our own story and you can never do that because wherever you go,

that story still remains with you. And oftentimes, we are running and trying to go fast to prove our worth. We are trying to earn love. We are trying to earn respect. We are trying to earn our place in the world. And when we equate our worthiness with our achievements, we cannot go fast enough because underlying that, there is this belief of I'm not good enough.

And until you change that belief, you're always going to be running to the next thing, chasing that dopamine hit, chasing the accolades, chasing the approval, chasing the love, chasing the money, and it is exhausting. I think about my own journey. When you grow up with very humble beginnings, when you grow up with this belief that you're not that kind of girl, when you grow up feeling like you're not good enough, when you look around and you compare yourself to the people that are doing what you think is way better than you and you seek to prove yourself wrong, what ends up happening is that it's never enough.

And that's what happened to me. It's like I got into this pattern of running. I did not know how to stop. I was on this treadmill that just kept feeling as if it was going faster and faster. And the problem was I was looking around at the outside world and comparing myself and I can never live up to those comparisons. I was seduced by the world of achievement, and I find this to be true in the personal development space which I am in. And I am all for us achieving.

I think it's a beautiful and wonderful thing. I don't think we're meant to just sit around and do nothing with our lives. I want to create and live and experience a life that at the end of it I can look back and be like, "Wow, I am so proud of you." But I know that that does not include me pressuring myself, hurrying and putting my worth in what I accomplish.

The real work is seeing yourself as worthy now and building from that place. The other thing that I want to say about this is that exponential growth, fast growth can be very seductive as well. I do believe that there are moments in our lives where we can have big ahas and big massive shifts. In fact, for me, one of those years was 2020. I experienced a big exponential shift in my self-image. But for the most part, my growth has been very slow.

Let's take my weight loss journey as an example because this is something that my members often ask me about, how long did it take you? And when I first started my weight loss journey, I bought into the idea that it needed to happen fast. And so I was

always reaching for those cliché books like lose five pounds and five days and get skinny quick, any kind of version that promised fast results, I was a sucker for.

I would try these different modalities and what would end up happening is I would lose some weight, but inevitably I would put it back on. It's only when I decided to take the pressure of a timeline off and go at my own pace that I was able to do the inner work required for lasting and sustainable weight loss. I think about my business. I have many colleagues and friends who from the outside are doing way better than me. They're making more money than me. They seem to be way more successful. But I decided a long time ago that I wanted to build a sustainable business with a solid foundation. And so even yesterday I was meeting with my CFO and he was like, "What's your revenue goal for next year?" And I told him that I only want a 10% growth. And he said, "That is very conservative."

But then I explained to him why. I'm going to be making some changes in the business. I am really wanting to work on improving the membership, which is always a desire of mine, but we're going to be focused on that. So it's not going to be a big growth year for us, but I'm going to have a lot of internal growth that I think will set me up for future external growth. But that's how I've approached my business. I've been in business for, gosh, 15 years I think, and I have intentionally done it at a pace that has allowed me to catch up with my own success. Because that's the thing with self-image.

If you grow too fast, and I've seen this with so many friends and colleagues and other entrepreneurs sharing their stories, you can work and grind and really experience some fast growth, but I have seen so many people sabotage themselves. They end up with angry customers, they end up with an exhausted team. They are exhausted, and it's just not sustainable. They have built something that they can't even keep up with. And I always ask why? Because at the end of the day, what matters is that you like your reason for whatever pace that you're going.

And the majority of them realize when we talk about this that their pace is being driven out of fear and ego, and an energy that doesn't feel good. In fact, I was talking to a gentleman who was in the industry and he was telling me how exhausted he is, and I was asking him why? What's going on? And he says, "I've just set these goals that actually don't mean that much to me." But I'm so afraid of failing. I'm so afraid of what my dad will think. I'm so afraid of not making money that I don't know how to stop.

I hear these stories all of the time. What's really interesting is that within the School of Self-Image, I encourage every member each year to choose an extraordinary goal. But

we do a lot of work to make sure that that extraordinary goal is a true goal of the soul, what they really want. Because if you don't choose a goal from a really soulful place, you're going to end up resenting it. You're going to end up being exhausted, going after it, and chances are, even if you achieve it's not going to be that fulfilling. You're just going to set the next goal that you're going to be running off to.

And the whole purpose of an extraordinary goal is just to reveal to you the next version of you. And for some people, oftentimes the goal is to slow down because they've been in this pattern of rushing and pressuring and trying to prove their worth. And so oftentimes they will set a goal that is so out of the ordinary for them. Maybe it's to travel more this year. Maybe it's to cut back their workload. And from the outside in, people may think, "Well, that's not extraordinary. It looks like you're going backward."

But the internal shift that happens is incredible. I see these women come to life. I see them be excited again. I see them having fun on the journey to their goals. And that doesn't mean you don't have obstacles. Obstacles are a part of the journey. But when you change your whole approach, when you change your mindset, when you make a declaration that you are going to enjoy your life and not postpone it until one day when, then goal setting can become delicious, it can become so much fun. But if you are setting goals out of this pressure to prove and to get external validation, it will never ever, ever be enough.

Many of us want that overnight success story and rapid external growth, but moving too fast often backfires while slow, steady progress builds true resilience. Trying to grow too fast can sabotage your efforts. I know so many of you have experienced this. Weight loss is a great example. If your skillset or your self-image lags behind your achievement, you will not only feel like an imposter, but you will most likely sabotage your success because you always work subconsciously to stay in harmony with your self-image.

So for example, we think about rapid weight loss. How many of us have lost a lot of weight quickly only to gain it back? Why is that? Because when you try to grow too quickly, or in this case shed too quickly, oftentimes you haven't practiced the skillset and you haven't changed your thoughts about yourself in relation to the thing that you've achieved. And so you will always work to prove yourself true. And so it backfires.

I think about child stars who crumble under early fame or startup founders who can't scale responsibly. Think about people who win the lottery without proper money

management skills, without seeing themselves as wealthy, that fast growth isn't sustainable because they haven't caught up on the inside first. Prematurely expanding too fast can lead to misery. I've certainly experienced it. If you don't have a solid inner foundation and in the world of business, let's say solid outer foundations, and you don't have the emotional intelligence, quick external gains often leads to self-sabotage, a lot of internal drama and burnout.

I think about entrepreneurs expanding before their teams are ready without having the solid foundations, the repercussions of that. Leaders that are promoted beyond their capabilities. Can you live into it? Yes. But if it happens too quickly, it's too much of a cognitive dissonance for your brain. And oftentimes you will, again, self-sabotage. Again, anyone who becomes famous or wealthy very quickly can often find themselves in this new external state that they're not ready for yet.

A few months ago, I drove down to visit my parents. They live like three hours from me, and they had had a big, big storm the night before. And so as my mom and I were driving into town, there were trees down on her street and she explained to me, she's like, "Yeah. Those are river birches. Those trees grow really, really fast." And because of that, they don't have a solid root system. So those were the trees that the wind took down, but there were also these big oak trees.

Now, these oak trees have taken years and years to grow, but guess what? They were still standing strong because that slow growth allowed them to build and grow deep, deep roots that allow them to sustain the storms, the winds, and whatever mother nature brings to them.

It takes a lot to bring an oak tree down. And that's the way I like to think about slow growth. It may look slow to the outside world, but you are growing deep, deep roots underneath the surface that maybe people can't see, but it's going to be what allows you to have sustainable success. I think about working out with my man, Fons, and he is always about proper form and building a foundation. And so I'll go into the gym with him and I'm like, "Let's get busy. Let's grab the weights. Let's go. Let's grow these muscles." And he's like, "Wait." He was like, "First, we need to stretch and you need proper form and alignment."

Now with that, I may not start growing muscles immediately, but I'm preparing my body to be ready to build muscle in a way that doesn't injure me, and that is sustainable. Yeah, it's not as sexy. It's so much more tempting to go in there and let's pump a lot of heavy weights so we can get fast results. But then you get injured, and so

your attempts to get results quickly can backfire and take you in the opposite direction of where you originally wanted to go.

My experience is that slow growth allows you to build critical inner resources like self-awareness and discipline and resilience and wisdom, and a mature character supports lasting external success. Slow growth focuses you on enjoying the process versus obsessing over the outcomes. You learn to find joy in your small daily achievements. And when you do that, it makes you want to continue to show up. You're not so attached to the outcomes and your lack of them yet that you give up easily or you get super frustrated.

You bring it back to today, and how can I enjoy the process? How can I live today in such a way that makes me proud? What are the small steps that I can take today towards my goals? And again, to the outside world, it may seem like you're barely moving, but think about where you're going to be over time versus the people who are sabotaging themselves versus the people who had that overnight success, but now they don't know how to handle it. They're burnt out, they're frustrated. I've tried both ways and I will take slow growth any day of the week.

So, my friend, I want to encourage you to embrace your unique pace. And sometimes it will be faster, and it's okay if it's slower. Let's be in this for the long game. You will have moments where maybe you're sprinting, but life really is ultimately a marathon. And so keep going. Don't give up. Stay committed and let it take the time it needs to take to grow you into the human that you need to become to sustain lasting success. Have a beautiful week, everybody, and I will see you on next week's 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.