



EPISODE NO. 375

## Strength vs. Comfort

Do you ever feel like you're stuck between Netflix marathons and far-off dreams? Well, you're not alone. We all crave the serenity of the familiar, but we also yearn for the thrill of the unknown. But what if the key to true fulfillment lies not in choosing one over the other, but in finding a graceful balance between them? Ricky Naylor reminds us, "Find a balance between rest and restlessness." Find a balance between the life you dream of and the life you live. Today we are exploring how to weave those seemingly opposing threads into a tapestry of a life both deeply satisfying and wildly adventurous. So grab your snuggly blanket and your hiking boots because we are going to dive into finding your balance between comfort and strength.

Welcome to the School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here's your hostess, Master Life Coach Tonya Leigh. Hello, beautiful friends. Welcome to today's episode where we are talking about a topic that was actually inspired by my man. Some of you all know this phrase that he loves to say because at my events, he leads stretching sessions in the morning, and this is one of his key phrases that he shares with people, and it really is a philosophy by which he lives his life. I've been thinking about this phrase a lot. He says, "Choose strength over comfort."

Now, I don't know about you all, but I love comfort. I love the feeling of the sun shining on my face, a warm cup of coffee, and a fire when it's cold outside. I even enjoy sitting down in the evenings and watching my favorite Netflix shows. I love comfort. But I also know that too much comfort can steal your dreams. Because think about it, what is a comfort zone? It is something that is often very familiar, things that you're accustomed to, they're very repetitive or routine. There's low risk with comfort. There's minimal chance of you failing or encountering any unknowns. It's also very predictable. You know what to expect and how to react. There's a sense of control and comfort. You feel in charge of the situation and your emotions.

And comfort can create low anxiety. You experience minimal stress or discomfort within this space. And I think that's why we often crave it. We want to move towards more comfort because we feel like our nervous systems can settle down. And listen, that's a beautiful thing when it's not a way of life. Because when it becomes a way of life, if you constantly seeking comfort, it's like becoming the anchored ship. The anchored ship, although it's in a calm harbor and it feels safe and stable, and protected from the winds of change, it also binds you to the same spot. You're unable to sail towards those distant shores where your dreams reside.

And the longer you stay anchored, the more the hull just becomes downtrodden with routine, preventing you from sailing off on an adventure that could lead to your most fulfilling aspirations. You see, if your comfort zone was where dreams came true, you would be experiencing your dreams coming true, but it's not. It's off in that unknown, in that mystery of life, and so many people are afraid to step into it because they think, "Well, what if I fail? What if it doesn't work out? What if I get it wrong? What if people judge me?" And that my friend is where strength comes in.

I've watched this play out as I have set out this year to become in great physical shape. In the mornings when the alarm goes off, I've been getting up super early like 6:30 so I can get my workout in so I can get back to work and get everything done that's on my list for the day, and in the morning, guess what? That bed feels so comfortable. It feels protected. It feels full of ease. It feels soft and luxurious, and my brain seeks to stay

there. But I think about the strong version of me, that version of me who has a sense of self-mastery, who doesn't listen to her inner child who just wants the cookie or wants to lay in bed, but she wants to be strong, she wants to be fit, she wants to be healthy. And that's when we need strength. Because without strength, you will never, ever make your dreams come true.

Strength is that inner knowing that you've got your own back, that you are going to do what you say you're going to do, that you're going to handle the obstacles that come your way, that you're going to have courage. And that when things get hard, it's not a reason to quit. It's a reason to become stronger. When I'm coaching women, and especially when I'm coaching myself, I see this pull between craving comfort and wanting to be strong. And I believe both are available and both are necessary to live a beautiful life. Because think about it this way. In fact, the best way to describe it is the other day I walked in and Fonz was taking a nap and I said, "Babe, why aren't you choosing strength right now?" I said, "Are you choosing comfort?" He was like, "No, I nap so I can be strong." And I thought that was such a beautiful way of putting it.

One of the questions that I've been playing with is, "Does this comfort make me stronger?" Think about it. If you are just constantly on the battlefield, if you're constantly in the gym, let's just use that, if you're constantly in the gym every day for eight, 10 hours just pumping iron and running, it's going to eventually probably make you weak because you're not giving yourself the space to replenish and nourish and to rest. You need comfort in order to get stronger. I went to dinner with my friend who came into town, Melissa. Me, her, and Fonz went to dinner and we had this conversation and I said, "Epicurus says that true pleasure is the absence of pain. And if you do nothing but stay in your comfort zone, it becomes painful over time." Think about it, for some people, overeating is comfortable because it's familiar, it's predictable.

It offers a reprieve in the middle of your day when you're feeling stressed. For some people, it's binge-watching Netflix instead of working on their business or cleaning out their closet. They have these dreams, but they're choosing comfort over their dreams.

And so comfort becomes painful at a certain point. Equally, if all you're ever doing is working on your business, if you're never allowing yourself to enjoy a piece of cake if you are pushing yourself too much, if you're overworking, that too may be helping you get results, but you're going to be in pain. That's not sustainable. And so the journey is discovering what is the ideal ratio of comfort versus strength in your life? And for me, I love a 50/50 ratio. Now, in some seasons it might be 60/40. Other seasons, it might be 30/70. But when I look back at my life, I want to look back and be proud that I really did enjoy the comforts of life without guilt.

Because that's the other thing. For some of you all, whenever you try to engage in the beautiful comforts of life, you're beating yourself up, you're having the piece of cake, and the whole time you're not even allowing yourself to enjoy it because you're telling yourself, "I shouldn't eat this. It's going to make me fat. I'm such a screw-up," so you're not even enjoying the thing that you're choosing to do. I want to enjoy it. I want to be present for it. I want to celebrate it. And then I also want to look back at my life and be like, "Girl, you are a badass. I'm so proud of you for taking those risks. I'm so proud of you for not giving up. I'm so proud that you stood up for yourself. I'm so proud of who you've become because you were willing to step outside of your comfort zone. And then when you were in it, you enjoyed it fully."

It's so interesting. As I'm talking, I'm realizing this is a parallel to another concept that I coined years ago called leisurely hustling. You could substitute the leisure with comfort and the hustle with the strength. And you need both. If all you ever do is leisure around, what kind of life is that going to be and are you going to be proud of that kind of life? And for the majority of people, the answer is no, because there's no contribution, there's no risk-taking, there's no going out there and expanding what's possible. But on the other side of the coin is if all you're ever doing is hustling, if you're always running to the next thing, if you're always taking risks and you're not taking a step back to enjoy what you've created, to take care of yourself, to rest, to rejuvenate, that too is out of balance.

Now, I don't believe in a perfectly balanced life, you all, because listen, we all have seasons. There are seasons when we have little kids. Life will most likely not feel perfectly balanced when you have kids. And then there may be seasons where we decide to start a business, and it's not always going to be perfectly balanced. But I do believe in overall harmony. And that requires that you stay mindful. Number one, you stay mindful of what's driving what you're doing or not doing and do you like the driving force. Because some of you are choosing comfort because you're afraid you're choosing comfort because you don't want to feel discomfort. Do you like that reason for not going out there and doing what you're doing?

Some of you are hustling and you are being strong, but you're also depleting yourself and you realize that that too is being driven out of fear. Fear of, "Oh my God, what if I don't prove myself? What if I don't get the validation? Let me go out there and work harder so people will think I'm good enough." Listen, you are already good enough. You have nothing to prove. Now, what? What do you want to do? How do you want to spend your time? If you had nothing to prove, how would you want to live your life? And for me, I would want to live it enjoying the comforts and also really stepping into my strength.

There's something beautiful about seeing what you're made of. And when I'm coaching women, I'm like, "They don't even know yet how strong they really are, but they're about to find out." And there have been moments in my life where I didn't realize how strong I was until I put myself out there until I did the scary things and I didn't die. In fact, I learned so much and I became stronger as a result. And then you come back and you have some comfort to replenish you, so you can go out there and do it again.

So strength is one of those things that you have to build like a muscle. You don't go into the gym after never lifting a weight and then try to bench press 150 pounds. You have to build up to it.

You don't become a superhero overnight. It's about taking tiny brave steps like setting an extraordinary goal that makes your knees wobble. That's what we do within the School of Self-Image. One of the first things I have them do, I'm like, "Let's set a goal

for yourself that is out of the ordinary, that's out of your comfort zone, that makes you a little afraid, that brings up a lot of doubts because that's what we need to work through because comfort loves mediocrity." It's going to tell you to set a goal based on who you are today versus really going after what you truly want. The other thing is to build your strength muscle, you're going to have to embrace the awkward friend of courage, which is discomfort. Stepping outside of your comfort zone will feel strange like wearing someone else's shoes, but that's okay.

Remember, growth happens outside of your cozy corner. It's just like I remember times going into the gym and not really knowing what to do and how to do it. I just picked up a weight and I just started lifting it. And over time I became stronger. I learned more. But it started with that just tiny brave step. Also, you need to befriend mindfulness. It's the secret weapon against comfort's whisperings. One of the things that I do is I have my clients plan for their mental obstacles. They know when they're going after something extraordinary. They already know the voice in their head that's going to tell them things like, "Who do you think you are? This is going to take way too long.

Why don't you just go back to being who you've been? You're not going to get there. You know you're going to fail, right? You're too old for this." These are just our mental voices that love comfort. And they know, "If I can convince her to believe me, she's going to go back to that little cozy corner where we don't have to work so hard."

But with mindfulness, you can observe your thoughts and feelings without judgment and you can choose to react instead of being swept away by fear, and then celebrate every stumble as a victory lap. Because let's face it, you're going to trip along the way. We all do. But instead of wallowing in it and calling it a big failure, just dust yourself off. Learn from that experience. Let it grow you. Let it make you stronger and keep moving. It is that messy, imperfect journey that reveals our true strength.

So how do we navigate the dance of balance between knowing when to cozy up and knowing when to climb, I guess you could say? Well first, listen to your body and your mind. When you're drained, a nap is a strength, not a weakness. When you're restless, a

challenging workout is the recharge that you may need. Listen to both. The goal is to have them both on the same page. Let your body reveal to you what it needs, and then get your mind on board with that decision. Ask yourself the question that I posed earlier, "Does this comfort give me strength?" Is that extra slice of cake fueling your next adventure or weighing you down? Is that Netflix binge that you're doing to avoid something in your life, is it rejuvenating your spirit or stealing your motivation?

Also, embrace the ebb and flow. Some weeks, strength will take center stage. You'll push boundaries, you'll chase your goals, you'll conquer your fears. And then other weeks, comfort might be your guide. You'll rest, you'll reflect, and you'll savor that sweetness of slow living, which y'all know I love. But too much of it is not a good thing. And remember, in all of this, there is no one-size-fits-all formula. This dance is yours. It's a beautiful waltz between what comfort offers you and then also the invigoration of your strength.

A lot of the work that we do within the School of Self-Image is around our future selves. And when I imagine my future self, I don't imagine someone who never works who's just lying on a beach slipping my ties, like that's never... I think sometimes, especially when we're in hard seasons of our lives, we can fantasize about that kind of life, but if we allow ourselves to go there and really imagine it, we would be bored out of our minds because we are here to grow and to expand. And so when I'm thinking about not only my future self, but the members and their future selves, I always see this mosaic of both comfort and strength.

So I want us to do this right now. I want you to paint a picture of the future you. Imagine the you who can face daunting challenges head-on. You're fueled by resilience, built for moments of rest and joy. Imagine the you who savors the simple pleasures and their strength is born from a foundation of self-care and self-compassion. That's the you that I want us to focus on creating, a life that's built from both comfort and strength. Because ultimately, true fulfillment lies not in choosing one over the other, but in mastering the art of embracing both. Have a beautiful week, my friends, and I

hope it's filled with both comfort and strength. I'll see you on next week's episode. 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 [schoolofselfimage.com/join](https://schoolofselfimage.com/join) to learn more.