



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 124

5 Lessons Learned from the Rebrand

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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5 Lessons Learned from the Rebrand

Wow, how do I even start this podcast? You are actually listening to the brand-new French Kiss Life Podcast. We have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to rebrand the entire company and I was trying to figure out what should this new podcast be about and what I decided is that I want to share with you five lessons that I've learned through rebranding the company.

Because whether you realize it or not, you are a personal brand, even if you don't have a company or run a business or sell anything or even if you're not a famous TV chef, you're still a personal brand. A personal brand is nothing more than how the world sees you. It is a combination of your unique skills and experiences and personality. The question is, are you creating your brand on purpose or are you simply being who you've been told you should be?

Bonjour and welcome to The French Kiss Life Podcast, where personal development meets style. I'm Tonya Leigh, certified master life coach and the hostess of this party, where we explore how to live artfully and well. Each week, I'll be sharing inspiring stories, practical tips, and timeless wisdom on how to elevate the quality of your everyday and celebrate along the way. Let's dive into today's episode.

We're going to kick off this episode with a community spotlight. This is the part of the show where I give a shout-out to someone in the community. It may be a reader or a listener to this podcast, it may be a client, or someone on social media. Today's spotlight is on Janet. Janet left a five-star review on iTunes and I absolutely loved the title of her review. It reads, "Tonya, like Paris, is a movable feast."

She went on to say, "Tonya grabbed my attention with her blogs that suggest that no matter where I live, I can create a little Paris and a little Rome right there. When she wrote that she found god in Bergdorf Goodman, I just knew I had run straight into a kindred spirit."

Tonya taught me that no matter where I go, there I am. Really, more than teaching this to me, she gently awoke a basic truth I had forgotten. Every

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program I participated in with Tonya gave me pearls of wisdom I can easily access. Working with Tonya is the best thing I have done for myself and I have been hooked since signing up for her Slim, Chic and Savvy program in October of 2016.

Tonya often quotes Hemingway who said, 'If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a movable feast.' I am no Hemingway but can say whoever is lucky enough to work with Tonya, will always feel her muse as Tonya will stay with her, for Tonya is Hemingway's 'moveable feast' decked out in high heels and lipstick, toasting her forever with a flute of champagne."

Janet, you brought tears to my eyes, my friend. I love you so much and I am so honoured to be able to support you in this journey of life that we are on together. You are truly, truly, truly a remarkable woman. And to be associated with Hemingway, you know, that just touched me. But it is true, my friends, wherever you go, there you are, and Paris is a moveable feast. You can have a Paris state of mind no matter where you live.

So listen, if you want to be featured in a future community spotlight, all you got to do is leave me a five-star review on iTunes, telling me how French Kiss Life has impacted your life or you can even just screenshot this episode on your phone and share it on Instagram, on your IG stories or a post. I love Instagram. I hang out there a lot and I would just love to hear from you and maybe, just maybe, I'll be giving you a shout-out in a future episode.

Hello my beautiful friends. Today marks the first day of the rest of our lives. Do you all remember it seemed like that used to be the quote that every bride and groom used for their wedding? But there is some truth to it. Today is the first day of the rest of our lives, and today is also the first day of the brand-new French Kiss Life Podcast and the brand-new French Kiss Life in general.

We have been working so hard behind the scenes to rebrand the entire company, and I have learned so many lessons during this process. And I was thinking about what this first episode could be about and what I realized is that the lessons that I

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have learned are applicable to you because you may think that you don't have a personal brand, but the reality is that you do.

A personal brand is where your uniqueness meets your skills and your experience. It's you telling your story on purpose. I have many women who will say to me, "I'm not a brand," but the reality is that you are a brand. The way you are living your life, how you are showing up in the world is you telling your story.

I think about my grandmother. She lived in a single-wide trailer in the south but she had a personal brand. She didn't have a company. She didn't sell anything, but she was known as a faithful, family loving homemaker that made the most mouth-watering biscuits you will ever, ever taste. She was known as living a simply luxurious life. That was my grandmother's personal brand.

And the reason why a personal brand is so important is that it's you creatively telling your story, how you want to be known. It also informs your life decisions and how you show up in the world. Unfortunately, there are so many people in the world who don't take charge of their story, who don't take charge of their brand and create it on purpose.

Instead, they're being who they think they should be. They are walking through the world being the person that they think they are without deciding for themselves who do I want to be, what do I want to represent in this world, how do I want to be known. And the truth is you get to decide. You get to create your personal brand no matter if you're a stay at home mom or you're an executive at a Fortune 500 company.

And I think this is some of the most incredible work you will ever do because to me, this is about you living your life creativity and living your life on purpose, which is what French Kiss Life is all about. So, in this episode, I want to share with you some of the lessons that I've learned through going through this rebrand. It's been fun, it's been challenging, it has required that I get in deep touch with my soul, and on the other side of it, now that it has been relaunched, I'm so grateful for all of the lessons that I've learned.

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So, let's start with the very first lesson. To live a beautiful life, to create your brand, to live extraordinarily, here's what you need. You need space. In business, there's a really common saying that you need to work on your business, not just in your business, and I think the same holds true for your life.

You need space to work on your life instead of working in your life. So what that looks like, working in your life is waking up every day, taking care of the kids, getting them to school, cooking dinner, taking care of the house, going to work, paying the bills. That's the day-to-day realities of life. But working on your life is when you take the time to think about your life from a higher level, to ask the deeper hard questions about what you want, what your dreams are, to ask more of yourself.

So if your calendar is so packed and there's not a moment in the day for you to think about your life and who you want to be as a woman, chances are your life feels like a hamster wheel. If you want to create yourself as a woman on purpose, you need some white space to think about who you want to be as a woman, to think about what your mission in life is, to think about what your dreams are, to think about what you love, what you don't love. Because those are the questions that will help you shape not only your personal brand but your entire life.

And I saw this in rebranding the company. I had a full schedule, I was dealing with a lot of personal things going on and I finally told my team I need Mondays off to simply think about what I want in terms of the business, to think about the brand, to think about what our mission is and where I feel like I can have the biggest impact in the space that we're in.

And so I started to make it a habit on Mondays, I call them my thinking days. I think on my business and I think on my life. And what that looks like is me sitting down with my journal and just writing, asking myself the high-quality questions that will lead to a higher quality of life. Things like what lights you up, what do you want to change in this world, who are you as a woman, what makes you unique, what are you drawn to?

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I have a whole journal full of answers to these kinds of questions, but these were the questions that shaped the entire rebrand of the company. And the only way I could get clarity around those questions was to create the space in my calendar and my life to think on my business and on my life. And so maybe for you it's not carving out an entire day, but could you carve out your mornings? Even 30 minutes to think on your life, to think about what you want, to think about what you need to let go of, to think about how you are holding yourself back.

We need space in our lives to think more on a deeper level so we can create our lives on purpose instead of reacting because we're constantly in our lives. So that was the first lesson of the rebrand. To create a brand, you need space to think about what you want your brand to be.

The second lesson that I learned during the rebrand is that you need to focus on what makes you unique. I love the Coco Chanel quote where she says, "In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different." And the reality is we're all different, but so many of you are hiding. You are afraid to really step into your uniqueness and to what makes you different, but that is your secret sauce. That is what makes you a brand. That is what makes you stand out in a world where everybody has something to say.

And so I want you to be thinking about what makes you unique. And one of the things that I've learned is that oftentimes, what makes us unique, we don't even realize it because we just assume that everyone's like that. An example of this is I've had many women come up to me and say, "How do you be more feminine?" And I thought that was quite odd because I just assumed that all women were feminine because it just comes so easily to me, and then I realized no, that's not the truth.

There are so many women that are disconnected from that part of themselves and it's part of what makes me and French Kiss Life so unique is that I do tend to have that more feminine approach to personal development and to style. I'm all about slowing down and savouring and beauty and just the things, again, that I associate with being feminine.

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So I realized, wow, that's actually one of the brand's unique qualities, and I really during this rebrand process, embraced that. Also for us, French Kiss Life, it's that southern charm because I am from the south, but it's also with a French twist. That's part of what makes French Kiss Life so unique. I want the brand to be relatable, I want it to be very inclusive, and at the same time I also want it to be something that's aspirational, something that is elegant and luxurious.

And so I realize that that was part of our uniqueness is that southern charm that my mother raised me with, paired with the French twist on things. But then I also realized that there's a juxtaposition with French Kiss Life and it really resides in who I am. I am a woman who loves to be in a swanky New York hotel, and equally, I love being out in nature in a tent.

And so when I was going through the rebrand, I was really having a difficult time reconciling the two, and then I realized something that I've taught women for the longest time. Don't put yourself in a box. And I realized the juxtaposition of elegance and luxury paired with that down-home nature life-loving gal, they don't have to be two separate things. They can actually be intertwined and what I love about it is because of the juxtaposition, I attract women from all walks of life.

I attract my ladies from New York, who love the upper east side, and equally, I attract women from the south who can relate to my story as well. And so during the rebrand process, I understood very clearly that this is what makes French Kiss Life so unique.

So in thinking about your own personal brand, don't put yourself in a box. You're going to be creating a whole new box that contains all of the things that make you unique. How you see the world, your quirky personality, whatever it is. So be very careful to not think just because you have this thing over here that you can't also have this thing over there as well. There is a way to blend it all into your personal brand and it really comes down to owning it. Embracing who you truly are and who you truly want to be.

So spend time thinking about what makes you unique, and if you tell me there is nothing that makes you unique, sister, we need to talk. Every single one of you

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listening to this podcast has uniqueness about you. It's your job to figure out what that is. And once you figure it out, embrace it. Don't try to be like someone else, don't follow the crowd and what everyone else is doing. Embrace what makes you so amazing, so unique.

And then it's just about unapologetically owning that. And of course, there are going to be people that don't like it and that's okay. We can talk about that in a future episode. But for now, just explore what makes you unique. And for me, I will also say during this part of the process of the rebrand, I was very clear on who I was not.

I know I am not the hot pink girl gang babe boss group and I love those women and you know why I love them? Because they know what makes them unique and they own it unapologetically. But I am very clear that that is not who I am and it's not what French Kiss Life is about.

And it was a very difficult process to go through, especially considering where we are in our culture right now, where there seems to be this very hard girl power take everybody down, and I am all for women having equal rights. I believe women are the most amazing creatures on the planet. I am all for us having a voice and living our lives courageously and unapologetically, but my version of that is not so in your face. It is very much the feminine softness paired with the bold confidence.

So part of the rebrand was realizing, you know what, in this day and age, I think that makes French Kiss Life very unique. It's a different voice in this arena of what it means to be a woman these days. And I realize that there will be people that listen to this that don't agree, that don't like what I just said, that aren't in alignment, and that is okay. That is actually part of creating your personal brand.

It is owning who you are and who you want to be unapologetically. So I want you to spend some time thinking about what makes you unique. Pull out your journal, write it down, everything from maybe your quirky gestures to how you like to dress, to your opinions about the world. Those are part of your personal brand, my friend.

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Okay, lesson number three from the rebrand is it is so important for you to follow what lights you up. I like to think of this one as playing hot and cold. Did you ever play that as a kid? Where when you're getting close to the hidden object, everyone in the room starts saying you're getting warmer, you're getting hot, you're on fire. Equally, when you're moving away from it, they're telling you you're getting colder, you're freezing.

Life is like that. There are things planted in your life that are leading you towards your highest version to your destiny, and it really is based on what light you up. When I was going through the rebrand, I was asked these kinds of questions. Everything from music to places to textures to colors to fonts.

And I had to pay attention in my daily life of when I was on fire and when I felt like I was freezing in terms of if I was moving towards things that lit me up or if I was moving away from them. Part of creating your personal brand is incorporating the things that light you up.

And one of the things that I noticed is that I've really evolved so much as a woman since my first website, even since my last one, which by the way, I've had so much website shame the last two years, so I am so ecstatic that I feel like the new French Kiss Life, in terms of the website really represents the woman that I've become.

And I think that's important to mention because as you evolve as a woman, you'll probably also notice that what lights you up evolves as well. Now, the core thing, such as my love of Paris and my love of luxury, all of those things have remained consistent. But my taste in terms of colors and textures and just some of the more aesthetic things has evolved.

Now I'm really drawn to nudes and blushes and jewel tones like navys and deep greens and salmon. If you look at my old website, which I think you can't see any longer, but it was like, red and black and that's no longer who I am. I feel like I've evolved into a more mature aesthetic, let's just say. And so I had to pay attention

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during this rebrand of what am I currently drawn to? What is currently lighting me up?

So for you and thinking about your personal brand, I want you to think about what are you drawn to? Are there certain places that light you up? Maybe they're places in a city or maybe they are places in nature. I want you to think about the music that when you hear it, your soul starts to just dance. And maybe you start to dance as well.

I want you to think about colors. What colors are you drawn to? Even the textures. Are you drawn to light and airy textures or are you more of a velvet or maybe a concrete kind of gal? Really notice the aesthetics of your brand. Also notice the language of your brand. In fact, this would be fine for you to pull out a journal and just write all of the words that when you hear them or you say them, they just resonate with your soul.

So for example, in French Kiss Life, the words that represent the brand are words like charm and allure and grace and grit and luxury, romantic, elegant, style, feminine, enchanted, exquisite. When I say those words, my soul lights up, which tells me I am in alignment with my soul and therefore I am in alignment with my purpose and my brand.

So play around with what words really speak to you. They could be totally different. They could be power, wealth, they could be soft, it could be anything. Just notice how you feel when you hear the words and when you say them because those are a part of your brand. They are part of your soul DNA, so pay attention.

The goal here is to incorporate what lights you up into your daily life. Surround yourself with the colors that you love. Maybe you wear them. Play the music that represents your brand and the background of your life. Speak the words that light you up. Write about them, talk about them. And as a result, you will be building your own personal brand and the best part is you will be lit up.

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And when you are walking through the world with your light shining bright, the best part of that is that you inspire other people to find their light. And so it is true, the saying that you don't serve the world by dimming your light. You serve the world by lighting yourself up and the best way to light yourself up is to follow what lights you up and to make it a part of your daily life.

Okay, so let's talk about lesson number four, and that is your opinion is what matters most. So in going through this rebrand, I realized that everyone has an opinion about what your brand should be. People will tell you that they know best what is best for you, people will have strong agreements or strong disagreements with what it is that you want to do. But at the end of the day, your opinion is what matters most.

So one of the ways this showed up for me is that when we were doing the rebrand, I had to decide between going with my personal name, Tonya Leigh – Actually, my full name is Tonya Leigh Rising, but I've been known as Tanya Leigh – or to go with French Kiss Life. And you all, everyone, had an opinion. And most of the opinions were weighted for me sticking with Tonya Leigh.

I had people tell me, “You are the brand.” I had people tell me that I was playing small by taking my name out of it, that I must be hiding in some way. Everyone had an opinion about this. I even had this very well-known copywriter that I will not say her name that thought French Kiss Life was silly and dumb and she thought there was no merit to the brand.

And at the end of the day, I was so clear, so, so clear that the brand is French Kiss Life. I got very clear on the vision and what I see, and I also became very clear that I am not the guru of this. I am simply the face of the brand and I am the messenger of the message and that I wanted this to be about the community and not so much about me.

And so, in saying that, I had a lot of backlash. I had a lot of opinions. And I realized, at the end of the day, I have to go to bed with me, I have to sleep with me every single night, I have to be with me every single day, and while you can listen

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to opinions, you have to figure out what is best for you. You have to figure out what it is that you want and you have to believe in it 100%.

And I believe in French Kiss Life 100%. I know what it's done for my life. I know what it's done for other women's lives, and I was so clear and I was so convicted; so convicted that other people's opinions did not sway me. I was like, okay, you think French Kiss Life is silly? As my mother says, watch me. Watch what French Kiss Life does. And so I want you to be so in tune with who you are and who you want to be that other people's opinions do not sway you.

So, when you were thinking about your personal brand, I want you to be mindful of asking for too many opinions. This is something that I see happen a lot with my clients, and I've certainly done it. So I totally understand the need to ask, "So what do you think? Should I do this or should I do that?" You know, you have your answers.

The real issue is you trusting yourself, believing in yourself, believing in your brand. So I'm going to challenge you not to ask for everybody's opinions. They get to have their own opinion about their own life, but you need to have your opinion about what is best for you and know that your opinion is what matters most.

Okay, so let's talk about the final lesson that I've learned from the rebrand. And that is to decide. Okay, here's what I mean; we can spend a lifetime wondering, should I pick red or should I pick pink? Should I pick this font or that font? Should I use this music or that music? Should I wear this or should I wear that? Should I say this? Should I say that?

At the end of the day, you just need to decide. For me, I gave myself a deadline of when decisions would be made, and on that day, they were made, and I trusted that they were the right decisions. I tell my clients all of the time, the most important decision is the decision after the decision, meaning deciding how you are going to feel about whatever decision that you made.

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And so, for me, I found myself wrestling with, “Oh should I have chosen that font? Because I like that one too.” And I just had to decide because with decision, you get the momentum going. Living in indecision keeps you stuck. It keeps you right where you are. And so I had to practice deciding, this is what we’re doing, this is our mission, this is my vision, this is where we’re going, and trusting that that is the right decision.

And this isn’t just applicable in creating your personal brand. This is applicable in your life, my friends. How often are you spending your time trying to figure out the answer, and therefore taking no action and getting nowhere? I want you to practice deciding and trusting yourself, trusting your decision, and getting the momentum going in your life.

It is called French Kiss Life for a reason. We need to live it. And so many of the answers that we are seeking are found in living out the questions. I know that my brand will continue to evolve. French Kiss Life will continue to evolve, but I have to decide on who we are, what we’re about, what fonts we use, just so that we can continue our evolvment.

So, don’t spend too much time figuring out your personal brand. I do want you to create space to ask the deeper questions. I do want you to spend some time thinking about what makes you unique and what lights you up and honoring your self-opinion. But at the end of the day, you just need to decide, this is who I’m choosing to be, this is what I want to represent in the world, this is what lights me up and I’m going to share this with the world unapologetically.

It is time for a J’adore. This is the part of the show where I’m going to be sharing something that I love. I’m often asked by women, what’s your favorite skincare or what’s your favorite book that you’re reading these days, or what’s your favorite wine of the season? Well, this is going to be the part of the show where I share my loves with you.

So, since today’s episode was all about branding, I want to share one of my favorite brands with you. Can you guess what it is? Okay, here’s two hints; French

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and orange. If you guessed Hermès, you are right. Or, as I once called it on my very first trip to Paris, ‘ermies. True story.

You all, I have come a long way. Can we just celebrate that? But truly, Hermès is a brand that I adore for many reasons, but mainly for the story that the brand is built upon. Every great brand is built upon a great story. And the story of Hermès is that it actually started out as a harness workshop in Paris that catered to the upper-class Europeans.

And Hermès is known for its high-quality workmanship, and there’s so many interesting facts about Hermès. Did you know that the reason why Hermès started making bags was because of love? In 1922, Emile Maurice made the first handbag of the Hermès collection after his wife complained about not finding a handbag in all of Paris that suited her liking. Another interesting fact about Hermès is that the two iconic bags, the Birkin and the Kelly, were named after Jane Birkin and Grace Kelly.

Now, let’s talk about their iconic packaging, which is the orange boxes with the brown ribbons that they tie around every purchase that is made. Well, interestingly, it didn’t start out as orange. Originally, it was packaged as a cream color, but during World War 2, they had a shortage of materials and the only thing they could get a hold of were orange boxes.

So, those orange boxes that come in 188 sizes that women love to collect, it was a mistake. It was not on purpose. But Hermès took something and made it their own. That’s a really great branding story. What in your life, maybe, is not suitable, but how could you make it your own? How could you actually incorporate it into your brand?

So, those are just a few reasons why I love Hermès. Now, granted, I don’t have a Birkin bag yet. Maybe one day. But I do have a stack of orange boxes filled with beautiful scarves. And honestly, I was thinking about this the other day, I could go and buy scarves from anywhere. In fact, I have. I have a whole collection of scarves. But there’s something about opening up that orange box and pulling out

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the silk scarf and tying it around my neck or around my wrist or onto my handbag that just makes me feel a certain way.

And to me, that is the sign of a great brand. It's about so much more than the physical product or even the service. It's how that brand or that company makes you feel. So again, pay attention to even the brands that light you up, because when something lights you up, it lights you up for a reason. And it just so happens that Hermès is one of those brands that lights me up.

And guess what, I would love to light up your life with an Hermès scarf. Yes, I am giving away a scarf to one of the ladies in the French Kiss Life community. So, if you want to be the lucky winner of an Hermès scarf, head over to frenchkisslife.com/itunes to find out how you can be eligible to win.

Thank you so much for tuning into this episode. I cannot wait to see you in the next one, cheers.

If you enjoyed this episode and you want to dive even deeper into the French Kiss lifestyle, let's start with a makeover; a mindset makeover. You can download my free training, The 3 Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs by visiting FrenchKissLife.com/mindset – because after all, mindset is the new black.