



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

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# 3 Mentors (and Their Advice) That Changed My Life

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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## 3 Mentors (and Their Advice) That Changed My Life

Every once in a while, someone will come into your life, almost unexpectedly, and they'll say one thing, or maybe you're reading their book and you read one line and it absolutely changes your life. Well, that's what we're talking about in this episode. I'm going to share with you three mentors and the one thing that I learned from them that put my life on a completely different trajectory.

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.

What's happening, my beautiful friends? How's your week? I will tell you, in case you were wondering, my week is amazing. But let me tell you why. I'm going to be specific. Number one, Colorado in the summer is divine. Now, I know some of y'all only want to visit our state in the wintertime to ski. But if you want to see Colorado at its best, come in the summertime, especially right now.

We had such a big winter. The rivers are up. Everything's so green and fresh. It's like 80 degrees, dry, it's just beautiful. But not only that, but we are having our team retreat this week. In fact, my team is flying in as I record this and I have so much fun planned for us because I'm one of those CEOs that, yeah, I like to get business done, but I think we can have fun doing it. And so I have fun excursions planned and we have such a fun agenda of planning out the next year for *French Kiss Life* and I cannot wait to reveal what we have in store for this community.

Seriously, you all, stay tuned because it's going to be an amazing year because I've already decided it's going to be an amazing year, which that's a good topic for a future podcast, like, deciding what your year is going to look like and then believing in it and living in it so that you can then create it.

So, speaking of this amazing community, it is time for a Community Spotlight. This is the part of the show where I get to highlight someone in the community who is benefitting from the *French Kiss Lifestyle*. And today's spotlight is on

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Chic, Classic, and Best. This was a review left on iTunes from, actually, from Theresa, because you left your name in the review.

So, Theresa writes, “*French Kiss Life* is the ultimate inspiration. I’ve been a member of *French Kiss Life* for three years and I’ve taken all classes *French Kiss Life* offers. All I can say is that incorporating the *French Kiss Life* ethos into my life, I’ve changed my life from the inside out. Tonya insists that we show up for ourselves and live with intention. Every day, as I’m taking action on living in my sweet spot, I think, yay, I’m showing up for myself. With this simple discipline, my life has focused on living my own definition of a fabulous life that I’ve created and am in love with. My career, family life, relationships, most of all, my relationship with myself, everything is sparkling. Sparkling requires constant care and polishing and that’s what *French Kiss Life* inspires me to do every day. Thank you, Tonya, for shining and sharing your light with the world. My life is brighter and shining because of having you in my life.”

Theresa, thank you so much for that review. It really, really means a lot. And listen, if you listen to this podcast and it’s touched your life and you enjoy it, I would really appreciate it if you would leave a review on iTunes. In fact, we have a whole page walking you through how to do it at [frenchkisslife.com/itunes](https://frenchkisslife.com/itunes). But here’s the thing; I want to get this message out to as many women as possible because I know it has the power to change lives and help women add more sparkle to their everyday. So, thank you in advance for leaving me a review, and who knows, maybe I’ll feature you on an upcoming community spotlight.

So, I’m going to share with you some mentors who have literally changed my life because, here’s the thing; we all need people to mentor us, to coach us, that we can look up to, who are further ahead on the path than where we are now. And I’m often asked this question; who really inspires you? Who do you learn from? Who’s had such an impact in your life?

And so today, I want to share three of them with you. Now, there are many others, and maybe I will share them in a future episode, but today, there are three women who have definitely had a huge impact on my life. So, the first one is Martha Beck. If you don’t know Martha, you must check her out. Not only is she hilarious, but she’s brilliant and a phenomenal writer.

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And the way I came across Martha, I was totally oblivious to this whole personal development world. I think in the deep south, we didn't even know it existed. We had bibles, which were great, but I didn't know about this whole other world.

So for me, I remember reading an article about life coaching and it was at the time where I was at this crossroads in my life. I was studying at Boston University getting my liberal arts degree. I'd discovered that I had a love and a passion for the world of food and wine. I had also been working on my own issues with weight and body image stuff. And I was working as a critical care nurse.

So here I was, I read this article and I was like, "That is what I need. I need a life coach to help me sort this all out." And so I started doing some research and I came across this life coach who was actually just getting started at the time. And some of you all probably know her. Her name is Susan Hyatt. She's amazing. She's phenomenal. And it's been so rewarding to watch her grow as well.

But I was working with Susan and she was certified by Martha Beck and she turned me onto *Finding Your Own North Star*, which is one of Martha's books. And I fell in love with it. And the work that I did with Susan and the changes that were happening, I was like, I want to go and learn from this woman. And so I ended up going to get certified by Martha, went on to become a master certified coach with her.

And I'll never forget – I learned so much from her, but there was one thing that she said to me that really changed how I show up in the world. So it was at master coach training and I was just sharing my story and some of my challenges and she turned to me and she said, "Tonya, stay on the mountaintop."

And the context of that was I was so used to feeling guilty for my own growth. I felt like I had to save everyone, I had to pull everyone up with me, and so I was constantly going down into the valley, so to speak, to feel like I wasn't leaving people behind. Can some of you all relate to this? Because I love my family, I love my friends, and I had this fear of outgrowing them, to the point that we would no longer be connected.

But every time I would go down into the valley, I wasn't honoring myself and who I wanted to become. And so when she said that, I don't know why it hit the way it

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hit, but I had this just a-ha moment of I want to be a woman who stays on the mountaintop and loves people from there and inspires them to come up and join me.

So the way that shows up in my life today is that when I see family or friends struggling, I can be compassionate. I can offer empathy and I don't feel like I have to save them. I don't need to be their hero. In psychology, there's this dynamic that can often happen. It's called the family drama triangle. And within that triangle, there's usually a victim, a perpetrator, and a hero.

And the hero is the one that's constantly trying to fix everything and save everyone. And the way to get out of that role is to see the people in that dynamic with you as capable, as being on their own journey. And when I saw what I was doing, I realized the truth of it. It's actually very selfish and it's very egoic because it's like this, "I know better, I know what's best for you, I need to save you. You need to believe the way I believe."

And so coming down off of the mountaintop into the valley and trying to prophesize to everyone about who they should be and what their life should look like, and so I really began to separate myself from that dynamic. And realizing, for example, that my mother gets to think and believe whatever she wants – just because I think differently than her, does not make me superior or her inferior. My mother has every right to believe and see the world the way she does, and so does everybody else in my life.

But there was a moment where I thought the whole world needed to believe and live the way I wanted to believe and live. And separating myself from that and letting people be who they are has brought me so much peace and I get to stay on my mountaintop.

Now, that doesn't mean I don't go down into my own valley sometimes, my friends, because I do. But it's no longer because I'm going down there to save other people. It's because I'm thinking thoughts that are taking me down there and I know how to get back on top. But Martha gave me that wisdom and that advice and it has changed everything for me. So, thank you, Martha.

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The second person that I want to give a shout-out to, who I have met one time at an event that I was at, in Chicago, I think. I'm trying to remember where I met her. But it's Byron Katie.

Byron Katie wrote the book *Loving What Is* and I was introduced to her work through my coach certification program. And I remember going online and watching videos of her leading people through *The Work*. So, *The Work* are four questions that she leads people through, just to get you to question your own thinking. And I remember watching some of them thinking, "This is way too out there."

I couldn't get it. For example, I remember one time listening to her take a woman through *The Work* who had been raped and it just was so outside of my norm and what I thought to be acceptable, but then I understood the premise behind it. And it's this. And this is the advice that she gives and that has really changed my life.

And that is, "To argue with reality is to argue with god, and you only lose 100% of the time." Preach, because this is true. And so the way I started to use the work in my own life was first of all in my parenting. I feel like we, as mothers, we have good intentions. We love our children, but no one ever taught us how to be really effective parents. And we often end up parenting the way we were parented.

And so I remember my daughter when she was really little. She's always been super sassy. She's a triple Aries, so she's very fiery. And she would talk back and I would just become enraged. And how do I behave when I'm enraged? Not that good, my friends.

And so I thought I was feeling enraged because of what she was saying and how she was treating me. But the reason why I was enraged was because of the thinking in my mind. And so I would be thinking things like, "She should respect me. This is not acceptable."

Now, notice I'm arguing with reality in those moments. And I know, my mind wanted to justify it. I was raised to believe that children should respect their parents, right? But in that moment, thinking that was causing me so much anger. And then, what would happen is my actions that I would take when I was angry would push her further away and make her even more sassy. It was like this self-fulfilling prophecy.

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So I would take my thoughts in those moments and run them through the four questions, which the first one is, is that true? Is it true that she's disrespecting you? And in the moment, I would be like, "Yeah, that's true." In my mind, that's true.

The second question is, can you absolutely know that that's true? Well, I can't really know that that's true from her experience, because I don't know why she's doing what she's doing, if she's meaning to be disrespectful.

And then the third question is, who would you be without that thought? So, in that moment, if I could not think that my daughter was disrespecting me, I would just be a mom with my daughter; her being sassy and me just observing her. And I wouldn't be angry, I wouldn't be screaming back at her. I would just be a mom with our daughter.

And then, so the fourth part, is the turnaround. So you take your thought and you turn it around. So my daughter should respect me could go to, I should respect my daughter. In those moments, was I respecting her by getting angry and screaming and acting like a crazy mom? No, I wasn't respecting her. My daughter shouldn't respect me; could that be true? Well obviously, in my mind, she wasn't, so maybe she shouldn't.

And then the other one that I love is I should respect me. When I learn to respect me, I don't need the world to respect me. I just get to respect me and then let people be who they are. And then the other one is, I am willing for my daughter not to respect me. All of a sudden, there's no resistance there. She just gets to be her and I get to be me.

And when I started practicing this in my life with my daughter, it completely changed our relationship. I was no longer arguing with what was happening. I wasn't pushing her away. I was just simply being a mom to a daughter in that moment and that doesn't mean that I didn't have boundaries. I was able then to create boundaries with her with love, not out of anger.

So I could say things to her, "If you scream at me, I am going to leave the room." So she still gets to scream. She still gets to be sassy, but I don't have to get angry and upset about it. If you talk to me that way, I will take your phone – although

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she didn't have a phone then; she was super young. She's always been sassy. But that's an example of a boundary that I could set.

But what I realize is I didn't have to get upset. I didn't have to get angry. I could do all of these things from a place of allowing and accepting and out of a place of love. And my actions out of love are always better than when I'm taking actions out of anger.

So, Byron Katie taught me to stop fighting with reality. When you accept it, that's when you have the most power to change it because what you resist keeps on persisting. And so I have to give a huge thank you to Byron Katie for literally not only changing my relationship with my daughter, but with myself, with other people, and the world in general.

Finally, the third person who has had such a huge impact on my life is one of my dearest friends and one of the most hilarious people that I know and someone who is making such a huge impact on the world. Her name is Brooke Castillo from The Life Coach School.

Now, some of you probably know of Brooke because she has a phenomenal, phenomenal podcast, she is very renowned in the world of personal development, and she's just an amazing, amazing human being. And we laugh all of the time because we have running jokes with each other.

I'm always telling her, I'm like, "Would you please stop talking about the weather on your podcast," because it seems like every time she starts her podcast, she's talking about the weather in Dallas. And for me, she's always saying, "Tonya, will you please stop demanding that Glen buys you a handbag and go out and buy your own handbags because you can afford them?"

But she is a phenomenal person, a phenomenal coach, and I'm so proud of her. Last year, her company made 17 million dollars. You all, that is some serious cash and I've learned so much from Brooke because, number one, Brooke studied under Martha as well and she actually helped Martha create her certification program.

So, the way I coach and the tools that I use are very much influenced by the work of Martha and Brooke. But what Brooke has taught me is that it's okay to love money. Now, you all, I'm the girl that grew up in the trailer. I was not comfortable



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with money for a long time. I had such a terrible story around money. I feared it. I had a story that I didn't know how to manage it. I had a story that you could only make so much.

And to see Brooke proving what is possible, it's inspiring. And that is her purpose. Her purpose is to be an example of what is possible and she is living out her purpose. In fact, her goal is to make 100 million in the next 10 years, and I have no doubt she'll do it because Brooke's one of those people. When she says she's going to do something, she does it.

But I remember hearing her say, "I love money." We were in a mastermind together and she was just like, "I love money." And I remember how uncomfortable it made me because I was like, "But life is about more than money." And I do believe that. I do believe that money doesn't necessarily make you happy.

I don't think that money solves all of your problems, although money does solve a lot of problems, you all. But to hear her say that, it brought up all of my own limiting beliefs around money, all of my scarcity and lack mindset around money. And at first, I wanted to reject it. And I know that Brooke has probably experienced this. Her talking about money so much has probably made a lot of people uncomfortable. It wouldn't surprise me if she hasn't gotten a lot of hate mail about it.

But what I love about her, she's so unapologetic about it. And that's one thing I do believe in, you all, is being unapologetic about what it is that you want. Because the universe cannot give you what you want if you have a lot of split energy around it. If deep inside you're saying, "Yeah I really want that Ferrari but, I don't know what people will think," the universe can't deliver it to you because you're not all in on it.

And so Brooke really inspired me to get honest about what I want in life and to go all in on it. And it's so funny because her family came out to Aspen to stay with my family over the winter. We all love to ski. And she asked me before we got there, she's like, "Is there a place where I can land my private jet?" And I'm like, "Girl, it's Aspen, I think they can accommodate it."

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But she's honoring what she wants. She wants to fly private, and I think that's amazing. And what I've learned around money is that when you have an abundant mindset, you can be at peace with it because you know that you having more money and flying around private and wearing designer clothing or giving to organizations, however you choose to use your money, it's not taking from anyone.

And, you all, please hear me out because I know some of you all are where I used to be around this. And you have this belief that, well, if I have a lot, then what about those starving children in other countries? But you being poor does not help them. It's like what Byron Katie says, "If your friend falls down in the ditch and breaks his leg, does it serve you to fall down in the ditch and break yours too? Does that help your friend?"

No, I've come to this understanding of the universe that the best way that we can heal the world and the planet is to be the grandest most loving and most abundant version of ourselves. And Brooke really helped shine a light on that for me.

So I just have to give so much love to my good friend who loves to talk about the weather, because you are truly being an example of what is possible and it's inspiring so many people. So, those are three people and mentors that have had such a big impact on my life. And again, there are many others and I think this would be a good series, actually, just to share the people and the lessons that I've learned from, because it's not even in the personal development space.

I've had so many people that have taught me valuable lessons in the art and fashion industry and the world of food and wine, and just people in my everyday life. So think about the mentors that have touched your life and I challenge you to send them a note of thanks and gratitude and celebration because they may not know, and I think it's a beautiful, beautiful thing for people to understand how much that they've impacted your life.

It is time for a J'adore. This is the part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you. And today's J'adore is perfect for summers. In fact, when you think of summer, what do you think of? Beaches, swimsuits? Well, I think of those things too. But I also think about picnics.

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I love a good picnic. And I think spending time in France has made me embrace picnics even more because on a day where the sun is out, you will most likely see a lot of people picnicking. And so my J'adore for the day is a beautiful picnic basket.

Now, growing up, we picnicked, but it wasn't luxurious at all. It was usually a bunch of coolers and stuff in paper bags. And one of the upgrades that I made in my life, probably about 10 years ago actually, is I invested in a beautiful wicker picnic basket that has everything that I need, to gout on a beautiful summer day and just enjoy being outside with family and friends, having a nice glass of rosé and cheese and whatever I choose to pack into that basket.

But I really feel like every woman deserves a beautiful picnic basket. So I will be sure to put some links in the show notes for picnic baskets that are like mine. I've had mine for so long, but I did find some really, really beautiful ones for you. So if you want to check those out, head over to [frenchkisslife.com/138](https://frenchkisslife.com/138) – that's where you can see the show notes.

But I want us all to have amazing, amazing summers, and I think picnics are definitely one of the ways to create memories and experiences that our 90-year-old selves will toast us for one day.

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](https://FrenchKissLife.com/mindset) – because after all, mindset is the new black.