



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 147

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# Start Before You're Ready (Plus 6 Times I Did)

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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## Start Before You're Ready (Plus 6 Times I Did)

Do you want to know three words that kill so many dreams? They are I'm not ready. How many times do you say to yourself I'm not ready to start the business, I'm not ready to leave the job, I'm not ready to get into a relationship? I'm not ready to invest in myself. I'm not ready to do the podcast or shoot the video.

So in this episode, I'm going to share with you how to overcome that doubt, plus I'm also going to share times that I started when I wasn't ready and how it completely changed the trajectory of my life.

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.

Hello from New York City, my friends. Yes, I'm in the Big Apple. And I really did attempt to find a quiet spot in this apartment and I realized that hey, that doesn't really exist in this city so the show must go on. As Richard Branson said, screw it, let's do it.

So we are doing this podcast even though there's all kinds of noise in the background, but this is life. This is real life and one of the things that I've really come to understand is that the brain will always give you excuses as to why you can't do something. Even this morning, my brain was like you can't record a podcast with all of the cars outside and the honking of the horns and all the things.

I was like, why not? We're not here to be perfect. We're here to share from our hearts. And so that's what I'm going to do today. I'm really excited about this episode of the podcast because I'm going to be talking about starting before you're ready.

So many of you are waiting until you feel ready to get started and your brain will never allow you to feel ready. You just have to get started. So I'm going to be sharing with you some examples of how I've started before I was ready in my own

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life and some things to think about if you are experiencing that urge to wait on your dreams because life is short, my friends and your dreams are there for a reason and they're really tired of you just screwing around. They're waiting for you for show up.

But before we dive into the main part of the episode, I have to do a community spotlight because I love highlighting women in the community that have benefited from the French Kiss Life style, whether it's through my programs or the podcast, or being just a part of the community.

So today's community spotlight is on Denny Murrow. She left a five-star iTunes review and this was what she said. "Finally, the tools to become your own best friend. Everywhere we turn today, we are told that the secret to happiness is you have to love yourself. I walk through my life thinking it makes sense but how do I really achieve that? Just thinking positive thoughts was not getting me here. Tonya, her courses, and her podcast taught me.

I no longer have the negative self-talk playing over and over in my head. I have a kind and gentle voice that encourages me to do all the things I have wanted to achieve throughout my day and in my life for the years to come. I finally understand how to be my own greatest friend. If this has alluded you as it had me, you have to add Tonya's FKL community to your life. It is elegant and fun and one of the most special gifts I have given myself."

Denny, thank you so, so much. Life is so much more fun when you're your own best friend. We have to be with us all of the time. This is the one relationship that we will have for the rest of our lives and yet we put very little effort into it. We just let our brain go crazy telling us that we're terrible people and we're not enough. And we have to live with that day after day unless you really do make the decision, I'm going to learn to be my own best friend, and when you do, crazy fun things begin to happen.

You stop waiting for your dreams. You start showing up. You start feeling better because the voice in your head is so much more kind and encouraging. So if any of you struggle with this, you know this is an area of your life that if you were to

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really focus on changing and learning to become your own best friend, I have many, many podcasts on this topic.

But one that I would recommend is called *Is Your Self-Opinion Holding You Back* and I walk through how you can really begin to change your beliefs about yourself. That's in episode 111. So if you go to [frenchkisslife.com/111](http://frenchkisslife.com/111), you will definitely get some good tips on how to love yourself more.

So Denny, thank you so much for that five-star review on iTunes. I really, really appreciate it when you all take the time to leave a review because unfortunately, we do live in a world that looks at numbers and stats, so I guess when iTunes sees that I'm getting reviews, they're more likely to put it in front of other people that would potentially enjoy the podcast.

So if you have not left me a review and you enjoy the podcast, I would greatly appreciate it. You can actually head to [frenchkisslife.com/itunes](http://frenchkisslife.com/itunes) and we walk you through how to leave a review and hey, maybe you will be featured on an upcoming episode.

My mother has taught me so many valuable life lessons, and I feel like I need to give you a little bit of backstory on my mom so you can understand her mindset and her tenacity. So when my mom was three years old, she developed polio and it affected her gait. She definitely has a noticeable limp when she walks. She wears a five and a half shoe on one foot and eight and a half on another, so she's always had to buy two pairs of shoes just to get one.

And a lot of people doubted her. A lot of people saw her as broken and disabled, but my mother never ever saw herself that way. In fact, I believe because of what happened to her, she had this internal watch me in her. When people told her something couldn't be done, she would be like, watch me. I'm going to prove you wrong.

Now, on one hand I think it's sort of sad that my mom always felt like she had to fight to prove herself, but on another hand, she taught me the value of hard work. She taught me the value of staying true to yourself. And she also taught me the value of starting before you're ready.

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So when I was about 10 or 12 years old, I can't remember because time and me, we have a weird relationship. But anyway, I was a young, young girl. My mom started a catering business. And she was really used to catering small events for like, 100 people, 150 people. But she was approached by the college to actually host a big event and there were going to be over 1000 people that would be coming to this that she could have to cater.

And my mom just said yes without flinching. She's like yes, I'll do it. And I realized my mom didn't have all of the equipment, she had never orchestrated such a big event. But my mom knew the secret to success. She knew the secret to life and it's saying yes before you feel ready.

I talked about saying yes to life in a previous episode. In fact, I think it's episode 132. So if you go to [frenchkisslife.com/132](http://frenchkisslife.com/132), I discuss the power of saying yes to yourself and to your dreams. But in this episode, I want to reframe it a little bit because when you say yes to your dreams, it also means saying yes to being super uncomfortable and saying yes before you're ready.

Because here's the thing, my friends. The brain is always going to tell you you're not ready, but it makes me think of Richard Branson's quote where he says if someone offers you an amazing opportunity and you're not sure you can do it, say yes, then learn how to do it later.

And that's what my mom did with this catering opportunity. She knew that by saying yes, she would be forced to figure it out. So how do we get over this tendency to wait on our dreams? The first thing I want to offer you is be really mindful if you're stuck in the research phase. Y'all know who I'm talking to.

I've coached many of you. I know how a lot of times, we're tempted to spend months, maybe even years researching, gathering more information, pretending to be working on our dream. But I want you to look at the results. Are you making progress? Are you moving in the direction or do you feel like you're just spinning your wheels going around the cul-de-sac of your dream?

Because again, the information that you're seeking is not going to be found in books. It's going to be found by getting out there and engaging, figuring out what

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works, what doesn't work. Looking at what you want to improve, what your strengths are, how you can do it different. And that's not found in the research phase. It's found in deciding and taking action.

So if you want to get the movement going in your life towards your dreams, I want you to practice being decisive. Give yourself a limit on how much research you're going to do and then beyond that, know that the rest of the knowledge that you're seeking is going to be found in real world experiences.

The second thing I want to caution you to be mindful of are the excuses that seem really, really valid. And the big ones that I've seen in coaching women are I don't have enough time, I don't have enough money, and I don't know how to do the thing. I don't know. I don't know how.

All of those really seem legitimate in the moment. But here's also what I've come to understand. If it's important to you, you make the time. If you want it bad enough, you figure out the resources and how to get them to make your dream a reality. And if you don't know how, you get in the game of your dreams and you start figuring out the how.

Clarity comes through action. It comes through engaging in the process of creating your dreams. And so just be mindful of those excuses and be really honest with yourself. Do you want it bad enough to make the time? Do you want it bad enough to figure out how to get the resources? Do you want it bad enough in order to figure out the how?

And the how really is a series of just what's next. What's the very next step and the very next step? And if you keep doing that, you keep stepping forward and learning along the way. So I want to share with you all some times that I started when I wasn't ready and how it completely changed my life.

So the first time was going to sommelier school because y'all, I was a country bumpkin when I walked into that class for the first time. I had such little experience in the world of wine that even to this day, I'm like, how did I even end up there? What was within me that wanted to learn more about this whole new

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world that I wasn't exposed to as a child because alcohol was not allowed in our home?

So when I walked in there, you can believe that my mind was telling me that I was not ready. I was afraid. I was embarrassed because I knew so little about the world of wine. I was afraid I would embarrass myself, which I did. Like the first words that came out of my mind of I love rose wine.

And yet I did it. I did it anyway because my desire was so much greater than my fear of making a fool of myself. And then the crazy thing is a year later, I'm working as a food and wine writer. I'm starting wine programs for some really prestigious clubs in the area. That opened up a whole new world, which led me to Paris and so on and so forth.

But imagine if had said to myself I'm not ready, I need to do more research, I need to learn how to pronounce all of the French wines, I need to do all of the things that my brain was telling me I needed to do. I probably would not be sitting here recording this podcast in New York City for you because those little decisions, even though they were scary at the time have led me to this place.

Going to sommelier school led me to food and wine writing, which led me to Paris, which led me to realizing oh my goodness, these people are French-kissing life, which then led me to starting a business, which led me to here. Everything I have done you all, I have done before I felt ready.

And that's why I'm so passionate about this because I know that you have a dream. You have a desire within you that's just waiting for you to show up for it. And you're not going to feel ready ever, ever, ever. You're just going to have to go out there and learn and grow in the process. Then you'll look back and you're like oh wow, I was always ready. My brain was just trying to keep me where I was.

Okay, let's move to the second time that I started before I was ready. And this one was a big one because I literally was not physically ready for it but I did it anyway. And that is running a marathon. When I signed up to run my very first marathon, it was the Disney marathon. I was not a runner. I'd never run more than two miles.

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So again, I was legitimately not ready but I signed up anyway. And I knew I had some months to prepare for it. And so in signing up, I was inspired to get ready. And then months later, I crossed the finish line and I cried because I was so proud of myself.

And so sometimes, in order to get ready, you just make a public declaration or you put money on the table, or you sign up and you get registered. And then you are forced to get ready for it. You are forced to show up for your dream.

So think about this for you. Maybe your dream is something that you can actually make a public declaration around. You can let people know that your first podcast is coming out in two months. You can let people know that you are running a race. You can sign up for something that you will then have to show up for it unless you just back out on yourself.

But that's another little tip that I've learned has been very useful for me is to actually declare it. And you can declare it publicly, you can declare it by registering for something, but declare your dreams and know that you're not going to feel ready when you do it. But by declaring them, you will then begin to put the energy and effort into realizing whatever that dream is for you.

Okay, let's talk about the third time that I started before I was ready, and that was starting my business. And in order to do that, I made the decision to leave nursing and let me tell you, my brain was telling me you're definitely not ready for this, Tonya. You don't have a business degree, you don't know how to read a P&L statement, you don't know anything about managing a team, and you certainly don't know how to go out there and make money because I was so used to just getting my paycheck.

So you all, trust me when I tell you this. I did not feel ready to start a business. I did not feel ready to leave nursing. But let me tell you what I was ready for. I was ready to see what I was capable of. I was ready to tap into my inner mama who was always saying watch me. Just watch me.

More importantly, I wanted to watch me. I wanted to watch me do something that felt impossible. I wanted to watch me go beyond the limitations that had



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been placed on me as a child as to what a young girl in the south should be doing because I thought my options were nursing, teacher, or secretary, or I could work at the bank.

And let me be really clear. There is nothing wrong with any of those professions. I love my nurses and I'm so, so grateful for my nursing career. It taught me so much. But what I want to offer you is that those careers are great if you're choosing them on purpose. So many of us are in careers because we have been told that's what's possible for us. That's what we should do.

I work with a lot of attorneys and doctors who are like, yeah, I went into this because my parents told me I should and now I'm miserable. And we're miserable because it's not aligned with our soul's calling. And so I wanted to live in alignment and so I started to figure it out. I started my business and what I can tell you is I think one of the key secrets to my success is that I took quick action.

I did everything before I felt ready. So the way that looked for me is that even before I finished my certification program, I had my website up and running. And then I started to promote my business. I started to promote my coaching. I started to create programs. I just put them out there.

Now granted, they were not flocking to take them but I just kept showing up. And in the meantime, I watched so many other people that were in my same class get stuck in that research phase. They were still taking more classes, trying to figure out how to do a website. I saw some of them spending literally a year trying to figure out the name of their company and what their brand color should be. A year.

Do you know how much they could have produced and created within a year? And yet they were stuck because they didn't feel ready. And so because they didn't feel ready and they listened to that part of their brain, they didn't go out there and take the action that would get them ready.

And in the meantime, I had a website going, I started having clients, I started doing my programs, and I was growing. And the whole time, I didn't feel ready. I

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just knew, as my mama taught me, that if you want to get ready, you say yes and then you figure it out later. And that's what I did.

Even hiring my first VA. And it was – looking back now because now we have, gosh, 19 people on the team, but back then it was just me and my one VA and I remember when she told me how much she charged. It was like, \$25 an hour, and I freaked out.

I was like, how am I going to pay this girl? I valued her work but my brain was like, you're not ready for this. That's a big investment. But I knew that if I wanted to grow and build a company, I couldn't do it myself. So I betted on myself. I betted on my little small team that we would figure it out and I hired her. And it was one of the best hiring decisions I ever made.

And so that was another example of starting before I was ready. Starting my business, making the investments that I needed to make, making the quick decisions that have led me to here. So let's talk about another time I started before I was ready.

And that was saying yes to the Monaco Luxury Network. Okay, so I've talked about this before so I'm going to try to keep it really brief for those of you that have heard this story before. But if you're brand new to me, here's what happened.

I was in the south of France and I was having this conversation with a gentleman, and I was just expressing my desire to learn more about the world of luxury and it was just a really open conversation about yes, I'm intrigued. I've always been drawn to it; I'm learning about it. Well guess what? A couple weeks later, he calls me and he asks me to partner with him within that organization, to help him out.

And he was like, I'm going to fly you back out here. And I said yes. I was terrified. Next thing you know, I'm sitting in the principality of Monaco's office, like the prince's office. The prince wasn't there but all of his cohorts were. They're all speaking in French. I know very little French. In fact, I don't think I owned one luxury piece at the time.

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I mean, keep in mind, this was a time in my life when I didn't have a lot of money. I just had a curiosity. I had a desire to learn more about the world of luxury. You know the best way to learn about luxury is to immerse yourself in it, especially in Monaco because there happens to be a lot of luxury there.

And so I'm sitting there and thinking oh my goodness, I am so in over my head. They're speaking a different language. I don't even know if I knew how to pronounce Yves Saint Laurent at that time, but I showed up. What was the worst thing that could happen? That I could be embarrassed, that I could be humiliated?

I'd done that before. I knew how to navigate that one. But that also opened up a whole new world, and the biggest world that it opened for me was internally. Knowing that I am worth sitting in any room that I choose to be in. That if I want it, I can create it. That it's all within me. I just have to show up.

So the biggest takeaway from that time was again, as I was just saying, the internal shift that happened within me. I started to see myself differently because I put myself in different rooms with different people. And so I know for some of you all, you have this belief that you're not as good as another person. You have this belief that you don't deserve to be in certain rooms, and I'm going to tell you, that is all BS. It's all a lie.

You get to decide what rooms you go and sit in and I want you to go and sit in them. And feel the discomfort, see your mind go crazy, but know the truth of who you are. And the truth of who you are is that you are deserving, you are worth it. You don't have to prove anything. I think you just need to show up with a heart of curiosity and excitement. And from that place, so, so much is possible for you.

Okay, the next time I started before I was ready was running my first international retreat. So as you can probably see now, the theme is Tonya gets an idea and Tonya takes action on it. So I had this dream and this idea that I wanted to take women on international retreats.

And at the time, I didn't know of anyone that was doing this in the personal development space. I thought I was a pioneer in this. Comes to find out other

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people were doing it. I just didn't know about them. So I wanted to take women to France, and I'm going to be really honest with you. I did not know what I was doing and I did not feel ready for it.

All I had was this burning desire and a destination. So with those two things I just jumped in. I announced it. I had women who signed up. It was actually part of a mastermind. So we met in Aspen and Charleston and then our final stop was Monaco.

I did not have an event planner. I didn't even know that I was supposed to have one. I just thought I was supposed to do all the things. And I planned it. I will tell you, it was not my best retreat. Did we have an amazing time? Yes. Was it full of laughter? Yes. But it was not my best retreat.

But you know what, I needed to do that, I needed to experience it in order to get to the place that I am now where I lead world class retreats. And it's because I was willing to start before I was ready. I was willing to do it and figure out what works and what doesn't work all with the intention of creating an amazing experience, but knowing that every time I do these retreats, I'm just going to get better and better and better.

Some of you all are wanting to write a New York Times best seller right out of the gate. Some of you are wanting to create that smashing hit without ever having done it before. But the truth of it is we learn by doing, and so by me doing this retreat, hosting this retreat, I was able to continually grow into an amazing event hostess that I've become today, but I didn't start out that way.

Trust me when I tell you this. There were a lot of bloopers and mistakes along the way, but we also had a blast. But because I was willing to start before I felt ready, I'm now someone who has sold out retreats year after year. And again, like I said, they are world class. They are so well planned, so well thought out. The experience is really dialed in. But I didn't start out that way.

I started out with my little baby retreat in Monaco, just me and me. Trying to figure it out, and an incredible group of women who I'm still dear friends with to this day. But I think a lot of times we see where people are and we compare our

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lives to where they are and we don't see all of the things that they did along the way to get there, and how afraid they were and how many mistakes they had, and how many times they failed.

And so I just want to be really transparent with you all. You all may see me, the Tonya of today, but I want you to also see my journey that's gotten me to this place because to me, that's the best part. Who I've had to become in the process and just know that every time I did these things that were new and seemed really big, I did not feel ready. I never felt ready but I did it anyway.

So let's talk about the last thing. I have so many examples of this but I'm trying to keep it condensed for the podcast. But the last one is more recent and it's writing a book. I recently announced that my book is being written this year. It's written in my heart, it's written on paper in terms of an outline, and I'm in the process of writing.

And I will tell you all, I am really scared. I have a lot of doubt. My mind is telling me you're not ready, you should go to a writing workshop, Tonya. That's the answer. You should hire someone. That's the answer, right? And so my brain is constantly telling me I'm not ready. But I know that little trick and I know that trick never works and never produces the result that we're looking for.

And so I announced that I'm writing this book this year. I even created a digital experience where some of you are coming along on the journey of my writing this book. So you're getting classes, plus you're going to get the book at the end of the year. And I don't feel ready and yet I know deep down the truth, I actually am ready.

This book has been a long time in the making and I am ready to write it, but I want you to be clear in understanding that I'm very uncomfortable, and yes, I don't feel ready, but I'm doing it anyway. And just like all of these other examples that I've given you, I know that the result of doing this book, if nothing else is going to grow me in an incredible way. And at its very best is going to touch the lives of millions of women, which is my hope and my intention and my goal.

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So just like signing up for the marathon, I made a public announcement. This book is going to be done in a year. Just like my mom saying yes to the catering event of over 1000 people, say yes and then figure out how. And I will tell you, this is what it means to play in life. This is what it means to French kiss life. This is what it means to get on to the playground of life.

And really, play with your dreams. Show up for them. Think about us as kids on a playground. There was that first moment of going out on to the playground and seeing all of the equipment and not feeling ready. We didn't know how to do monkey bars. We didn't know how to swing. We didn't know how to do any of those things, but our desire to play was so immense that we were willing to get up on the monkey bars and fall down and get back up again because it was fun.

Life is so much more fun when you're playing, when you're on the playground versus sitting on the sidelines watching everyone else play. And you're never going to feel ready to play but your heart knows the truth of who you are. The heart knows that you were born ready for this.

And so all you have to do is say yes to it and then get out there and start playing and figuring it out. You're going to fall, you're going to fail, you're going to make mistakes. That is all part of the process, my friends. But that is how we learn. That is how we get better.

You have to be willing to start before you are ready. So I want you to think about something that you've been wanting to do but you haven't felt ready. What if you just said yes to it? What if you know that the secret, the answers that you're looking for are all found when you get on the playground of life and you just get started?

It is time for J'adore. The part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you. So today's J'adore is perfect for the season that we're about to all head into, which is fall. And for me personally, I'm also heading into a season of travel.

And so that means I'm looking for cozy, chic things that will keep me warm. And also that I can travel with. So today's J'adore is my favorite travel wrap. This is

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what I take with me on the plane. It's what I wear sometimes around the house, and it's cashmere.

And it's made by White and Worn. They produce really beautiful cashmere pieces because I think every woman needs to have cashmere in her closet, especially in this season. So if you're looking for something that is elegant and chic that you can throw on with a pair of jeans, you can wear it on a plane, you can wear it around the house with your lounge pants, go check out the White and Worn cashmere travel wrap.

You can actually go to [frenchkisslife.com/travelwrap](http://frenchkisslife.com/travelwrap) and you can see the one that I'm speaking about. But I have one in camel and in black because I love camel. I think camel is such a classic color and of course, you can never go wrong in black. And this piece is so, so versatile. You can wear it as a scarf, you can wear it as a bigger wrap, and again, I think it's a great, great addition to your fall and winter wardrobe.

So again, head over to [frenchkisslife.com/travelwrap](http://frenchkisslife.com/travelwrap) to check out today's J'adore. Okay my friends, that's it for today. So much fun hanging out with you all. It always is. And I hope that this week, you will start something before you feel ready because life is so much more fun when you're on the playground of your life.

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