



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 168

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

FRENCH KISS LIFE

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6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

Joy Marino said, "You are a breath of fresh air in a world so suffocating."

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.

Well, hello, my beautiful friends. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. I am actually sitting in this gorgeous loft apartment in Wilmington, North Carolina. And I wasn't planning on being here this week. This was not a part of my plan, but what's the saying? "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." Life happened. Actually, had a really big scare. I drove home on Saturday night after getting my daughter moved into her apartment in Denver, and I was so exhausted. I went straight to bed, and then I woke up Sunday morning, and I had like 17 missed calls from my mom, I had a bunch of missed calls from my brother and my sister-in-law, and then I had a text from my mom that said, "Call me now." And I knew. I knew something had happened to my dad.

And so, I called and I found out my dad had coded and was on life support. So I immediately booked a flight and got here as soon as I could, and I've been by his side every day since. And the good news is they were able to take him off the ventilator and he is now in a regular room. So my whole family is packed in there, all the cousins and the aunts and the uncles. It's like a revolving door of family. But I think that's a Southern thing. Like, Southern families are pretty tight. Right? And then the preachers, and their wives, and all their children. Like everybody is coming in to see my dad. But that's because of who my dad is. My dad literally is a breath of fresh air in a really heavy world.

You know, I remember when I was growing up, just when my dad would walk in the room, it was just like I would light up. I would be so happy to see him. And my dad taught me so much about love, and understanding, and kindness, and because that is who he is. He has affected so many people in such a positive, positive way. So I'm dedicating this episode to my father who is my breath of fresh air.

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

It is time for a community spotlight. This is the part of the show where I get to highlight someone in the community who has benefited from the French Kiss Lifestyle. And today's spotlight is on, My Heart is at the Beach. She left me a five-star iTunes review that says:

"Live your best life. I found Tonya's podcast quite by accident while researching our first trip to Paris. The very idea of French Kissing Life talked to my soul in a way I had never considered before. I have always subscribed to the belief that being grateful and loving myself were keys to happiness, but Tonya takes that to a whole new level. She is like a friend whispering in your ear 'You got this,' and gives tough love reminders when needed. I listen to her while driving to the beach, putting on makeup, or making dinner. She is a breath of fresh air and I love her upbeat wisdom and encouragement to live today, not someday when. Having a red velvet rope policy around my life and remembering that we create our thoughts has helped me to pare down my life to the essentials that bring me joy and to not feel guilty for following my own bliss. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Tonya. You have truly inspired me to live my best life."

Well, thank you, My Heart is at the Beach. My heart's at the beach too. But I do appreciate it. And listen, I want you to always remember this. You do have this, you always have and you always will. And I will remind you of that as often as necessary. Now listen, if you listen to this podcast and you enjoy it and you have not left me a review, what in the world? Head over to either iTunes or Stitcher, or wherever you may listen to this podcast, and let me know how it is impacting your life. And maybe I will feature you and an upcoming community spotlight.

I saw a quote on Instagram recently, and the author is unknown, so if anyone knows who the author is, please let me know. But it said, "It is good to take in a breath of fresh air. It's even better to be one," and that's what we're talking about in this episode.

I want to share six ways that you can begin to be a breath of fresh air in this world, because Lord knows we need it more than ever. It seems like there's so much heaviness and suffering and darkness in our world, and if we're not mindful, we can get caught up in that energy. We can start to be around those types of people, and then we can start to match their energy, and therefore we are only adding to the

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

problem versus doing what we can to alleviate the problem. This is a topic that I find myself coaching on a lot.

Women will say to me, "When I walk into my workplace, it's just depressing." "When I walk into my home, it's depressing." "When I'm around certain groups of people, it's depressing," right? And what often happens when we're in those situations and we sense it, we can start thinking depressing thoughts, and all of a sudden we are feeling the very ways that we don't want to feel. And it's as if it just begins to multiply.

And this is why it is so important that we, women and men, if you're a man listening to this, that we take emotional responsibility and we decide that we are going to be a breath of fresh air in every room that we enter. This is something that I hear a lot, and it's sort of surprising because I think I used to be more of a heavy blanket in a room because I was running so many doom and gloom thoughts in my mind that made me feel hopeless and discouraged and depressed and sad.

And people can sense that, right? But now people often say to me, "You're such a breath of fresh air." And that is because I have shifted how I see myself. I've shifted how I see other people. I've shifted how I see the world. And every day, my prayer is to help me love more, help me to understand more. And the more I step into that loving, understanding state of being, the lighter I feel. And the lighter I feel when I walk into rooms, people can sense that.

Now sometimes people aren't ready to breathe the air that I bring into a room. Sometimes people are very turned off by my lightness, and that's okay. I can still love them, but sometimes I have to dismiss that energy from my life. Sometimes I have to love those people from afar. But then, there are people that are just in a sad state and I know that my breath of fresh air can hopefully lift them out of it. And I'm so grateful for the people in my life who were my breath of fresh air, my dad being one of them.

You know, growing up in the religion that we grew up in, it was very dark for me. There was this doom and gloom. It was like hellfire and brimstone, like anything I did that was pleasurable was going to send me to hell, right? So I found myself living in this very dark world. But then my dad would be in the room with me, or he'd be sitting on the church pew beside me, and I would just look at him and he

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

would smile at me, and he wouldn't even have to say it, but just the energy he was putting off was like, "It's okay. It's all going to be, my darling." And I believed him.

His freshness, his airiness, his love lifted me out of so many dark moments. And I am so grateful for that gift, and I have so many examples of people in my life who have been my breath of fresh air when I felt like I was breathing in stale, heavy air that was just weighing me down.

You know, many times, I think about at the end of my life, what I want people to say about me. And this is a really beautiful exercise for all of us. It may seem morbid, but one thing we're all guaranteed is that we're going to die one day. And I think it's very constructive for us to think about the end, and what do we want people to say about us? What do we want our children to say about us? What do we want our family and friends to say about us? What do we want our coworkers to say about us? What do we want random strangers who just happened to bump into us on the street? What do we want them to say about us? And why don't we get clear on that and then reverse engineer our lives so that we can guarantee that that is stated at the end of our lives?

And I would love for people to say about me two things: "She French kissed life," and "She was a breath of fresh air." And that guides me. It instructs me on how to be with other people and how not to be. I mean, just this day ... Here's a really great example. The hospital where my dad is, the parking is basically impossible during the day. There are so many people there. And so, we pulled up and there was a security guard, and he was standing there with a gentleman, and he said to us, "Why don't you follow this gentleman and you can take his parking space because he's about to leave?"

And so, I follow along, and I'm sitting there with my turn signal on, and then this little old lady comes around the corner and as soon as he pulls out, she just whips right in. Now, in that moment, I had a choice. I could have become bitter. I could have probably matched the state she was in, because clearly she saw that I had been sitting there for a while and that my intention was to get that parking space.

And so, for anyone to just cut me off like that, I mean, she's probably ... I don't know. Maybe she had a loved one that was dying. Maybe she was trying to hurry

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

up and get to someone. I don't know. But I just said, "You know what? It's all good. She can have that space." God, universe, spirit will provide me with a new one. I'm not worried. And as soon as I shifted my energy into that, lo and behold, a space opened up right behind her that was on the very front row, and I just wheeled right in.

It was all good. That's what it means to be a breath of fresh air, my friends. And there are so many opportunities for us to practice this every single day, for us to notice when we get triggered, for us to notice when we start to match the heaviness of the people around us, and in those moments we can choose to shift into something more airy, more light, more loving, more kind, more grounded.

And you all, we need this more than ever. More than ever, we need this. So many people are fighting about being divided, and the fighting is only causing us to be more divided. So many people are trying to fight the hatred, and fighting the hatred only creates more hatred.

We definitely need more breaths of fresh air in this world because a lot of us are breathing that heavy, stale, toxic air that's only adding to the heaviness and the darkness in this world. But on a micro level, it's poisoning you, right? And when you're poisoned, you don't have the energy to go out there and create abundance and joy and love and all of the things that you want to do. You're sluggish, you're heavy, you're downtrodden. But when you begin to breathe in the fresh air and be the fresh air, you really begin to detoxify your body and your mind and your spirit.

I want us to be the people who are walking into rooms, and we have so much light and love, literally people have to put on glasses. Some people may have to turn away, but some people are going to be so enthralled and know, "This person has something that I want for myself. I'm going to stare straight at it."

I want us to be the kind of people that we are such a breath of fresh air, that people around us feels like they're standing on a mountain top when we're in their presence. And again, I am so grateful for the people who have done that for me, and who continue to do that for me, because even now, there are times when I can be a little downtrodden, where I can feel the heaviness in my spirit. And thank goodness for the people that come into my lives that remind me of the truth. The

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

truth is that where love is, is where I want to be. And my work is to get back to that place.

You know, just the other day ... I feel like hospitals are full of that heavy energy. You know, people are scared, people are losing their loved ones, people are confused, people are angry, people are suffering. And so, you walk into a hospital and it's so easy to get caught up in that energy. And I noticed that the other day. I was sitting in the waiting room, waiting to go back and see my dad, and I just looked around at the people and I just saw their faces. And I could just see the pain and the suffering.

And if I didn't have the awareness that I have now, it would have been so easy to match that, especially considering what my dad was going through. He was on life support. You know, we don't need to try to control life. We just need to embrace it and love it and find the joy in it, to find the beauty in all of the moments, and to know that it's always okay. And I do believe that no matter how bad it may seem, it's always okay.

This is the cycle of life. Life has its ups and its downs. Life is part-positive, part-negative. Life is sometimes amazing and ecstatic, and sometimes it's terrifying. And we fight it, and we resist it, which causes all of that heaviness within our spirit versus being like, "It's all okay, my friends."

So I'm going to share with you six ways that I practice being a breath of fresh air. And many of these I have come up with by watching my father and watching other people in my life who have been a breath of fresh air. So, the first one is to decide that you are unaffected. Decide that nothing can penetrate your spirit without your consent.

So what does this look like? It goes back to what I was just saying, having this mentality, "It's all good. It's all good, honey. It's going to be okay. I love you. All is well." Be unaffected. We are living in a time where everyone is so easily offended. It's as if we're looking for things to be upset about. We're looking for things to be angry about. And if that's what you're looking for, you're going to find it everywhere.

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

The little old lady tries to take your parking space, and you lose your mind. Right? And I'm not immune to this, you all. Just so you know. I have gotten so much better, but I still get triggered sometimes. But the more I practice being unaffected, the better I get at it, because whatever you practice the most is what you're getting good at. And so, for me, I'm just like water off a duck's back. And I think that comes from me learning to value how I feel more than trying to control the outside world. When I make feeling good my number one priority, I can let the world be what it is and then I can just manage my own thoughts and my own emotional state.

But imagine walking into a room and knowing that energy cannot penetrate you without your consent, and knowing that it can be literally like water off a duck's back. It hits you, and then it just disperses in a different direction. And that takes practice, especially if you've been someone that's so accustomed to taking on energy. And when I say, "Taking on energy," here's what happens: You walk into a room and you can just sense that the energy is a very low vibration, and all of a sudden you start running thoughts in your head about, "Oh my God, what did I do wrong? Did I say something to offend someone? Are they okay? I need to fix them. I can tell they're sad. It's not okay to be sad. So let me go fix their sadness."

And that's because we're not okay with the human experience, right? I see this with parents, and I've certainly done it too. It's like, we're not comfortable with our own negative emotion, so when our child starts to have sadness, or anger, or heartbreak, or whatever it is, we think something's wrong, and we want to go and fix it because we're not okay with that within us. But when you realize it's okay to be sad, it's okay to be angry. It's okay to be scared. You're not so afraid to be around it and you don't try to fix it, you can just be with it and be unaffected by it. I mean, really think about if you went about your days in this way.

Someone cuts you off in traffic. Someone says something hurtful, and you're like, "Honey, it is all good. I know you're hurting. I know that at the core of who you are is good and kind, and you've just got a lot of hurt going on. Don't worry about me. Go take care of you. I'm good. It's all good." That's how to be a breath of fresh air, my friends. Be unaffected.

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

Number two, look for what you want to see. I use this quote so often because I love it. I love Rumi, but he says, "Whatever you seek is seeking you." A lot of you are seeking things to be upset about, things to worry about, things that weigh heavy on your spirit. And so, then when you walk into a room, you are that heavy blanket only because you're looking for things that feed that state of being, but when you start looking for beauty, and love, and joy, and kindness, you're going to find it as well.

Life is like one big buffet. You get to choose what you put on your plate. And most of you are choosing some nasty food to put on your plate when there's, like, caviar and beautiful fresh farm-grown vegetables that you can also equally choose to indulge in. So if you want to be a breath of fresh air, when you walk into rooms, when you walk into your home, look for what you want to see. Look for the kindness in people, look for the love in people, look for the good qualities in people, and you will begin to draw that forth in them. And if you're not drawing it forth, that's okay too. Again, they're just not ready to breathe in the air in which you are, but that's when you turn your attention and you find it elsewhere.

But what are you looking for? If you're walking into a room and you're looking for all of the reasons why people don't like you, you're going to find it. If you're looking for the reasons why you're socially awkward, you're going to find it. That's what I used to do. I would walk into rooms, and I would have this story of, "Oh my gosh, people aren't going to like me," and then I would be so crazy awkward, I would just repel people with my energy confirming my story.

But when I walk into rooms now, I walk in thinking, "I love everyone in this room." I really do. I just love people, even if they're nasty. Even if they're ... Got a heavy spirit. I know at the core of who they are is love, and they're just confused, and they've been hurt, and they've got a lot of stuff going on. And I just choose to love them because it feels good for me. I don't know how it feels to them, but for me it feels good and that just helps me to rise above it.

If you think about warm air, it rises, right? And then, I'm just able to rise above all of that. And then now, I'm on a different frequency. And when I'm on a different frequency, I start attracting different things. A great example, when I was in the waiting room the other day and I noticed the heaviness and the suffering and the

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

hurt that people were experiencing, I shifted my energy. I looked for the love, I looked for the hope, I looked for the beauty. I looked for what I wanted to see, and I could feel just my whole just being just like expand. And I looked up and there was this little lady in the corner of the room, and she just looked over and she smiled at me. I drew that out of her. She met me on a new frequency. That's what that means. So, look for what you want to see.

Number three, spread love and understanding. There is so much fear in this world, and here's what I want to say about that. I've noticed just the polarities that are going on in our world right now. You've got the right versus the left, you've got the bad versus the good, right? It's just like all of these polarities, and one doesn't exist without the other. So what that means is the right doesn't exist without the left, and the left doesn't exist without the right, and they're going at it and it's just causing more divisiveness, more arguing, more hatred, more heaviness in the world. And what we need more of is love, love for all the people, love for all the sides. We need to understand people. We need to sit down and talk to people.

If we want to heal the world, and I really feel that at the core, we do. Like, I feel like we all want to have a positive impact on the world. It's time we stop hating on the other side, or the other group, or the other country, right? That's not going to be what elevates us as a society. That is holding us back, literally, in the Dark Ages. And so, we, again, need more breaths of fresh air in this world to really offer more love and more light.

And I know for some of you, you're thinking, "This is so woo-woo. This is so out there, Tonya. Here she is preaching love and light." But let me tell you, that is exactly what we need right now. But let's talk about this again on a micro level. That's what you need right now. We spend so much of our energy resisting and fighting with ourselves and with life itself. And as long as we're fighting with life, we're reacting to life. And when you're reacting with your life, you continue to create the same things over and over and over again.

So if you want to create new things, if you want to create new results in your life, you're going to have to stop reacting to the energies around you and get crystal clear on who you want to be and what it is that you want to create, and you need to harness all of that energy in that direction. And you can't be doing that if you're

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

being distracted by, you know, Uncle Joe over there who's angry at the world, and you're walking into rooms getting all in a tizzy because of his energy. That's when you get to love Uncle Joe. You don't have to agree with him, but you can love him. You can release yourself from that energy so that you can focus on what it is that you want to create and who you want to be. You can be Uncle Joe's breath of fresh air.

Now again, Uncle Joe may not be ready to breathe the air in which you are in, but you can still love him. You can release yourself from that energy. So spread love and understanding.

Number four, carry yourself lightly. Air is light. It's fluid. It's effervescent. It's moving. And our emotional state impacts our body language. So, have you ever been around people, and you can just look at them, they haven't said anything, they haven't done anything, they're just sitting there, but you can sense their energetic state?

So imagine someone sitting in a chair ... And really think about this as I'm describing it. So, a man is sitting in a chair, his head is slumped over along with his shoulders, and he's very contracted, and he's just staring down at the floor. What kind of emotional state would you assume that he's in? Maybe depressed? Sad? Scared, right? There's a heaviness to how he carries himself. Versus, imagine someone sitting in a chair, head's up, arms across the back of the chair, shoulders are back. What do you assume about this person? Probably confident, light, fun, excited. Like, it could take many different forms, but we draw conclusions even just based on body language because our bodies are affected by our feeling states.

So, one of the hacks is to start carrying yourself as a breath of fresh air, light. Like when you walk into room, just pretend you're walking on clouds. Hold yourself high, hold yourself in high regard, and not in a place of, "I'm better than anyone," because that is not a breath of fresh air. That's called arrogance. And no one is better than or worse than anyone. We're all human beings having a human experience, right? But you can have high regard for yourself. And, often, people that really have high regard for themselves, have high regard for others when it's coming from a pure intention.

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

So, just even notice how your body language transmits energy to other people. You can look at people with love and understanding. You can interact energetically with people just through your body language, that will begin to help them shift their own if they're ready. And so, just practice carrying yourself as a breath of fresh air.

You know, sometimes I can feel that energy within me, and I'll just notice I'll sort of like starts skipping through the parking lot. I'm like, "Oh, it's a beautiful day, and I'm just feeling good," and I can just tell there's like an airiness in my steps. There's a fluidity. There's a movement of life through me, just through how I carry myself. So carry yourself lightly. Carry yourself like a breath of fresh air.

Number five, keep rising. You know, that's my maiden name. My dad's name is Rising, and he always had that quality to him. Plus, he's almost 6'7", he's a very tall man, so he literally has risen in his height, but he just had that quality of just always rising above everything. When something negative would happen, he'd rise above it. When people would do terrible things, he would rise above it. I remember one time this man stole a bunch of money from my dad. My dad said, "Well, he must've needed it more than I did." Like, it didn't even phase him. He rose above it. He was unaffected, and he just kept rising.

And again, if you think about warm air, that's what it does. It rises. Cold air is heavy, it's weighed down. But warm, hot air, it just keeps rising. And so, what would it look like for you to be in rooms full of people that maybe their energy is more negative, they're vibrating at a lower level? What if you just really practice rising above it all, and just staying aware?

And I know I hear a lot of people say, "Well, I'm afraid of leaving people behind." And so, what want to do is you want to fall in the mud and get muddy with them as if that's going to help them, versus just being committed to your own evolution, to your own rising and trusting that the universe is going to support you. It's going to bring in the people that you need, and it's going to allow those that don't support you to exit your life. Just trusting in the universe to have your back. So, just keep rising like that beautiful warm air, so that you can be unaffected, so that you can be that breath of fresh air.

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

And then finally, be willing to take up space. That's what air does. Air takes up space. And I know, for a lot of us, we're afraid to take up too much space. Maybe some of you were taught when you were younger, "Be quiet." You got praise for being the quiet one in the corner of the room. "She's such a good girl. She's so well-behaved. She's so quiet."

Or maybe for some of you, you had an experience where you did put yourself out there in a big way and you got ridiculed and humiliated and now it doesn't feel safe. But to be a breath of fresh air, you got to be willing to take up space. You've got to be willing to walk into a room and say, "Here I am, I'm going to spread so much love and light on you all, you will not know what hit you." Right?

And it's scary, and it's only scary because it's unfamiliar for so many of us, especially us women. We walk into rooms, and we contract ourselves, and we play small, and we don't believe in ourselves, and we don't trust ourselves. And so, we literally can become wallflowers. But breaths of fresh air, they just walk in and they're willing to take up space knowing that there's space for everyone.

I want to say this to you and I want you to really hear me. I want you to be willing to be too much. You know, I had someone that I love who said to me not too long ago, and it was a little hurtful, and then I rose above it, but she was like, "You're just too much sometimes. Like, you walk into a room and it's just like your energy is so big." And I had a moment of a little bit of shame, like maybe I shouldn't be so big, maybe I shouldn't take up so much space, maybe I should just cower in the corner and be unseen.

And I realized, no, that's BS. That's coming out of fear. That's coming out of fear of what people will think, fear of being too much. And I feel like those are moments where we have a choice. We can listen to people who speak out of fear and buy into their fear, people that project on to us, and then we start living out their projections, or we can step into the next version of ourselves. We can step into being a little bit more, and a little bit more, to the point that maybe everybody in the room thinks we're too much, but we know the truth that we are here to grow, and to expand, and to take up space. And do it with so much love and with the intention of our presence being a healing presence in this world.

6 Ways to Be a Breath of Fresh Air

So, doesn't it sound fun to be a breath of fresh air? Why don't we all commit to being more of that in this world? So, I'm about to head out to see my dad, and I am committing to walking into that room and being the breath of fresh air to him that he's been to me my entire life. I love you all. Have a beautiful, beautiful week and I can't wait to see you in next week's episode.

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 Three Mindset Makeovers Every Woman Needs by visiting FrenchKissLife.com/mindset because after all, mindset is the new black.