



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE N° 189

Thinking Highly of Yourself

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Thinking Highly of Yourself

Recently, I came across a quote by one of my favorite singers, Edith Piaf. Here's what she said, "I had a very high opinion of myself, perhaps with good reason." And it caused me to think about what your life would be like if you chose to have a high opinion of yourself, if you chose to think highly of yourself.

Because, I can guarantee you, you have a good reason to. And that reason is that what you think of you is the most important opinion that you have. So, why not? Why not think highly of yourself? Which is what this episode is all about.

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.

It is time for a Community Spotlight. This is the part of the show where I get to highlight one of you who has benefitted from the French Kiss Lifestyle. And today's spotlight is on Sarah.

Here's what she said, "Bring it, Tonya. I have cherished every course you've ever put online, most of them twice because they just keep on giving. I simply cannot imagine how different my life would look without your empowering grace-filled influence. I'm writing a book and finding the courage to keep on the path of uncovering my authentically empowered self, all with joy and beauty. You are my mentor and we've never met. I'm so excited for the next evolution of French Kiss Life. Let the cocoon fall away, the butterfly is rising. I'm here for it with so much love."

Sarah, my friend, I love you back. And yeah, I feel like the cocoon is falling away for so many of us. And I love that my maiden name is Rising. Yep, like the phoenix. And I feel like that's what we all continue to do. I feel like that's what this work is about, is constantly evolving and rising up into the next version of ourselves.

Hello, my beautiful friends. Welcome back to another episode. Wow, so much is happening in my life. So many amazingly wonderful things. At the beginning of

Thinking Highly of Yourself

the year, I chose the word amazed, and I am certainly amazed with my life and myself and some recent decisions that I have made.

And I was talking about this with someone the other day. I was telling them how proud I am of myself, how far I've come. I was basically bragging on myself. And this person said to me, they were like, "Wow, you really think highly of yourself." And I was like, "Yeah, shouldn't we all?"

And then, last week, I was teaching a class on confidence to the women in my membership program. And one of the women said that it's really difficult for her to be confident, to appear confident in front of other people because she feels like it's her being arrogant. So, these two incidents inspired today's podcast, which is about thinking highly of yourself.

So, when I was growing up, it was very common for me to hear things like, "Don't get too big for your birches." Or, "Don't forget where you came from." Or, let's not forget one of my favorite southern sayings, which is, "She's so highfalutin. And now, when I think about those phrases and I look back over my life, I realize that those kinds of phrases, those kinds of statements all were designed for a woman not to think too highly of herself.

So, when I was preparing for this episode, I was really curious what the general consensus is of the phrase, "Thinking highly of yourself." And I was shocked when I discovered that it's associated with being an egomaniac, self-centered, conceited, narcissistic, puffed-up, selfish, stuck-up, vain, self-absorbed, self-important, self-involved.

No wonder, my friends, that we don't want to think highly of ourselves. Because society has taught us that if we think of ourselves in high regard and, god forbid, we brag about ourselves, then we are the very things that we are so afraid of being.

I was on a hike recently with one of my dear friends and I was sharing with her that for a large part of my life, I was so concerned with other people's opinion of me. And my biggest fear was that people would think that I was stuck up. They would think that I was conceited.

Thinking Highly of Yourself

Sometimes, people can just look at you and they can project onto you what they believe to be true about you without ever even knowing you. And so, because I was so afraid of being called stuck up or a snob or all of the things that I've been called throughout my life until people get to know me, and then they're like, "Oh my goodness, you're nothing like any of those things..."

But because that was my biggest fear, I would overcompensate to be nice and to get people to like me and sacrifice staying in integrity with myself. And that, ultimately over time, led me to have a low opinion of myself and to not think highly of myself, which is what the system is designed to do.

The system that wants to keep people in their place, the system that believes in scarcity and lack, meaning if you think highly of yourself, that must mean that you think poorly of everyone else, or if you have too much confidence, then you're taking confidence from other people, or if you have too much money, then you're taking too much money from other people. That is the system that keeps us playing so small and keeps us from having a high opinion of ourselves.

But I want to change that conversation. I want to reexamine what it means to think highly of yourself and why it is so important. I want you to think about someone that you think highly of. For me, so many incredible people in my life come to mind. But the first one that I thought about was my dear friend Brooke, who I've been spending a lot of time with recently.

And I love to tell her how proud I am of her. I am. And when I think about what it means for me to think highly of her, what it means for me is that I respect her. I respect her opinion. I respect what she's created. I respect who she is.

I enjoy spending time with her. I love her mind. I trust her. I have a lot of admiration for her. So, when I think about thinking highly of her and then I turn that around and I think about what that would mean for me if I thought that way about me, what an incredible impact that would have on my life, being proud of myself, trusting my own opinion, enjoying being with myself, admiring myself.

Now, does that make me an egomaniac? Does that make me arrogant? Does that make me appear highfalutin? Do you know what? To some, it may, if they

Thinking Highly of Yourself

translate that into you think you're better than me. Which I know is not true. And that's why we are so afraid of having a high opinion of ourselves.

Because many of us think that if we have a high opinion of ourselves, if we think highly of ourselves, then it must mean that we think we're better than someone else, it must mean that we think our you-know-what doesn't stink. Which isn't what it means at all.

It is the person who thinks highly of herself and highly of others that is the most confident. I don't think I'm better than anyone. I am still a human who's made so many mistakes, who deals with daily discomfort, who deals with shame and guilt and all of the other humanness, and I still choose to think highly of myself.

And because I embrace my humanness, because I don't hold myself to such perfectionistic standards, it allows me to be even more loving and to see the best in other people and to have a high opinion of others, even when we make mistakes, even when we have failures, right?

Like, you get to decide what you think about yourself, no matter what. It doesn't matter what you do. It doesn't matter your past. It doesn't matter anything outside of you. You get to decide, when you think of you, what you want to focus on. And I just want to ask you, what is the upside to having a low opinion of yourself? I see none, other than you get to stay where you are, which is probably very comfortable. But it's not where you're meant to be if you're being truly honest with yourself.

So, when you have a high opinion of yourself and low opinion of others, that is arrogance. That is being stuck-up. That is being big-headed and egotistical, right? And what I want you to know is that having a high opinion of others doesn't lower your opinion of yourself.

But then, there's the flipside. And I see a lot of this happening too. It's having a low opinion of yourself and high opinion of others. This is when we put other people on a pedestal. This is when we see other people as better than us. This is when we go onto Instagram and we see a photo of someone and our brain immediately starts saying, "Oh she's so much smarter or prettier, or more successful than I am."

Thinking Highly of Yourself

It's when we start living our life as a ranking system, which, by the way, if you think about the way we grow up, we grow up in this ranking system of constantly looking outside of us to see how we rank in relationship to other people. Who's going to be the valedictorian? Who's going to make the cheerleading squad? Who's in the beta club? Was I good enough? Were they better than me?

But as adults, we get to stop all of that craziness and nonsense and we simply get to decide how we want to think about ourselves. And when you think about thinking highly of other people and what your life would be like if you thought that way about yourself on purpose, what I can tell you is it would change everything.

You would learn to respect yourself, to admire your accomplishments, to be proud of yourself, to focus on your strengths and what you're amazing at instead of beating yourself up for what you think you're terrible at. And because what you focus on grows, you will begin to see it everywhere, what a wonderful and amazing human you are.

And there is nothing wrong with believing that about yourself. It doesn't take away from me. It doesn't take away from your family. It doesn't take away from your coworkers for you to think highly of yourself. In fact, I'm going to challenge you to consider that it makes you a better friend, a better coworker, a better citizen for you to think highly of yourself.

The world does not win when you think lowly of yourself. All it does is keep you in place and it keeps you small and it keeps you from shining bright. And I personally want to be around people where we can all think highly of ourselves and each other and we can celebrate ourselves and each other and we all know that no one is taking from us by being amazing.

If anything, they inspire us. They challenge us to want more for ourselves. They give us an example of what is possible. No one wins when you play small, especially you.

Now, one of the things that I've noticed, and I have certainly done this before myself, is that many of you want to change yourself in order to think highly of yourself. So, some of you are thinking, "Well, when I lose the weight," or, "When

Thinking Highly of Yourself

I get my business up and running, when I..." fill in the blank, "Then I will think highly of myself."

But that is not how it works, my friend. Life will meet you at the level of your thinking. Life will meet you at the level of your own self-opinion and your self-regard. So that has to happen first.

I was reading a book not too long ago called *Seductress* by Betsy Prioleau. And it's such an incredible book, just talking about women in history. And there was one part where she talks about Edith Piaf, which is one of my favorite singers, by the way, and Edith Piaf was definitely a woman that had a high opinion of herself. But she didn't consider herself beautiful.

In fact, she states, "I'm not Venus. I've got sagging breasts, a low-slung ass, and little drooping buttocks. But I can still get a man." Now, when you hear that, what do you hear? I hear a woman who thinks highly of herself, no matter what is happening with her body. I hear a woman who believes in herself, who has confidence, who is showing up in her life with high regard and high self-esteem.

Now, personally I don't ever see an upside to a woman thinking she's not beautiful because I think we all are beautiful. And if we look for it, we will find all of the ways in which we are. But Edith Piaf didn't even think she was beautiful, but she still had a very high opinion of herself and her ability to get a man.

And this proves my point. The point being, it doesn't matter what you look like. It doesn't matter if you don't fit the societal standard of beauty that actually is changing about every decade, by the way, so good luck trying to keep up with that. All that matters is what you think of you. And I am always going to encourage you to have a high opinion of yourself. I am always going to encourage you to think highly of yourself.

One of the concepts that I was thinking about as I was preparing for the podcast is that I was raised to be humble, to have a sense of humility. And I realized that I've actually used that against me for a huge part of my life because what was driving it was fear; fear of what people would think if I got too big for my birches, fear of what people would think if I thought highly of myself.

Thinking Highly of Yourself

And any action taken out of fear only creates more fear and it keeps you small. It keeps you hiding in your life. And so, I used to believe in humility and being humble. But when I looked up the definition, here's what I read, "The quality or condition of being humble, a modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance or rank, having a feeling of insignificance, inferiority, subservience, low in rank, importance, status, quality, lowly, courteously respectful."

Now, the last definition I can get behind. I believe in being courteous and respectful. But I will never believe in any of us feeling insignificant or inferior or subservient to another person. I will never see you as low in rank or importance or status or quality. I'm starting to believe that humility may not be serving us at all.

I was sitting with some friends at brunch the other day and there was this incredible man who was at the table. And he was talking about how he feels about himself, how he thinks about himself. And he was like, "I never want to be the best. I always want to be in the back of the room. I always want to not bring too much attention to me. I always want to be second best."

And I was like, why? I'm like, you're amazing. Why would you choose to be second best? There's room for all of us to be the best at whatever we choose to be. And out of my mouth, I just said, "You know what, your humility is boring," because the way I see him is this incredible spirit, this incredible man, this man with so much potential and so much love and so much to give the world, and yet he is choosing to be second best, as if, if he were to choose to be the best, he would be taking from someone else. And I just don't believe in that system any longer.

I don't believe in any of us being inferior to each other. I don't believe in us being in a ranking system any longer. I believe there is so much room for all of us to be the best at whatever we choose to be the best in. And by doing that, you're only going to inspire other people to be the best in whatever they choose to be the best in. And this is all going to require that we all start to think highly of ourselves and each other.

My friend sent me a picture the other day in this outfit and she said to me, "I am looking cute today." And I responded to her, "Yes you are." I want to see more of that. I want to see more women seeing their cuteness, their beauty, their potential,

Thinking Highly of Yourself

their capability, the possibility that lies within each of us. And you cannot see that if you are so committed to thinking lowly of yourself.

So, I want you to, right now, think about your life, if you were to choose to think highly of yourself what would you be doing that you're not doing now? How would you be showing up differently, in your home, at work, in your community, and most importantly, with yourself?

So, here are some things that I'm going to challenge you to do. This is like a little homework assignment. We've been doing this in my membership program and I think it's so powerful because we, as women, we get to focused on everything that we think we're doing terrible, everything that we've done wrong, everything we think we're not good t.

But I want you to make a list of all of your accomplishments, everything that you're proud of. And I want you to fill up at least one page. I would love to see you fill up a journal with this because, if you're looking for it, you'll find it everywhere. And you have to start training your brain to look for what you want to see.

I also want you to practice taking a compliment. A woman that thinks highly of herself knows that she can take a compliment and it doesn't take away from anyone else. So, the next time someone says, "I love your dress," or, "Your hair looks amazing today," or, "You're just an incredible person," instead of saying, "Yeah, but..." which is what we often do – it's like, "This is uncomfortable, let me get rid of it," which is what the but does – I want you just to open your heart and say, "Thank you."

Open your heart and accept it. Allow it into your being. And then finally, a challenge is to take a picture of yourself and send it to a friend, or you can send it to me in Instagram @tonyaleigh and tell me how cute you are today.

Share your beauty. Share your heart. Share your celebrations. Share what you want to experience more of with the world, knowing that there's a place for all of us at the table.

Thinking Highly of Yourself

It is time for J'adore, the part of the show where I get to share something that I love with you. And today, we are talking about brows; eyebrows. So, I spent the better part of my young adulthood not knowing anything about makeup. I was so clueless. I was one of these girls that would go to the drugstore or to Walmart and I would grab some eyeshadow and use the little sponge applicator that came with the eyeshadow, which it turns out, that's a big no-no if you want your eyeshadow to look really good.

And brows, I just didn't pay attention to them until I decided, when I was in New York many years ago, someone had told me about a brow bar, a place where you go and you get your brows done. And I was in this place in my life where I was just experimenting and trying new things, which I'm doing it again. I keep doing it.

I think, the more we can experience, the better life gets. But back then, my experiment was with my brows. And so, I went to this brow bar and when she did my brows, I was flabbergasted. I was like, "How did I not know this? How did I not know what a difference doing your brows correctly can do for your face?"

It changes everything. It accentuates your eyes. It makes your eyes pop. It makes such a huge difference. So, brows are one of those things that I now pay attention to. And if I do nothing else on my face every day, it's to do my brows before I leave the house.

And so, the pencil that I like to use is by Anastasia and I do go back and forth between a pencil and a pomade. You can use a pomade if you want a bolder look. So, for evenings, I might use a pomade. But for everyday use, I love a brow pencil. And I love it because you can just do little strokes to mimic real hair.

And when I'm doing my brows, what I like to do is to start on the bottom and I just do little short strokes to line the bottom, and then I fill in the middle, and then I do a little short stroke at the top. And then, it comes with the little – I don't know what you call it – the little brush on the end so that you can just brush your brows and blend it all in.

And again, it's amazing what a brow pencil can do for your face. So, if you want to see the one that I use, you can go to frenchkisslife.com/browpencil. I use the soft brown shade, but you need to make sure that you get the right shade for you. I like

Thinking Highly of Yourself

my brow to be a little darker than my hair. My hair is blonde. It's colored, obviously, but I prefer personally for my brow to be a little darker than my hair shade.

Now, there are many different opinions on this. Some people will tell you, you need to pick a shade that's the exact same color as your hair. I think you need to go and experiment and try and see what looks best for you. So, ladies, let's do our brows. You will thank me for this. Again, head to frenchkisslife.com/browpencil.

Have a beautiful week, everyone. And I cannot wait to see you in the next 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.