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Episode 175 – 10 Essential Steps to Unlocking Self-Love 

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Jonathan: Welcome, everyone, to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm joined by my co-host, TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn: Hey, everyone.

Jonathan: And today, we are doing a special two-part podcast. It's February, love is in the air. And so, we wanted to do a two-part podcast about the most important relationship in your life, and that is the relationship with yourself. So, part one, we're going to talk about self-love, and then in our second part, we're going to talk about self-care and just kind of talk about the differences, and we're really going to talk about what are the top 10 ways to show ourselves more self-love, and then when we get into self-care, we're going to talk a bit about stress and how to manage stress, and just really, how to take care of yourself on a much deeper level than most of us usually do.

TeriAnn: Yeah, I'm really excited about this topic, because we've talked a little bit in the past, on previous podcasts, about putting ourselves first. We talked in the goal-setting about putting our health first. And we're on a mission to help people be healthier and be more mindful about being healthy in their lives, and I hands-down think that being healthy comes out of loving ourselves. It really does. It's putting ourselves first, and not in a selfish way, but in a way that allows us to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of everything else in our lives.

So, question for you. What is—there's a lot of definitions out there, but what is self-love for you?

Jonathan: What is self-love for me? It is making the sacrifice to put myself first. And I say making the sacrifice, because it's hard, right? I have two daughters, 2 and 4 years old, and it can be very easy to fall into that trap of "Just take care of them," right? I own a company, and I can fall into that trap, a lot of "Running the business, running the business," and going 60+ hours a week. And so, it's, for me, it's really—it's about making that choice to put myself first, and it's not an easy thing to do. It's something I have to do on a consistent basis. So, on a broad answer, or from a higher level, that would be what self-love is for me, or why self-love, I would say, is important for me.

TeriAnn: Yeah. And I think a lot of people have a hard time putting themselves first, because there is so much going on in our lives, and we have all these things around us, and things that take our attention, and over time and life. It's interesting, as you think about time, your timeline of life. As a child, people are taking care of you, and they're putting you first. And then all this time, you're focused on yourself.

And all of a sudden, I think we hit this point in our lives as adults, where it's like "It's all about everyone else," and we forget to put ourselves first. But we've spent all this time allowing people to love

us and take care of is, I mean that's the way it should be, I know it's not that way for everyone in the world, but then all of a sudden, it goes to "Let's focus on all these other people," and we forget about ourselves.

And I think a huge issue with not having self-love in our lives is that we start to be critical of ourselves in everything that we do. I think that we become harder on ourselves, I think that we forget to be kind to ourselves, and I think we forget to look at all the things that we're doing around us. I think one of the biggest downfalls of not having self-love and putting ourselves first is that we start to get this negative perception of ourselves, negative perception of life. I think that's one of the biggest fundamentals with self-love is putting ourselves first, recognizing what we're doing in life and our accomplishments. I think that starts to change as we don't put ourselves first in the things that we need.

Jonathan: Yeah, and I think that as we get older in life, as we progress, and now especially with the power of social media that's out there, is we find ourselves comparing ourselves with somebody else, right? And there's a certain amount of that that can be healthy, right? And it starts in school, and how do your grades compare to somebody else? And it kind of helps you determine what you're good at and what you're not good at and can build some self-worth there.

But then I think it starts getting a little too far for a lot of people and especially with social media, right? We go on social media, go on Facebook or Instagram, and you see these pictures of people, and it's not even their real pictures. They've used filters, they're doing all kinds of different things to make them look good.

And now all of a sudden, you look at a picture of your friend or somebody else on there, and you start comparing yourself to them. And then the negative talk starts coming, "I need to go to the gym more." "I need to do this more." "I don't have this." "I don't have that." And I think social media is definitely playing a big part in that negative self-talk that's coming up.

I was listening to a podcast just yesterday that talks about that effect on young girls, and just that comparison that goes on. And it just starts that negative talk so much earlier in life. So, I agree with you. I mean what is self-love? What do we need to do about it? Well, I think the first thing is we need to really figure out how do we talk to ourselves? What's the narration that's going on in our heads?

And then really having some perspective around that, right? What's causing that negative talk? Are we comparing to other people? Are those comparisons even realistic? And I think the first step in really increasing self-love is just being aware, getting a lot more awareness around what's going on around you, what's going on in your head, and that conversation.

TeriAnn: Yeah, it's interesting, going back to my comment on as we grow up and as time goes on in our lives, we start to focus more on other people and other things. When you were just talking about social media, I actually read an article the other day about how kids, there's research behind the fact that kids shouldn't be on social media. And I do think that that's changing things.

I think when we look, even in the last 10-15 years, kids growing up didn't focus on other people and outside influences. It's like "Oh, I'm with my family and I'm growing up, and I'm going to school." Kids are more self-centered because they don't know about thinking about the world outside of them, it's just cognitively how we develop.

And one of the things it said in the article was that social media is not important in children's and teenager's lives, and it shouldn't be a part of their lives for that very reason. It starts putting this negative context in their mind of like "I need to be better." "I need to be thinner." "I need to be more beautiful." "I need to dress a certain way." "I need to keep up with appearances." "I need to get certain grades." "I

need to be successful with money.” It puts all these things in their heads that kids didn’t used to think about.

But that doesn’t just influence children. If it’s influencing children, it’s influencing all of us. And so, I think that’s a really important aspect of self-love. There’s so many outside influences in our lives now, and I think it can start to eat away at us, and it can start to impact the way we talk to ourselves. And I think that’s been a big change just in the last 10-15 years with how much information is coming at us day in and day out through social media and the internet.

Jonathan: Absolutely. So, let’s talk about just some of the—let’s talk about some of the reasons we need to increase the self-love. Like what is that going to do in our life? And I think that—and let’s talk specifically about the criticism part, right? So, self-love, I think is a broader topic, but I want to stay focused for a second on the self-criticism, which is really that negative talk, the “I’m a loser,” “I’m this,” “I’m fat,” “I’m blah…” All these things. We are so harsh on ourselves. We’re harsher on ourselves more than anybody else ever could be towards us, right? So, let’s talk about what is that doing to us? What are the negative things that that kind of self-criticism does?

TeriAnn: I definitely think that the self-criticism can keep us from going after our dreams and doing things that are really meaningful in our lives. I think we talk ourselves out of what we can truly do and what we’re truly capable of because we have this idea in our head. We make a mistake, and it’s like “Oh, I made a mistake,” and then it’s like instead of just saying “I’m learning from it,” and moving on, we tend to hold onto that. And it’s like “Okay, well now I’m just going to focus on the fact that I made that mistake, so now, I want to go try this new thing, but this last time I did it, I made a mistake.” And it keeps you from doing things, you keep that.

I think we have a tendency to hold on to mistakes and failure and like “I just can’t be good. I can’t do it. I can’t move on.” And so, I think that self-criticism keeps us in a holding pattern. It keeps us from moving forward and learning and growing, for sure. That’s the biggest one I’ve felt in my life personally.

Jonathan: And it just keeps you focused on what’s wrong, not on what’s right, right? I definitely think that there is a healthy amount of self-reflection and being self-aware. And I think that far too often, do we go too far down the path of just criticizing ourselves harshly, and focusing on what’s wrong with ourselves, and focusing on all of these things that are bad in life. And then the more you focus on that, the more it decreases your confidence because you’re beating yourself up. And of course, you’re not going to be as confident.

And just like what you said, you start telling yourself “I did this wrong, I did that wrong,” and now you’re faced with an opportunity that is similar to one in the past that you failed on, and that’s where you instantly go. And so, your confidence is lower. Now you’re starting to think about everything that went wrong the first time around. Your chances of succeeding that second time around are far lower if you allow that narration, is how I call it, that self-criticism to go too far down that negative side.

TeriAnn: Yeah. How does self-criticism impact you in your life? Like what’s the biggest thing you’ve noticed? For me, what I just shared is probably the biggest one for me. It keeps me from—self-criticism keeps me from going outside of my comfort zone, not only from an internal perspective, like “Oh, I’m not going to be successful,” but also, from an external perspective, it’s like “What will people think of me if I fail? What will people perceive this as?” And so, that, for me, that was the biggest one that comes to mind when I think of self-criticism. But for you, what’s something that you’ve noticed with self-criticism and negative talk in your head, and not loving yourself more?

Jonathan: It's really interesting because I can compartmentalize my life into different areas. When it comes to business, there's very little negative talk that comes up. I started my first company at 17, and business comes very easily to me. Maybe not easily, but my confidence in business is sky-high. When it comes to my personal appearance or my personal health, that's where that negative talk can come in.

I'm carrying around more weight than I want to right now. At one point, I was carrying around a lot more weight. I was, at my heaviest, 270 pounds. And that, the negative talk that happens at that level, I mean it's like a downward spiral. So, this was five years ago, and I was very unhealthy. I was living a very unhealthy lifestyle. I was smoking, I was eating, I was drinking every night like it was Friday night.

And it's interesting because that negative talk would just continue down that spiral, and it would make you want to escape life more, so it'd have you want to have a drink or smoke a cigarette or find some other vice to get you out of that, or eat, eat something that's unhealthy.

And so, I think that there's different areas of life where we have different conversations with ourselves, and areas where we've gotten really good feedback. For instance, I get really good feedback with business, because my businesses generally have done fairly well. And so, I get that good, positive reinforcement. So, my self-talk around business is much higher, much better.

And at one point, I was thinner and healthier physically, but I let things get out of control. And as they started downward spiraling, that negative talk would come in more and more. And as that negative talk got more, that downward spiral continued, and I got heavier and heavier, and I cared less and less about my health, and then I started making all kinds of excuses about "I'm just a fat person. That's just who I am."

But deep down inside, I mean that's not who I am. It prevented me from doing all kinds of things that I love, like snowboarding, and getting out and doing all kinds of other physical things I couldn't do because of the size that I got to at one point.

So, for me, that's the journey that I'm on right now, is getting healthy, getting healthy physically. It's really finding—and it's more than just taking a few supplements. It's more than just going for a run in the morning. It is changing that narration of myself. And that's—I've said before, nobody's going to be as harsh on yourself—as harsh to you as you'll be on yourself. And that is tenfold when it's something, for me, when it comes to like my physical appearance or my health like I can just beat myself up to an unhealthy place. So, I probably went too far down the rabbit hole than you were looking for, but—

TeriAnn: No, I think—

Jonathan: —just sharing that. Because I think there's a lot of people out there that, in certain areas of their life, the negative talk is not a big deal.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: But there's other areas where it's really damaging.

TeriAnn: I think you touched on a really good point, though, and I don't think that one size fits all when I make this statement, but you said, "I can put my life, I compartmentalize it into boxes." And there's actually research behind the fact that men are better at having boxes than women are. And so, I actually think it's a really important point.

I think that, first of all, I think women tend to be a lot harder on themselves than men with self-talk and the way they talk about things. And this is why I think that—this is just according to my own theory, but

I think that women, their boxes are more fluid, and it's like when we have that negative self-talk, I think it seeps into all these different aspects of our lives.

Like you just talked about business, I've got it, I'm solid. When I'm feeling negative about something, it typically impacts—I start thinking about how it impacts all these different aspects of my life, and I really have to pull myself out of that. Even when I'm really being successful at business if I have this negative self-talk on this little point over here. It's like “Well, I'm thinking about it in business, too.”

And I think that men are really good at compartmentalizing into boxes, in most cases, and I think for women, again, I think it's more fluid. And I think that we're different in how we have the negative talk in our heads and being self-critical in that aspect. But I think it impacts all of us.

So, there's some research behind—scientific research to support the benefits of healthy self-love, so let's go back to the self-love for a minute. We're going to talk about 10 ways to improve self-love. And we'll post links in the Cliff Notes to some of the research that we're looking at here, but just a few of the things that stand out as far as why self-love is so important and how it benefits us.

Some of the things that they found in their research is that it increases motivation and willpower, it brings a greater perspective, and therefore, better decision-making in your life, it makes you more resilient, you're more ready to bounce back in the face of failure and learn from your mistakes. We talked a little bit about that and how negative talk can keep us from moving forward when we make mistakes.

I love this one. It makes you more emotionally intelligent, and therefore, improves your relationships. So, think about emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is such an important concept when it comes to navigating relationships in our lives. When we're emotionally unhealthy, we see the world in a very unrealistic perspective, in my opinion. And I think emotional intelligence is what guides us to communicate better. It guides us to take care of people better. It guides us to taking care of children better. It guides us in all aspects of our relationship, forgiveness, the way we perceive things, the way we look at things. Emotional intelligence is such an interesting concept. It's so important.

This one's really important. One of the benefits they found, it lowers your stress levels and decreases feelings of being overwhelmed, it increases your motivation and willpower. Talk about negative talk. Depression, it decreases anxiety and depression. Depression is rampant in the United States right now. It's something that so many people are facing. And I do think that a big aspect of that is the way we perceive ourselves and how we talk to ourselves. It makes you more resilient. We talked about that. It boosts—improves your health, which is also really important.

And I do, I want to just touch on that really quickly before we get to 10 ways to improving our self-love. I think that we talked about self-love and health, and I've talked about this a lot in previous podcasts, but our health is, I believe, one of the number one factors in being able to do everything we want to do in life. When our health is failing, we can't do anything else. Our bodies and our health are so important.

And I notice for myself, when I have negative self-talk, when I'm feeling stressed about life and stressed about myself, I can feel it. I can feel myself carrying it. It's heavy. It feels heavy. And I think it's that way for a lot of people. And I think when we feel happy and we're laughing and we see things positively, it's this lift and this release in our life. And so, I don't think you can underestimate the power of self-love and positive self-talk when it comes to your health. I think it impacts it significantly.

Jonathan: I mean I think that it would be easy to argue that it's the most important thing in any aspect of your life, right? Whether that's your health, whether that's business or finances, or parenting, or anything like that. I mean I think that is one of the problems is that we don't—self-love being much

deeper than just that self-talk. But that self-love of taking care of yourself, how do you feel about yourself, that narration, putting yourself first. All of these things fall into that category of self-love. And I think without it, you just can't be who you're truly meant to be, or who you would be at your happiest.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: I mean you talk about the emotional intelligence, I mean if I'm not feeling good about myself, how in the world am I going to be as good of a father as I could be to my daughters?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: It doesn't mean that I'm necessarily going to tear them down emotionally, but I'm certainly not coming from a higher place that I could be coming from if I felt different about myself. And then what are some of the things that I impose on them that's unfair or unrealistic because I'm not feeling good about maybe the way I'm eating, or I'm exercising, or this, or that? Does that change now how I feed them? How do I influence their relationship with food or exercise? All of these things. And so—

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And I think one of the biggest challenges with self-love is just actually making the time to put yourself first.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: So often, do we just do things for other people. I'm a people-pleaser, right? So, I do things for others. It makes me feel good. So, I do things for my daughters, I do things for people I don't even know. And that makes me feel good. But really, if I want to have the best impact on my daughters and others in my life, it would be taking care of myself first.

TeriAnn: Yeah. Okay, before we get to the 10 ways to improve self-love because I said we were going to that next, I just want to touch on that really quickly. I'm in a group for entrepreneurs, people in business, people who are trying to build a better life, and the other day, in one of the live videos, a woman was like—it was just like ask any question you want to ask, and she was just like “Why do I feel like the worst mother? And why can't I just be a better mom? I feel like I'm always talking so negatively to my kids, and I feel like I'm always such a bad mom.”

That was kind of the context of it. And it's funny, because outside appearance, like looking into her life, I feel like she's a great mom. And I don't know her on this deep, personal level, but from what I see, like she's taking her kids to events and doing fun things, and they're in sports, and they have a loving home, and their parents love each other.

And I think when you talked about being a better parent, I think in all relationships when it comes to self-love, we have to love ourselves and recognize what we're doing best. I think the first thing we go to when people ask “Well, how are you doing?” or “How is this going?” I think we're wired to go negative first, like “Oh, I yelled at my kid this week. I'm the worst mom.” But then, did you think about you took them to school, you helped them do homework, you fed them food, you have them in extracurricular activities, they have friends, you gave them a hug this week?

But we just focus on that one fight we had, like “I yelled at my kid, and that's all I can think about. I'm not a good mom now.” And I think we have to be so careful to say more positive, focus on more positive. For every negative thing, you have happen, think about the 10 things that you did right. And we don't do that enough. It's just like negative, negative, negative. “I did that one wrong thing,” so it

impacts everything. So, I just wanted to touch on that, when you were talking about your kids. I think we're so hard on ourselves when it comes to kids and relationships.

Jonathan: And I think you touched on something too, where we go to the negative. You ask somebody "How was your day?" and is their first response something positive or was it something negative?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: I know Tim Farris did a challenge, it was probably a couple years ago, but it was a 24-hour challenge to not complain. Can you go 24 hours without complaining about something? And it's just—it was very interesting to take on the challenge. I'm trying to remember back if I made it the whole 24 hours or not. And part of that would be did you complain to somebody else? But I think an even deeper challenge would be that complaining to yourself.

TeriAnn: In your head. Yeah.

Jonathan: That negative talk.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And so, it is interesting, and it takes conscious effort to focus on the positive. It takes—and I'm not saying, listen, let's all just be optimistic and run around like it's flowers and roses and everything's perfect. And I think that we could absolutely be a lot more conscious of how we respond.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: "How was your day?" You know what? Let me build up the muscle that remembers the good over the bad.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And the only way that's going to happen is by consciously trying to do it more and more and more.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And over time, it will get better. I mean when I talk about my challenge with it being my health and really getting as healthy as possible, and I'm doing a 5K a day challenge, where I'm running 5K a day, the more I do that, the easier it gets. I ran eight miles yesterday morning. I mean it's—and I'm still a couple hundred pounds. It's not like I'm just—it's a light load that I'm carrying around. But it's that constant effort of doing that every morning that's going to change my self-talk, that's going to change that narration, that's going to change that habit. Now we just need to do it in all—in a lot of other areas, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah, most importantly, in our head.

Jonathan: I agree.

TeriAnn: When you were talking about that 24-hour challenge, wouldn't it be interesting, not only not complaining, but every time you catch yourself from almost going to complaining, saying 10 positive things?

Jonathan: Sure.

TeriAnn: “I did this, I did this, this person did this for me.” Or thinking of something you’re grateful for. Could you imagine how you would rewire your brain if you took that 24-hour challenge, and instead of not just skipping over the negative, like “Oh, I’m not going to complain right now. Nope, I’m going to talk about all the good things that happened today,” right? Think about what that would do in your mind for your perspective, for how you feel about things, how you feel about people. It would be fascinating.

Jonathan: The one part that you actually said in there, rather than just naming off 10 good things, but what are you grateful for? So, when we complain, I think it’s when we’re not present to all the things that we do have.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: So, what if, instead of every time you had that negative thought or you’re about—not a negative thought, but every time you’re about to complain, you actually thought of three things that you’re grateful for? And just get present to that for a second. I think that’s a fascinating challenge that we may need to explore a little deeper in another podcast.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: Or even this one. But let’s move forward. You’ve been promising the 10 ways to improve your self-love. Let’s start with number one.

TeriAnn: Yeah, so we came up with these 10 different ways to improve self-love. Number one being—and we’ve talked a little bit about this, and I think so importantly—become mindful. People who have more self-love tend to know what they think, feel, and want. They are mindful of who they are and act on this knowledge rather than on what others want for them.

This is the most fundamental part of self-love, is doing what needs to be done for you and not for other people. Saying what needs to be said to yourself about how you are, how you want to be, what you want to accomplish, and not including what other people think about that. In the morning, not having talk in our heads that we’ve heard from other people, but how we want to see ourselves and how we want to see the world, being mindful about how we talk to ourselves, how we take care of ourselves, putting ourselves first. It’s a really hard thing to do. You can say it, but actually doing it is incredibly hard.

Jonathan: I think the thing here to really focus on is getting clear on what do you want? How many of us are going down a path that was set forth from our parents, or our spouse, or doing all these things that other people want us to do or being these things that other people want us to be. And I don’t know that you’re ever going to achieve true self-love if you’re going down a journey for somebody else, or if you’re doing somebody else’s journey, right?

And so, I think step one is getting really clear, what is it that you want? What is it that you want in the business? What is it that you want in your relationship? What is it that you want in friendships? What is it that you want in where you live or the climate? I mean getting really clear on all of these things, I think is really step one in the journey to putting yourself first and making those things a reality.

TeriAnn: Yep. For sure, for sure.

Jonathan: Number two, act on what you need rather than what you want so you love yourself when you can turn away from something that feels good and exciting to what you need to stay strong, centered, and moving forward in your life instead.

I think it's very interesting when you act on what you need rather than what you want. And it's—these are lessons that I'm constantly teaching my daughters, so it's very present for me now, because “I want this, I want this, I want that.” And it's like “Well, I understand that you want that, but what is it that you really need? Let's get clear. What's the difference between wanting and needing?” And what is essential, and what isn't?

And it falls—I think that going after what you want, I don't think there's anything wrong with getting what you want. I also think that there's a good balance, too, and understanding the reasoning behind the want. Do you want that nicer car because your best friend just got a new car? Do you want x, y, or z because somebody else has this or that? And now, we're falling back into that trap of comparison, and now, we're falling back into that trap of “I'm not good enough.” And so, “I want this, to make me better.”

TeriAnn: Yeah. Well, when you talk about wanting that car that your best friend has, okay, that's fine. But do you have the money to pay for it? You may want it, but that doesn't mean that you need to go into \$60,000 of debt to keep up with your friend. Same thing goes with “Well, I might want this relationship, but is it toxic and bad?” Then yeah, I don't know that you need that in your life. I don't think people—wants and needs can be the same thing.

Jonathan: Sure.

TeriAnn: But you have to weigh those two against each other. I may want that donut, but what my doctor told me is that I'm having issues with blood sugar and I need to regulate it better, and I should be staying away from things like that and staying on this nutrition plan that they put me on. So, it's a want, but do I really need it?

Jonathan: Well, you may be hungry, so it might feel like you need it, right?

TeriAnn: That's true.

Jonathan: But it's making that conscious choice, just like you said.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: A want and need can be the same, and then it's making that conscious choice.

TeriAnn: Yep. Wants and needs are an interesting thing, and I think you have to weigh the two when you're looking at how you're navigating your life. And again, I think wants and needs can be a good thing, it's just do those needs and wants align together in what's best for you in loving yourself the best that you possibly can? Super important in looking at those two things. They don't always go hand in hand, and sometimes, you have to separate them out to realize what you really should be doing for yourself to love yourself better.

Number three, set boundaries. You'll love yourself more when you set limits or saying no to work, love, or activities that deplete or harm you physically, emotionally, and spiritually, or express poorly who you are.

So, we just kind of touched on this a little bit, but let's, for the purpose of setting boundaries, let's talk about saying no for this specific thing because I think saying no is one of the hardest things for people to do.

“Oh, we're all going out. You should come with us.” And you feel this like dedication and commitment to your friends, but you're like “I've been going, going, going, going. I just want to stay home,” but you don't want to let people down. It's like once you weigh that option in your head and your thought was like “Oh, but I just want to stay home,” that's your answer. And you say “No.”

Or, we talked about this with holidays and family. Like we always feel like we have to say yes to family because they're family, but we don't. Sometimes, you just need to say no, like “I don't want the stress of that family dynamic right now, and I don't have the capacity to handle it, but I'm just going to show up because it's family.” Well, how is that loving yourself and respecting yourself? You're not going to show up in your best form with your best emotional intelligence on, and all of those things that we talked about if your first thought was “But I don't want to go.” But you still go? We do that all the time in life. All the time.

Jonathan: And sometimes, it's that family that destroys that self-love the most, or they criticize the heaviest, and then you leave there just feeling like you're definitely not worth as much as you thought you were before you went.

TeriAnn: Yep.

Jonathan: The interesting thing about no is it does not require an explanation. No is enough. And I think that—and it's a challenge for me at times as well, is somebody asks something, and I don't want to do it, and I say “No,” and then I feel like I have to justify it. And no doesn't require any justification.

TeriAnn: No.

Jonathan: It's just no.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: Why is none of your business.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: It's just not what I want to do, or not what I'm going to do.

TeriAnn: Yeah. It's so funny when you said that, like I'm sitting here thinking about all the times that like I'm writing a text to someone because they're like “Hey, can you do this?” And I'm like “I don't want to do that.” And then I'm like “Alright, I want to say all these reasons why I don't want to do it.” And it's like “Why can't I just say no?” I do that to myself all the time, and I get all stressed out about why I'm not going to say yes to what they're asking me to do, and it's like you're so right. We just—first of all, we have a hard time saying no, and second, why do we always have to give an excuse for saying no? It's just like “No, I don't want to do that.”

Jonathan: Yeah, and I think that—it's something that I want to start practicing more of, and it might just be a copy/paste that I have. And it's my “No, and I don't believe no requires an explanation. Thanks anyway.”

TeriAnn: Yeah. Or you could just write “No,” and copy and paste that every time. “No.”

Jonathan: Just “No.” The other interesting thing around no is—and I can say this very much in business, one of the things that has helped me become more successful is saying no more often. And I think that that can be true in a lot of areas of life. I haven’t necessarily taken it to all areas of my life, but I’m very clear that that is one of those places that has helped my business be more successful, that’s just saying no.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: Saying no to more opportunities, saying no to some great idea that somebody has, saying no to a lot of things, and just focusing on the core. And one of the ways that I worked to get to that point was if it’s a maybe, it’s a no.

TeriAnn: Yep.

Jonathan: And so, if you’re on the fence, just maybe, make it a no.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: It’s easier. So, only make it a yes if it’s a “Hell yes.”

TeriAnn: Yeah, yeah. No, and I think that just even now, the way you’re wired, you’re like “I’m going to write no, and I’m going to have like a defined answer.” “Well, because of this…” But you’re giving an excuse. It’s like just say no. It’s so hard for us to do.

Jonathan: Well, I’m trying to train the people that I say no to, to not expect an explanation from me. So, that was my point.

TeriAnn: “No, and I’m not giving an explanation.”

Jonathan: “No, and I don’t—” Yeah, and I no longer give explanations to my no. That one’s going to be my copy/paste.

TeriAnn: I’m going to wait for you to start sending that. That’s awesome.

Jonathan: I will start doing that.

TeriAnn: And it’s interesting, I think they say that to master something, it’s like minimum 10,000 hours of practice. So, we’d better start saying no more.

Jonathan: I agree.

TeriAnn: 10,000 nos before we’re going to get that down to a perfect science. Let’s see.

Number four, protect yourself. Understand the term in front of me, it describes so well the type of friends who take pleasure in your pain and loss rather than in your happiness and success. Get rid of them.

And we talked about this in relationships when we talked about wants and needs. “I want this relationship, but I don’t need it.” But what about relationships where we really don’t need them and we

don't want them, but we still hang onto them because we can't say no, because we're not putting ourselves first, because we have this—just this idea in our head, like “Oh, I'm hanging on.”

But why are you hanging on? Why do we do that so often with friendships and relationships, where we give, give, give, and we don't get anything, but we keep giving? It's so interesting. It's an interesting concept to me. And I think we're all guilty of it. I think everyone is.

Jonathan: And it's more than just that frenemy. We stay in romantic relationships much longer than is healthy for us. And there's all kinds of reasons around why we do all these things. And I think that it comes back to setting boundaries, right? And that comes back to number three, get clear on your boundaries. And what do your boundaries need to be? Even for a friendship, or a romantic relationship, or whatever it is, that way, you just may have to say no to that friendship, right? And we talked about some family members may be a bit more toxic. You need to say no to them more often.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And just getting really clear. And that's okay. And I think something also to understand is we may be in places in our lives where we have to say no more now, and put ourselves first, so that we can rebuild our confidence, and so that we can get to a certain level. In a year from now, we may be able to say yes to that same invitation because we're a lot stronger, and going to that event, or going and being around that person isn't going to destroy us as much as it would right now, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And so, I think that's another thing to understand, too, is you don't necessarily have to say no forever, but it may just need to be a no right now.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And put yourself first for a while and build up that confidence and that strength, and “That's who I am.” Listen, if you're starting a new way of eating, and that way of eating does not include donuts, it's in your best interests to say no to that invitation to go to a donut shop.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: For a few months. Now a few months from now, if you've stayed very clear to that way of eating, it may not be an issue going to the donut shop with your friend, and you can sit there and you can watch them eat a donut, and you can be as happy and strong as can be. But you may just need to say no for a few months and set that boundary.

TeriAnn: Yeah, I often say to people that we live our lives like there's a race to the finish line, but it's actually a journey. When you talk about timelines and timeframes, maybe that relationship goes forever, and it's just not a good part of your life. And maybe it comes back at a later time. And I think we get in this mentality of like “I have to be here right now.” “I have to do this right now.” “This has to be completely finished,” or “This has to be...” “I have to go all in.”

And it's like I think that's another thing with self-love, talking about setting boundaries and protecting yourself, we've got to get out of this mentality of like “I need everything now. I want everything now. Everything has to be final now. I have to accomplish that right now.” It's like okay, but did you take time to enjoy the process of getting there?

And that might be saying no to a relationship for a while, or no to a certain way of eating for a while, so that you can get to this point. But that doesn't mean your whole life's going to be that way. I think we have to step back and realize, like life is a long journey, and while we should live every day with—to the fullest, and love our lives, it's okay to step back and enjoy what you're going through, for sure.

Jonathan: And to finish this off before we go on to the next one, it's we live in a society, in a culture of instant gratification now. And you want to buy something, you get right on Amazon and go buy it. And it's going to—and if you live in a place like I do, in the DFW area, you might even get same-day delivery, right?

TeriAnn: Yep.

Jonathan: And so, it's like “Let me hurry and get on there and buy it.” I've been in internet marketing for about a dozen years now, and there was a very big trend when the e-books first came out and doing special reports and things like that. And people would pay more for a digital book than they would for a physical book. And one of the reasons is because of the instant gratification. So, I could market a 100-page book for \$37, and one of the reasons that people may buy that is because it's 2:00 in the morning, and maybe it solves a problem, and they get to read it instantly.

TeriAnn: Instantly.

Jonathan: And so, everybody just wants everything right now. And that generally does not sustain for the long-term, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: I could go get my—let's say when I was really heavy at 270, wanted to lose weight, and I got my stomach stapled, or I did things like that, right? You could do some of these things that might give a more instant return. And where am I going to be a year or two from that? If I didn't actually go through the process of learning how to eat healthier, learning how to exercise more, and understanding that “You know what? It just may not happen for six months or a year, or two years. And that's okay.”

TeriAnn: Yeah. I think that that, before we go on to number five, I think that speaks to emotional intelligence, too. That instant gratification, having everything now, being given everything we want right in the moment, I think emotional—part of emotional intelligence is processing what we're feeling in relation to needs and wants.

Feelings dictate a lot of what we do, and while feelings are super important, and they're so important in how we process and perceive life, and we have to honor and respect our feelings, we have to realize that sometimes, feelings are just feelings, and they're not reality. And we let our feelings become reality far too often. Feeling something and processing and walking through it is one thing, but then letting that feeling dictate how our actions happen is a totally different thing.

And so, in all these things we're talking about today, I also—it just becomes more and more clear to me that a lot of self-love is finding emotional intelligence and being able to separate and compartmentalize our feelings versus what needs to be done, or what we truly need in our life, or—you may really, really, really love that person in your life, but it's not what you need. But that feeling's dictating “I don't want to feel bad by pushing them away. I don't want to hurt myself by pushing them away. I don't want to be alone. I don't want this.” This is all feelings.

And so, when you were talking about that instant gratification, that's a feeling. Like “I want to read it now. It's going to help me. And it makes me feel good thinking that it's going to help me.” But think

about—step back and evaluate your emotional level of intelligence in that situation, and that’s part of finding that emotional intelligence, which is so important to self-love. Emotions and regulating them, I think is super critical.

Jonathan: Alright, number five, forgive yourself.

So, we can just clearly be so hard on ourselves.

You have to accept your humanness, the fact that you are not perfect before you can truly love yourself. Practice being less hard on yourself when you make a mistake.

And this is just part of our whole conversation that we’ve been having today. And it just, it requires you being, like you said, more emotionally intelligent, it requires you being more consciously aware, right? Of what’s going on and how are you talking to yourself. And was it really that big of a mistake anyway? Do you talk negative on yourself because you’re used to others criticizing you? And so, you find some sort of comfort in that?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: Maybe you got criticized a lot by your mom or dad when you were a kid, and so, you criticize yourself more.

TeriAnn: You’re wired that way.

Jonathan: You’re wired that way, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And I think that—I think that we could use a lot more forgiveness of ourselves, and others, quite frankly. We all hold onto grudges entirely too long. And likely, the grudge we’ve held onto the longest is the one with ourselves.

TeriAnn: I think this is one of the places where it’s okay to compare ourselves to others. And what I mean by that, we talked about this a little bit with Susan Pierce-Thompson, when we—in one of our previous podcasts, when we talked about the mom being late to pick up their child for school. And we’re like “Oh, I forgot my child, and now they’re mad, and I’m mad, and I can’t believe I did that, and who does that?”

I think when it comes to forgiveness, this is where humanity and compassion can play such a critical role in our lives, first for ourselves, it’s like maybe it was a really big mistake. But how many other people have made really big mistakes? But it’s what you do with it and how you move on from it. And then also, when we’re looking—

We’re talking about forgiving ourselves, but I also think part of self-love and healing and emotional intelligence is being able to forgive others, and truly forgive them as well. And I think sometimes, that’s a gauge for us. They’ve done this horrible thing. I’ve done things, too. Other people have done things. And do we believe in our ability to be better? Do we believe in other people’s ability to be better?

When we’re talking about self-love, if we can’t forgive ourselves, and believe in our ability to be better, how can we love ourselves? And I think in looking at the fact that everyone makes mistakes, and everyone has to learn, and everyone’s on their journey, and everyone’s going to make mistakes again,

and having that positive talk in our head, like “I made a mistake. Yes, it was wrong. Yes, I need to make amends. Yes, I need to fix what I’ve done wrong. But I can be better. And I’m going to make mistakes again, but I need to learn from this and move on.” And we need to give that same compassion to other people, like they’re human, too.

Jonathan: Well, and I think when we make a choice to forgive somebody else, one of the things that we do is we look for the lesson that was learned, right? Somebody that’s wronged you, and you forgive them, doesn’t mean you have to go back to being their friends, doesn’t mean you have to let them back into your life anyway.

TeriAnn: Totally true.

Jonathan: But one of the ways to get over it and to forgive them is to really look at the lesson. “Well, if they didn’t do that, I wouldn’t have learned X.”

TeriAnn: Nope.

Jonathan: Well, I think it’s the same thing when you’re going to forgive yourself. “If I didn’t do that, I wouldn’t have learned Y.”

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: So, and I think that’s part of it, is just it’s a different narration of the mistake. Some of the biggest lessons that I’ve ever learned are usually my biggest financial mistakes. They usually cost the most. And you can really sit around and beat yourself up for making a bad business choice, or do this, or do that. Or you can really just look at it for what it was, and it was learning what not to do. And that’s all it was, right? And sometimes we get to learn cheap, sometimes you get to learn, and really like “Ooh, I saved myself on that one.” Other times it costs us a whole lot more. The negative talk doesn’t change the outcome one bit, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: It just changes how you perceive it in the future, and it changes how much did you learn from it? Some mistakes, we learn over and over and over again, because we refuse to look at what was the lesson learned from it? So, we continue to put ourselves into situations that need to teach us whatever that lesson is, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And so, I think that’s part of the forgiveness as well, is looking at it, what was the lesson? And then learning the lesson. Because that will decrease the likelihood of making that mistake again.

TeriAnn: Yeah. And it brings in that aspect and element of emotional intelligence again. I think letting go and finding peace in our lives is a learned art. And I think that when you talk about forgiving people, it doesn’t mean you have to keep them in your lives. Well, the same thing goes with bad habits and being harsh on ourselves and doing things that have been—making mistakes in our lives.

It’s okay to process, to find your level of emotional intelligence in all of that, and a stronger level of emotional intelligence, and let go. And it’s okay to let that part of your life stay where it was and then move on and heal from it and make peace with it. So, I think that was a really important thing that you touched on. Sometimes you forgive in an effort to move on, and that’s okay. And make your peace with

it and don't keep anger inside, and let it go and move on, and go put your passion in your life into a different purpose. You know what I mean?

And just moving on. I think that's really tough for people to do. But I think that's one of the best ways that we can love ourselves is to recognize that it was there for a reason, and then move on.

Jonathan: Well, and it's likely going to be the only way that you move forward in different areas of your life, is to forgive yourself for anything that helped get you there, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah, for sure.

Jonathan: I mean if you're struggling with weight, you've just got to forgive yourself for the many nights of choosing a midnight snack, or of not going to the gym, or whatever the stress that may have caused that weight gain, whatever it is. If you don't just forgive yourself and just understand, "Listen, that was all part of my process to learn x, y, z," then you're never going to move forward with finding that healthy body. And it's the same thing with all areas of your life.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: So, you've got to forgive yourself for being—for being so hard on yourself to being where you are. Because that's all okay.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: It's all fine.

TeriAnn: Yeah. So, your comments on choosing what to eat at a certain time, going to the gym, it's a great segue into number six, and this is probably my favorite one on the list because everyone knows I love the word intention.

Number six is live intentionally. If your intention is to live a meaningful and health life, you will make decisions that support this intention and feel good about yourself when you succeed in this purpose.

I want to talk about this in the context of intentional self-talk. Because I think when we're intentional with the way we do things in our lives, it makes a shift in our lives. When we live with intention, it helps us to see things more clearly.

So, let's talk about that in the way that we talk to ourselves. Because one of the best ways we can love ourself is what's in our head. Think about self-love for a minute. Self-love is so internal. No one can see how you feel about yourself today on the outside. Yeah, maybe someone's super heavy-set. Yeah, maybe they didn't take a shower today. Yeah, there's all these little cues that you can see in people from time to time, right?

But I can't see inside of you and know that you're saying x, y, and z about yourself today. I can't. I can't know that, I can't hear it, I can't feel what you're feeling. I can only know what I know from what you say to me.

So, when we talk about living with intention, and specifically in how we talk to ourselves, and that's kind of what I want to touch on when it comes to this concept, how we talk to ourselves is something only we can understand, and only something we can feel unless we share that with other people. And

how often do you have a conversation where you wake up in the day and you call a friend, you're like "This is how I talked to myself this morning." You don't ever do that.

And so, this component of self-love is something only we have control over. We could say that other people have control over it, but it's not true. Even if someone's beating on us and harping on us all the time, we have to choose to rise above that and see differently than what it is. Yes, it makes it hard. Yes, it makes it—it makes it easier for us to do that to ourselves. But the only person who can change the course of how you intentionally talk to yourself is you.

And so, when I think about self-love for myself, for a long time, a long, long time, I was so critical of myself. "I can't do this. I can't be this. I can't have this. I can't... this, this, this, this, and this." This long list of things. My life in the last four or five years has drastically changed because of how I talk to myself.

And I've been through some really hard things that like would just pull the rug out of under some people, and they wouldn't know what to do with themselves. And in some moments, I felt that way in my life, but the only thing that kept me going was "I can do this. I can do this. I can do this. I can do this. I'm stronger than this. I have more power than I'm giving myself credit for." And intentionally, I changed the way I talk to myself.

I'm certainly not perfect, and I have my moments where I'm like "Oh, I wish I could do this better, I wish I could do that, I wish I could do this, I wish it was this way, I wish that this looked this way." And I'd say things to myself all the time. But it's like changing that and intentionally living in a way where we love ourselves internally in a way that no one else can see, sets the course for how we do everything else in our life. I truly believe that, and it is a learned art. It is not something that comes easily.

Jonathan: I agree 100 percent. I think that's—living intentionally is key. And I think the clarity here is, I mean it's not all going to be perfect. You're not all of a sudden going to wake up tomorrow, and "I'm going to live this way, and everything's going to shift." I mean life just doesn't work that way, right? We're giving 10 tips on ways to love yourself more, and you're not going to be able to put all 10 of them in place right away and see some big shift.

It's the same thing when we were doing our New Year's podcast, and we talked about just find kind of that one thing and do that one thing first. So, if your one thing is getting healthier, just focus on your eating. Don't worry about the gym, don't worry about on all these other things, just focus on that one thing. I think living intentionally is that one thing. It's like getting very clear.

And it goes back to number one, right? Number one is being mindful and really knowing what it is that you want. Once you really get clear on what you want, then it's really moving intentionally towards that. And being focused on that. And I think that that's just one of the—it's like what you're talking about, needing to be intentional in how you talk to yourself.

But it even goes deeper than that. Intentionally making sure that you're living intentionally when you get up and go for your morning walk, knowing that that morning walk is going to change that narration for the whole rest of the day because you got up and did that one thing, you did that walk. Or whatever, whatever the area is that you're trying to tackle.

And I just think that—I just think that we find so much comfort in coasting along. I think there's a lot of comfort in just going down the stream and just floating along, whatever life brings us. And I think that there can be a lot more reward and a lot more joy with you directing that stream and where it goes.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And intentionally having that focus and that goal, and all of these other things, and all the rewards that come from that, rather than just floating along.

TeriAnn: Yeah. I think that we like to live in our negativity, too. Could you imagine the one—if you could pick one thing to change, talking about one thing, if you woke up in the morning, and before you even hit the floor with your feet, you’re like “I’m worth it. I’m going to have a good day. I’m loved. I’m enough. I’m going to make a change in my life today by the actions that I take today. I’m powerful. I’m strong. I’m courageous. I’m a good mom. I’m a good father. I’m a good sister. I’m a good daughter. I’m a good friend. I’m a good coworker. I’m a good creative designer. I’m a good copywriter.” I’m thinking of people at work right now. “I’m a good customer success representative. I take care of our customers. I feel for them. I connect with them. I’m a good leader. I’m... whatever.”

Could you imagine if we all said 15 things to ourselves before we got out of bed? How would that translate to the rest of our lives and living intentionally? You’d have a more can-do, “I’m going to get after this” kind of attitude because you’d believe in yourself. Making that one shift of waking up and not—

I have a practice of feeling gratitude, but I love just talking about this. Thinking about waking up and saying like all the things you can do, and all the things you are that are beautiful, as opposed to all the things you can’t and all the things you are not. Imagine what shift would take place in your life by doing that. Start in the morning, and then down the road, it’s like, “In the middle of the day, I’m going to put this into practice. At the end of the day when I go to bed, I’m going to think about all the good things that I did.” How that would shift our perspective and how that would help us to accomplish more in our life.

Jonathan: Absolutely. Number seven, I’m not sure whose turn it is to read, so I’ll just go for it. Become a master communicator. Every great relationship relies on positive communication, so take the time to check in with yourself. Remember, always speak to yourself in a loving way. How would you speak to someone you love? How can you speak to yourself in a more loving way?

I think that it’s—this is all the same conversation that we’re having. I would challenge you and the listeners, the next time that you have that negative conversation, that negative critique of yourself, to say it out loud, right?

And so, one, verbalize it. Get it out of your head.

Then two, imagine saying it to your son or your daughter, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah, so powerful. Yeah. It’s a powerful practice.

Jonathan: So, saying it out loud for the first time, and then picture. They don’t have to be there, you can do this by yourself, driving in your car, whatever.

TeriAnn: Don’t think about someone you don’t like, because then it doesn’t work.

Jonathan: Picture somebody that you love. And then give them that same criticism. And I promise you, it’s hard to do. You’re not going to want to do it. Even though that person is not there and it’s just imaginary, and it’s just a practice—

TeriAnn: It makes it sound awful. I’ve done this before in my life. It sounds—

Jonathan: It makes it sound extremely awful.

TeriAnn: Yeah, you'd never say that to someone else.

Jonathan: Agreed.

TeriAnn: But you'd say it to yourself. It's really powerful. This goes along with number eight, be kind and gentle with yourself. We give the people we love space to make mistakes, we're compassionate of their challenges and appreciative of their efforts. So, remember to give yourself a little understanding while you learn how to truly love yourself.

I mean we've touched on all of this. Just comparing yourselves to others in a good context. Like we all make mistakes. We all have lessons to learn. We can all be better. I'm not the only person who's done this wrong. And realizing that you're human. We're all human. And I think it's such an important concept.

Jonathan: I agree, and I don't want to—I don't want to come across like “Hey, everything's fine. You can always make mistakes. And who cares?” And just go down—go through life just like “Whatever, who cares if it's all bad?” That's not what we're talking about. What we're talking about is having the goals and going for it, and living that life of intention, and being kind to yourself along the way.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: Right? And you don't have to have these huge, enormous goals. I mean sometimes, it's a goal just to wake up the next morning, just to get out of bed, especially if you're suffering from depression and different things like that. So, nobody's judging the goal here. What I'm saying, though, is this isn't an excuse to just allow mistakes and not care, and just la-la-la.

TeriAnn: Yep.

Jonathan: It means that, as you're on your journey, to be gentle and be nice. I mean I can tell you right now, the way I talk to my daughters, my tone of voice would be different. You may not even recognize it's me talking the way that you hear me on this podcast, if little Alivia, four years old, was in here and I started talking to her. My voice would be softer, it'd be a lot gentler, it'd be a lot more loving. And it's just interesting. So, I wanted to say that one caveat, earlier, but two, just we've got to be a lot nicer to ourselves. We have to be a lot gentler.

TeriAnn: I want to add one to the list. It's going to be an 11.

Jonathan: Okay.

TeriAnn: 11 ways. Because you said something really important, and I'm going to add it to the list right here and now. And I think that's being honest with yourself. I love that you said that, and I think for all the things we've said today about being kind, and loving ourselves, I don't think that we have to negatively talk to ourselves in a way that tears us down.

But talking about—let's go back to wants and needs. Being honest with yourself is one of the ways you can love yourself the very best. Because when you're honest with yourself, it allows you to see all the places that you need to improve, and places where you can be better, and places where you can stretch yourself a little farther.

And I think when we look in the mirror and say “I’m good enough, I’m strong enough, I’m courageous, I’m a good mom, I’m a good this, this, this and this. And today, because I am all of those things and I want to be those things, even more, I’m going to do this better because I need to,” or “I’m going to let go of this,” or “I’m going to move on from this thing in my life.” So, I’m adding the 11th one to the list, of being honest with ourselves. Because if we’re nice to ourselves to the point that we oversee things where we can improve, we’re not doing ourselves any favor.

Jonathan: Agreed. And the only caveat to being honest with yourselves is as long as you can do it in a kind, gentle, positive way, be honest with yourselves, right? Again, definitely look at the areas that you can make improvements, but you can’t be like “Oh, I’m a piece of crap for doing this or that.” Like that’s one way some people might interpret being honest with themselves. “Well, I’m just being honest with myself. I did this.” But that’s still going down that same negative path. So, be honest in the sense that be aware of everything and being consciously aware of it and tweak the way that you talk to yourself as you’re being honest.

TeriAnn: Yeah, yeah, agreed.

Jonathan: Number nine, trust yourself. It’s important to trust yourself to look after your best interests. Don’t sacrifice your needs for the needs of those around you. Honor and prioritize commitment you make to yourself.

I think that far too often, people don’t trust their gut. They have a gut feeling, but they don’t end up making that decision based off of their gut. And I think that—I think there’s a lot of things that weight into that. I mean confidence, what’s your success level been in the past, different things like that. But I challenge a lot more people to just trust themselves, trust your gut, and that instant first thing that you feel is likely the right thing.

So, when you’re asking yourself “Do I do this, or do I do that?” That instant answer is 99 percent of the time the right answer.

And I encourage people to actually make that decision faster than sitting on decisions for a long time, for the simple fact that the quicker you make that decision, the quicker you get to find out if it was the right or wrong answer. Because if it was the wrong one, you just make a pivot and you go the other way.

So, going on a little bit of a tangent here, but I’m talking about trusting yourself and trusting your gut, and rely on you. And it’s the same thing about not allowing other people to dictate your life. Don’t allow other people to tell you who you should be and who you shouldn’t be, and what job you should work at, and this and that, and how you should look, and how you should exercise, and how you should eat, all of that.

And that’s a challenge with a lot of the diets and the ways of eating that are out there. You’ve got the vegan, and on the other end, you have the carnivore diet, and you have keto, and Paleo. And everybody and their brother can come and try to say “You need to eat like this. You need to eat like that.” No, you need to eat in the way that works for you, and the only way that you’re going to find out is by trying to eat a bunch of different ways. Try it for a month. Maybe it’s Paleo for a month that works for you. Maybe it’s veganism for a month that works for you. Maybe it’s some combination in between there.

But I say all that to say like trust that you can figure it out. Trust that your body will respond a certain way to ones—to a certain way of eating, and don’t let other people dictate. Don’t let other people—yeah, drive your decisions in life as much. Because I think that that naturally beats you up. You feel less secure about yourself, you feel like you’re doing things for all these other people, and I think that your

self-worth and your self-love, and all of that goes down, the less that you trust in yourself to make those decisions.

TeriAnn: Yeah. I'm a big believer in the fact that when we're living our life the best that we can, our—almost our instant reaction to things, our gut reaction, is what we truly need.

Jonathan: Agreed.

TeriAnn: And I think a lot of times, we sit around and justify alternative answers to our initial answer, like “Oh, I should do this.” “Oh, I should do that.” And I don't think, in all cases, that's bad. I think sometimes, going back to emotion, we live our life on emotion instead of stepping back and seeing the reality.

And sometimes, we do have to look at the answer in different aspects and different layers, because it's a multi-layered and multi-faceted aspect of your life. But in most cases, when you start having more self-love, when you're living your best life when you're saying no to things, when you're living intentionally, when you're doing all these things we're talking about, you start to learn what's right for you. You feel it. You feel these gut feelings, your instant reaction. You're like “That's what I want.”

Like going back to the conversation of “Well, my friends want me to go out tonight and I don't want to disappoint them, but I don't want to go.” Your first reaction was “I don't want to go.” But you're like “But...” all these things out here. But what was your instant reaction? I truly believe when we're living our best life, our best self, doing the very best we can, we need to trust ourselves with our instant reaction, because that's typically the best one for us. And it's hard to swallow that sometimes, like “That's not what I want.” But it's what you need, right? So, that goes back to trust and loving ourselves the very best, is listening to that voice in our head that tells us what we need.

Jonathan: And I think that your emotional intelligence plays a big deal because don't confuse your gut feeling with your emotional feeling, right? If I think about, I don't know, moving to Colorado and living on a mountain-top where I can play in the snow and do all that like emotionally, that sounds great. My gut reaction is like “Hey, that's not the right thing to do right now.” And so, it's having that emotional intelligence to understand the difference between emotion of excitement or fear or something like that, and definitely, that's where emotional intelligence matters, because you don't want to move based out of fear, or out of this, that, or the other.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And so, it's understanding your gut feeling. And here's the other interesting thing, too, is you're not always going to be right. Your gut sometimes is going to be wrong, and that's okay. What I will say is the more that you trust your gut, the more you'll go with your gut feeling. And it will be an upward spiral instead of a downward spiral. And the more you trust your gut and you start realizing “Wow, that worked out for me, and this worked out for me, and this other thing worked out for me,” like then your confidence starts building, and you don't need that outside opinion as much, you don't need that external validation. And yeah, I think it just continues to build on itself and it makes it easier to trust your gut. And before you know it, I think it brings a lot of happiness.

TeriAnn: Yeah, for sure. Yeah. Good conversation. My mind just goes far down the rabbit hole when we get into that concept of trusting ourselves.

Number 10, practice good self-care. You will love yourself more when you take better care of your basic needs. People high in self-love nurse themselves daily through healthy activities like sound, nutrition, exercise, proper sleep, intimacy, and healthy social interactions.

And I don't want to talk too much on this, because this is going to be part two of this podcast but taking care of ourselves and our basic needs and things that really fulfill us is so important. And we're going to do a whole podcast on that next time. So, we'll leave it at that, but practicing good self-care.

And of course, I added number 11 to the list, of just really—

Jonathan: Being honest with yourself.

TeriAnn: Being honest with ourselves. And that kind of goes—I was thinking of trusting ourselves, too, and how those two tie together. But really trusting ourselves and being honest with ourself, those two things go hand in hand.

So, just to wrap this up, there was something that we found from a pioneer in positive psychology, Emma Seppala, who offers “Four empirically-validated ways to exercise your self-love muscle.” And I just want to touch on these really briefly, to wrap up our podcast here today. And we talked about a few of these things, but some of them, we did not, and I really love them.

The first one is “Notice your self-talk.” And we talked about this when we fail, or we have challenges, the first thing we go to is self-criticism and negative talk, but we need to be more compassionate and realize that we're human.

The second one that I really want to touch on is “Write yourself a letter.” I think this is really, really important. I've done this before in the past, and not just writing yourself a letter, when you have a lot of emotions, when you have a lot of things going on, it's—she makes the comment of “Writing a letter to yourself as if you were writing to a friend.”

Let's say you made a mistake, you're feeling a lot of things, you have a lot of things going on. Write a letter to someone, like you would to a friend, but to yourself. And then, one of the things I've actually personally done is read it out loud, for a couple of reasons.

Sometimes, when we're writing a letter to ourselves, and I've done this in the past, in a positive way, “You're doing great things, you're moving forward,” all these things, it helps us to say it out loud and hear it. It's like loving ourselves in a way that words help other people in our lives. When we tell someone we love them, when we compliment them when we praise them and hearing them out loud, it does something to your brain, does something to the way you feel.

On the other side of that, sometimes we have emotions that we need to get out, and we just need to write them out before we act on them or think on them or feel on them. I've done this in my life, too, and then I read the letter out loud, and I'm like “Wow, I sound ridiculous. That sounds so crazy. Why would you say that to someone?” “Why would you say that to yourself?”

I think writing, as hard as it can be sometimes to sit down and write with how busy we all are, it's such a powerful form of communicating to ourselves in a positive and negative way, to see how it sounds. And really see if it's the right thing for us to do, if it's the right way of feeling something, or if it's what we really need.

Jonathan: Well, it gets you out of your head, and it gets you out of your body, right? And it gets you just out of that moment and gets it outside of you and on paper. And I think it just gives you a level of reflection that you don't get when you just sit there and think about it constantly when you stay in your head.

I'm going to read, just because there's some really good details here, about writing the letter to yourself.

“So, when your emotions are overwhelming, writing a letter to yourself as if you were writing to a friend. Let’s say you made a costly error and are feeling angry with yourself. It might feel stilted or strange at first but write a letter as if you were writing to someone dear to you who had committed the same mistake. Your words should comfort and not attack, normalizing the situation rather than blowing it out of proportion. A number of studies demonstrate that writing about your emotions can help regulate them.”

So, I just wanted to give that as some very specific instructions for people that are looking to write a letter to themselves.

Another exercise that I’ve done, that I’ve used when I’m working on forgiving somebody else, and they don’t always get the letter, but I write a letter to that person. And no matter how they’ve wronged me, I write the letter from the perspective of what they’ve taught me and how—what their actions, what lessons did I learn from it? And a lot of times, just the act of writing that letter allows me to get to a place of forgiveness.

Especially, there’s times in our lives when we really get stabbed in the back, it feels like, or when you feel like somebody really just totally betrayed your trust. And it’s like you just want to hold onto that anger and that frustration, and that blame that you have on them.

And I encourage you to pull out the pen and paper and write a letter to them, thanking them for what they did. And I would encourage you to do the same with yourself. If you find that there’s something that you’ve done that, you’re not able to forgive yourself on, write that same letter to yourself, in that same context.

TeriAnn: Yeah. So, I’m going to actually share something pretty personal on this, and I’m, as you know, and I’ve mentioned many times, I’m a very private person, but this, when you were talking about this, I got a little bit emotional. Because a few years ago, I went through a divorce, and it was one of the hardest things I’ve been through in my life.

And I talk about negative self-talk. In the aspect of being a mom, I told myself “You failed your kids. You’ve failed your family. You failed all these people in your life. You’ve failed yourself. Like how could you have gone through this? You’re so successful, and all these things in your life. You’ve told all these people you’re such a good person, you do all these good things,” and on and on.

It was so ugly in my head. And then you’re trying to navigate these waters with your children and with your ex-spouse, and it’s incredibly hard. And at first, it was pretty hard. There was a lot of fighting and there was a lot of emotion.

And one of the things I started doing was I would write out these emails or write out these letters. Like “I’m going to send this.” And then I’d read it, and I’d be like “Even if you’re in this place with this person, how could you say that to someone? How does that make them feel?” And my goal was to have a good relationship with my ex-husband for my children. I really wanted that.

And we’re in a much different place now than we were before, we do things together with my children, and we try to work together for my children. And it’s not perfect, and we have emotions, and things are still hard. But I think that practice of writing out my feelings and what I wanted to say to him, or how I felt about the situation, and reading it out loud, I was like “That’s not who you are. That’s not how you truly feel.” That was a feeling in the moment.

I don't think we can underestimate the power of our words in communicating them, and sometimes writing them out and saying them puts us in a better sense of what the reality truly is and how we can improve and be better for ourselves and for others. It's so powerful.

Jonathan: Agreed. And it just gets it out of your head.

TeriAnn: Out of your head.

Jonathan: And we live in our heads a lot, right? And we're the only ones allowed in there.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And we can go down some crazy paths, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: I mean think about the last time you were sitting around waiting for your husband or wife to come home for dinner, or you guys had a date, and all of a sudden, they're five minutes late. And your mind's just kind of thinking about stuff. Now they're 10 minutes late, and you start going down a path. And they're 15 minutes late, and now they didn't answer your text or your phone call. I mean you can go way off into left field.

TeriAnn: Down the rabbit hole.

Jonathan: Yeah, with what goes on. And then they show up, and it's like "Yeah, I was stuck in traffic and my phone died."

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And that was the reality.

TeriAnn: After you got all worked up.

Jonathan: After you went and—that's what happens when you get stuck in your head. As an example, right? And so, that's what writing that letter really does.

TeriAnn: Yeah. Well, and it changes, it just changes the way that you do things. Like with my ex-husband, the way that we have a relationship now is based on how I taught myself to communicate through those letters. That's not who I want to be. That's not what I want to say. And now we can communicate so much better because I learned a better form of communication through writing to myself. It's an interesting concept, it's a powerful concept.

Jonathan: Agreed. I love this third one, that was—again, this is all adapted from *The Happiness Track* by Emma Seppala. Number three is "Develop a self-compassion phrase. Consider using a self-compassion mantra or phrase that you can turn to in challenging situations, so you can deal with them calmly and with grace."

Hers is "This is a moment of suffering. Suffering is part of life. May I be kind to myself in this moment, may I give myself the compassion that I need."

TeriAnn: So powerful.

Jonathan: Yeah. I've never seen this before doing some research to do this podcast. And I absolutely loved it.

And I loved the part, the very beginning. "This is a moment of suffering. And suffering is a part of life." I think that that couldn't be more true. There's just—listen, if we didn't have the bad, then how do we even recognize the good? So, if you're—if you understand that there's going to be good in your life and there's going to be times of happiness and joy and fun, there has to, mandatory, be times of suffering and frustration and anger. Because otherwise, you would not be able to identify the times of happiness.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: And so, I love the beginning of that, "This is a moment of suffering. Suffering is a part of my life. May I be kind to myself in this moment, may I give myself the compassion I need." I love it.

TeriAnn: Yeah, and I love that you said—my daughter asked me this the other day, that you said, "We have to have the bad to know the good." My daughter looked at me the other day, and she said "You know? There's a lot of things that go on in the world," and she sees it at school and in the media and things like that.

And she looked at me, we were talking about something really bad that happened in the news, and she said: "Mommy, why do people have to do bad things?" And you know, we were talking on a larger scale, but I said—we toned it down to like even people just make daily mistakes. And I said that same thing I said earlier. "Life is a journey, and we have to see the opposite in things to realize where our center is and where our balance is. We have to have the bad and the good. We have to, in loving ourselves, recognize those two things in life, that there's opposites to everything, and we find our balance in the center of it all, and what our lessons are that we've learned through it all." Super powerful conversation.

Jonathan: It's interesting, and not to go too far down it, but I got very clear on this a couple of times in my life, that this is true for people, too. It's not just true for situations. There are just some people that are toxic. They're just not healthy. They're just not. And whatever their personal thing is, I'm not here to judge, but I know having them in my life was toxic to me.

And I had to get really clear that, "You know what? Without those toxic people, then there wouldn't be an identification for myself." I like to identify myself as a good person, somebody that gives, that's caring. Well, without those toxic people in the world, then there wouldn't be that identification that I have on myself.

TeriAnn: No.

Jonathan: And so, understand that I mean with all of it, in order to have that really good, that bad has to exist.

TeriAnn: Yeah, agreed. Number four, "Make a daily gratitude list. Write down five things you feel grateful for every day." And she says, "This may sound simplistic, but this extremely short exercise has been shown to produce powerful and long-lasting results."

And I love what we talked about earlier like I would love for people to take the 24-hour challenge of not being negative. I do practice gratitude daily in my life, and I've talked about this in previous podcasts. Tony Robbins does this exercise, and I would go and look it up. He did it on a Tim Ferris podcast. And he walks you through the exercise of feeling gratitude.

Every time I listen to it, and I don't listen to it every day, I know how to do it in my head now, I get emotional. Listening to him walk you through the exercise of feeling gratitude. Not thinking it, not just expressing it, but feeling it. Every time I listen to him do it, I get emotional. It's brought me to tears before because gratitude is such a game-changer in how we perceive things in life.

But I love that 24-hour challenge. Like wake up tomorrow and try not to be negative all day. And start your day with gratitude. What are you grateful for? And feel it. And then go throughout the day, every time something negative comes up, think of positive things, or things you're grateful for, and see how it changes your life. It's going to impact you significantly.

Jonathan: I agree 100 percent. And what we've been working on here inside of our company at Organixx is having a good work-life balance. And we have about 50 people that work for the company. And it's very easy for us to get into work mode. And everybody works virtually. Everybody works from home. And so, it's always work, work, work.

And it's hard to get away. And we've all been practicing as a company to find a better work-life balance. And one of the exercises is write down three things that you're grateful for first thing in the morning before you even get out of bed. Have a journal next to you your bed, sit up, and write down three things that you're grateful for.

And it's not just writing it down, right? Writing it down can be easy. It's actually taking 30 seconds, or 45 seconds, to feel each one. And really, this is a three-minute exercise. 15 seconds to write it down, 45 seconds to feel it. Three minutes in the morning will absolutely change your life, in my opinion.

And I think it's one of the best ways to get truly present to all of the wonderful things that we do have in our lives, so that when you get on Facebook, when you get on Instagram, and you see somebody's new car, or this person got this house, or this person lives whatever glamorous lifestyle, you are not instantly drawn into the place of comparison and the feeling of lack and that you don't have. But hopefully, you're instantly drawn into that emotion of "I have a roof over my head, too."

TeriAnn: Abundance.

Jonathan: Right. "It may not be a 20,000 square foot mansion like so and so celebrity that I follow, but I have this, I live in an apartment and I have a roof over my head. I have food. I have this, I have that." And then that can help combat that "I should live in a mansion. I should be a superstar."

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Jonathan: Whatever the negative crap is that goes on in your head that causes you to go down some downward spiral, hopefully getting present to that gratitude early on in your day, first thing in the day, will allow it to show itself more throughout the day.

TeriAnn: Yeah, you totally made me think of the word abundance. And to close out our conversation on self-love today, I think that attitude of gratitude brings abundance, and I think one of the things we need in abundance in our lives is self-love.

My biggest takeaway today, for sure, I've been thinking about this over and over and over again as we've been sitting here talking, is emotional intelligence and the way we guide our lives through our emotional intelligence, and how we perceive things and needs and wants. And not allowing our emotions to take away from what we truly need.

Because that is loving ourselves. Giving ourselves what we truly need in the way we talk to ourselves, in the way we intentionally live our lives, in the way that we take care of ourselves, in the way we allow our relationships to be in our lives. Just this abundance of self-love and focusing on emotional intelligence to love ourselves better and do better. Just rolling through my head over and over and over again. Really powerful conversation.

Jonathan: Absolutely love it. My biggest takeaway from today is really understanding that you have to make a conscious choice to choose yourself. It is a constant conscious choice to love yourself.

And it's very easy to say "Well, I've got to go take care of my husband or my wife," or "I have to take care of my kids. They need me. I don't have time to do this gratitude list for the first thing in the morning. I've got kids screaming for me." They'll be fine for three minutes, I promise you.

It's consciously making that choice to choose you. If you want to be the best mother or father, choose yourself a little more often. Take that time out for you and have that self-love and choose to do things for you. If you want to be a better husband or wife, same thing. You want to be a better businessperson, employee, whatever it is you're trying to be better at, I can promise you that if you choose you a little bit more often, the end result will be being better for all of those others around you.

And it's interesting, I'm going to go on a short tangent, we look at selfishness in a negative way. And it's very unfortunate. Because it's necessary to be selfish. If you're not selfish at times, if you don't put yourself first, if you don't take care of yourself, if you don't identify that you have to be selfish, then you will absolutely crumble.

Whether that's through depression, nervous breakdowns, needing other medications or other things because you're just not fulfilled, or you're not happy. All of these negative side effects come from not being selfish enough.

Now I'm not saying being so selfish to where you cause harm to others in order to get to yourself, what I'm saying is understanding that you have to put yourself first in a lot of situations, and by doing that, you will be better for everybody else in your life.

TeriAnn: Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more.

Jonathan: So, we will have entire show notes on our website, Empowering You Organically. If you enjoyed this podcast and you want to get notified of other ones in the future automatically, please make sure you subscribe to our podcast on iTunes. Again, we have the Cliff Notes, we have show notes, we'll have links to things. If you want to watch the video, it's all on Empowering You Organically.

I'm also going to ask that you share this with your friends and family. If you've gotten something valuable from either this podcast or one of our other episodes, do us a favor and shoot them an email and just say "Hey, check this out. I think you'll like it." It helps us spread the word, it helps us spread more positivity, it helps us in our goal to empower people organically to get healthy and live healthy, happy lives.

So, with that said, TeriAnn, thank you so much.

TeriAnn: Thank you.

Jonathan: Thank you for listening, and we will see you on part two, which is all about self-care. Thanks, everyone.

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