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

TeriAnn Trevenen: Hey, everyone.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So, this is just a special episode, with Valentine's Day right around the corner. We wanted to do a podcast just talking about self-love and giving you some tips for how to love yourself better. And I know you've put together three of your top tips that we're going to talk about today.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep, super excited to talk about this today.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Valentine's Day, it's always focused on a significant other, being with somebody else, and while I do think that's important, I actually think the most important person in your life is you.

And I think that a lot of people spend Valentine's Day alone and they feel depressed and all of this, where I just really want to take this time for people to honor themselves and find different ways to love themselves better, share some of our tips on how we love ourselves, and hopefully it helps others love themselves and just have a more enjoyable holiday around Valentine's Day.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. You know, as Jonathan and I were talking about these podcasts and what we would share with you, we talked about having both a male perspective and a female perspective on some tips that we've learned, especially over the last year, to love ourselves better. Both Jonathan and myself are very involved in the self-improvement space and learning to love ourselves better, just improving your life overall.

We're surrounded by friends, peers, and coworkers who also live in that same mindset, very motivational, very self-love-driven, and a lot of improvement in our lives that comes from having a better sense of self and a better self-love. So, we both sat down and individually wrote out our top three tips for loving ourselves better that we've learned over the last year.

And this week, we're going to talk about my top three tips for loving yourself better, and just as a disclaimer, these are things I've done in my own life and things that have worked for me, and you can

take them for what they're worth for you, and you can implement them in your life in a way that works for you, or maybe they aren't the right thing for you.

This is just for me what has worked, and if these aren't the tips for you, I would still encourage you to look at self-love and look at ways to make your life better through finding more trust and peace in yourself. One of the things that really impacted my journey over the last year were two people that I listened to at conferences that I attend.

And the first woman who spoke at a conference asked a question, and she said, "When I ask you who you love the very most, write the top three people," and then everybody wrote who they loved. And then, she asked everyone, "Raise your hand if the first person you wrote was yourself," and like very few people in the room could say that.

Then, she asked a question, "What's the safest place you know?" And you would think that we would have all picked up on this, but no. "What's the safest place you know?" and you think about a physical location, a house, a place that you love to go, whatever, a relationship, like a very materialistic thing. And we were all supposed to write down the place that's the safest place for us to go.

And she said, "Who wrote themselves?" and like literally two people in the entire room. So, who do you love the most and what's the safest place you know? And I was blown away by my own responses not being myself, and I was like "That's going to change today, and starting right now from this moment, moving forward," and I think everybody else was very impacted.

The second person that spoke to a group that I was at in a conference talked about our own experiences and talked about the fact that we spend so much time trying to control other people's experiences and allowing people to control ours. And one of the beautiful things about life is that we're all in our own unique individual experience and that the only person that we can control is ourselves.

If you really think about, you really dig deep, you can't control anyone else, you can only control you. And this impacted me in such a significant way. He told a story about him being on a bullet bike, and he wanted to go faster and faster, and as he started getting faster, and he was an adrenaline junkie, he started thinking about other people, "My nephews, my family, my nieces, these people, what are they going to think if something happens to me?"

And he pulled back, and he's like "But I want to go faster." And so, then he started going faster again, and he was getting to crazy speeds, and every time he'd get a little faster, where he'd pass another threshold of speed, he'd think of some external thing, "What if I hit a rock in the road and it throws me off?"

And he was thinking about all of these things outside of his control, and it stopped him from living an experience he wanted to live. Inside, he wanted to go faster, he wanted to see how fast he could make his bullet bike go, and it was fun for him, and he wasn't afraid to do it, except for the fact that he was thinking about everything outside of his control.

And when he let go of everything and enjoyed what he was trying to enjoy for himself, he went as fast as he's ever gone. He said, "It was one of the most freeing experiences of my life. And then, when I was done, I had done what I wanted to do. And I didn't let anything outside of that impact me." Each of our experiences is individual, and while we're all beautifully-connected in one way or another, we have to start with ourselves and our journey and what we can control to more powerfully connect with the world around us.

And so, those two experiences for me were some of the biggest things that propelled me into loving myself better, trusting myself more, and being the safest place that I know. Am I perfect in this? Certainly not. Do I have a lot of work to do? I absolutely do. But I think about these two experiences, these two people and their words literally every single day now. I think about them every single day. You can ask some of my friends, when we share experiences, I will often reference these two experiences to them because it has been so ingrained in me how much more I need to love and trust myself and what I need to feel fulfilled and loved.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So, I'm going to jump in here and just kind of talk on this subject a little bit.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Sure.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So, it's tough for us, because as kids, we're constantly taught to share and "Don't be selfish," and "Share your toys with other people," "Share your—" "Do this for other people." "Do all these things for other people." So, we're fighting a naturally-ingrained belief that we are not the most important, that we are not first, right, that we need to care about other people's feelings, we need to be kind, we need to share our toys, we need to do all of these things.

And so, when we become adults and we're giving all of this stuff to other people, like we feel like that's love, "Let me give all of these things to other people and that'll make me feel better because I'm doing all this for other people." And yes, it does. I mean listen, giving and helping other people does help. But we end up neglecting ourselves because of this ingrained belief that being selfish is bad.

And I think it's one of the biggest disservices that we can do to our children and what has been done to us is the belief that selfishness is bad. Selfishness is very good. Selfishness ensures survival. Selfishness

allows us to take care of us. The more we take care of us, the more we can take care of everybody else around us. If we don't take care of us, we die early, we get diseases, we do stupid things, we get hurt, all these things happen, and now you can't give to other people for as long as you could in your life.

And so, there's a challenge here that I'm putting forward to you, as we're talking about loving ourselves more, let go of the idea that you're being selfish by loving yourself, because the second you feel "Oh, I'm selfish. I shouldn't do this, I need to do this for my kids, I need to do this for my husband, I need to do this for my wife, blah-blah-blah," it's going to pull you away from focusing on you, and the number-one person you have to take care of is you. You can argue with me all you want. I guarantee, after it's all said and done, that will be the answer is that the number one person is you.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, and for a lot of people, this will be a radical way of thinking and a radical conversation, because we are, it is ingrained within us to always look outward, but we need to look inward and be strong within ourselves before we can truly be the best version of ourselves outwardly and towards relationships with other people, and do the best that we can to empower the world with beautiful things that we contribute that are unique to us.

And that actually ties right into my top three that I'm going to talk about today, and this was a really hard list for me to make because I have so many things I would love to share. But here are my top three things. And let me just say before I share these that, while I still have a lot of work to do in my life and it's a never-ending journey, and I truly believe that, and I'll constantly be working to improve myself throughout my life, I've never been in a place where I have felt happier with who I am because of these things I've learned than at any other point in my life.

Number one, invest in myself before anyone else, unapologetically. And I add the unapologetically because, just like we talked about, when we invest in ourselves, sometimes people look at that as selfish. And I want to expand on what Jonathan said. There's a difference between being selfish with the intent to harm other people, and the difference between selfish to love ourselves and be the best version of ourselves to give more to others and being selfish with the intention to hurt people.

There's a very big difference between the two. It's okay to be selfish and investing in yourself, because when you invest in yourself before everyone else, you're strong enough to contribute to the world around you in the best way possible. Investing in myself looks like having a morning ritual that starts with me before anyone else.

Gratitude, meditation, reading, thinking through things that are important to me, planning things in my life that are meaningful, laying there in bed in the morning and dreaming about what I want to do in my life and then making plans to act on those dreams. Going to the gym, which I'm going to talk about here

in a little bit as well, is a non-negotiable for me and it is my time, and it is sacred time for me to focus on myself.

And so, these morning rituals that I'm talking about, these things that I do for myself, they happen in the beginning of the day, and they are a little intermixed with my kids in there, because I have kids, but I wake up most of the time before my kids. And then at night, before I go to bed, I unwind and take time to do things that are fulfilling to me.

So, it's really important to get out of this mindset that you have to invest in everyone around you first, and then you'll feel better, because we have this mentality in the world of like "I have to take care of everyone around me, and then life will be good." But how can you take care of everyone around you and invest in everyone around you to the point that you deplete yourself and you can no longer give?

Then, you're no longer serving a purpose where you're helping everyone around you. You're actually hindering people. So, my number one tip for loving yourself better is stop being afraid to invest in yourself and stop apologizing for putting yourself first. Stop apologizing. What you do to make yourself a better person, to love yourself more than anyone else, and to trust yourself more than anyone else is no one else's opinion, judgement, or criticism.

That does not belong in that space. It's what you need to feel good for you so that you can be at your very best. What works for me is going to be different for you, and I just challenge you to find what investing in you looks like so that every day, you wake up and you're excited for your day, and you're excited to live, and you're excited to see what that day brings for you. When you're investing in you in a way that's meaningful for you, it doesn't mean you don't have hard days, doesn't mean that things get crazy from time to time, but overall, most days, you're excited to wake up and live your life.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah. I mean I think there's a lot that really goes into it, you know? And I think that it's easy, especially if we have kids, to think "I've got to put my kids first," right?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah.

Jonathan Hunsaker: "My kids are most important. My kids are most important." And yes, your kids are important, don't get me wrong, but if you have lost a parent, and your parent has passed away, what's one thing you wish you had more of as their kid? And that would be more time with them, right, that they lived longer, hopefully.

Consider that if you don't invest in yourself, you're taking away time that you would have at the end of your life with your kids, right? And the more that you take care of yourself now, not only will you live

longer, but the more you take care of yourself now, the better you can parent now, right? If you're not feeling healthy in your body, if you're not exercising, if you're not eating well and you're jacking yourself full of sugar and caffeine and coffee to get going, and now your kid is just a little bit annoying and you're snapping at them, like all of these things make a difference.

So, if you want a higher-quality parenting, let's call it, then take care of yourself first. And then, if you want to give your kids, if you want to take care of them the most and give them the most precious gift you can give them, which I promise you, hands down, is more time with you, not just when they're 5, not just when they're 10, but when they're 55, when they're 60, is to take care of you now.

And so, I just I hear that argument all the time, "My kids are most important. I can't. I've got to wake up and make them breakfast, and I've got to get them ready for school, and I've got to do this, and I don't have time for me," and all this, that, and the other. [0:21:26] And it's not true. It's not the reality. You've got to take care of you. Your kids will be fine. They can be late if they need to one morning, if everybody gets up late. Take care of you and it'll make a much bigger difference in your life.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep. And just to add to that, I actually feel like my kids and I have a stronger relationship now that I invest in myself and we're happier in our relationships than when I was just making everything in my life all about them and everyone around me.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Well, and what are you teaching them? You're teaching your kids to put you first, right? It's the same as, unfortunately, if you stay in an unhealthy relationship, romantic relationship or friendships or whatever, you teach your kids that it's okay to be in an unhealthy relationship. You teach your kids that it's okay to settle for that stuff. Well, if you don't eat healthy, if you don't take care of your body, if you don't do all of these things, you're—and you don't put yourself first, you're teaching your kids that it's okay to not be first.

And now, we're just continuing the endless cycle of selfishness being bad, right? And we need to end that cycle. And you do that by showing by example that you make yourself first, then your kids will make themselves first, and they'll thank you for it when they get older.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. Number two, changing our mindset about our past and our future, and letting go of the past and not waiting for the future. Let me explain. I found myself a few years ago, very, very sick. And I've talked about this on a few podcasts in the past. It's actually a very emotional topic for me and I don't talk about it very openly or very publicly hardly ever.

It's probably something I need to change in my own mindset and thinking, but I didn't even tell members of my family how sick I was. I had a very close circle of friends, a few friends, who I shared

with, but I was very quiet and very private. I was getting scans on my body; I was getting bloodwork done.

I was very, very sick. I was having issues with my lymph nodes, I was having issues with regulating my body weight, stress, sleep, and beyond. And one of the things that I realized was making me sick was all of the things I was holding onto from the past and all the things I was waiting for in the future. Over the last year and beyond, I've spent more time living for now, living in the present.

And this has changed a few things in my life. Relationships, I used to have some very stressful relationships in my life, and I realized that I was holding onto things that happened before, and I was leaving that person in what happened before instead of believing in what they could be now. And that included myself.

I was also waiting for the future, that everything was going to be better, and it was going to be fixed, and it was just going to be this way, and I was going to make it this way. And I realized that I can't control the past and I can't control the future, and I learned to start letting go. And as I let go and lived for the moment, and lived for my present more, something I am still working on every single day, because it is a huge shift in mindset that we are not trained to live in, I've found myself being healthier, happier, and more peaceful about my life.

I've healed relationships that I once thought would never be healed. I have started living dreams that I once only talked about. I've started doing things and taking risks in my life that I'd see other people do and be like "I want to do that," and I've started doing it. We can only live for today. And one of the things to love ourselves better is to identify what makes us happy, what fills us up, what are our dreams, what are our passions, what are the things that are sticky and hard and frustrating in our lives.

We have the power to change those right now, in this moment, by living for today and believing that other people can live and change for today. When we believe that about ourselves and we believe that about other people, it can dramatically shift our quality of life, the way we live, and it makes us realize that tomorrow is not promised, and the past is in the past, but I have right now, and that's a gift.

What can I do with right now? And as I've worked with coaches and mentors and had incredible friends, read some amazing books, attended incredible conferences, and as I've gone back in the past to connect the dots and realized that everything I've been through has brought me to this moment, and found the beauty in everything, I've found more beautiful moments in my present and living for now.

Jonathan Hunsaker: And I think it's amazing. I also think it's easier said than done, right?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I mean it's very easy to read the meme. It's like let go of the past, you can't control the future, live in the now. And it's like that all sounds good, but it truly takes conscious effort and it's—we've talked about intentions a lot and how you have to be intentional. And we're not always intentional. I mean I go back, I start thinking about crazy crap in the past many times by myself, getting upset about it, and you've got to intentionally pull yourself out of it, to not be in that place, to be where your feet are, right, which is another great meme that you see all over Instagram and Facebook.

And all of these things sound good, but it really requires practice to get to that point, right? And I mean and there's all those different sayings, like when we hold onto grudges and we hold onto anger from the past, it's like letting somebody live rent-free in your head, right? You're only torturing yourself. All of these things, we know inherently to be true.

The question is, is are we practicing that, right? And the only way to practice that is to truly learn some more skills, right? Do you want to read something from Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now*, and try to learn how he suggests to do it, right? Is it just a matter of being more intentional? Is it a matter of doing more meditations? Is it—who knows? Put a rubber band around your wrist, and every time you start thinking about something from the past, snap yourself, right? Or things like that. So, I just want to express that it sounds easy and it sounds great, but it requires work.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely.

Jonathan Hunsaker: But anything in life that's worth doing requires work. It's not easy. If you think there's a get-rich-quick scheme, you will soon find how hard you have to work at different get-rich-quick schemes before you end up getting rich.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep.

Jonathan Hunsaker: And if you would have just stuck to an original plan, you might have been fine, right? And any kind of change that's happening overnight generally doesn't last long. It's not easy. But that's okay, right?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep.

Jonathan Hunsaker: There's a great book by Ryan Holiday, *The Obstacle Is the Way*, right? Talking about stoicism. And that's all just—it's all part of the process. It's quit thinking that everything is easy. Let's quit wanting everything to be easy and tackle life in that way.

TeriAnn Trevenen: And I'm glad you made that point, because this second point that I made is one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life. When I talk about relationships and healing relationships, some relationships aren't meant to move on with us, and sometimes we have to get okay in the present, letting go of that. And letting them go on their way and have their experience, back to me talking about experiences, and letting us stay in our experience. But let me give you two tips, some of the most powerful tips in actually being present in this practice for myself.

The first one is I put reminders everywhere in my life. And let me tell you how. I have some of the most amazing friends in the world and I talk to them daily, and I talk to them daily because they remind me to live in the present, always. I also put sticky notes all over for a short period of time in my life until I had changed my thinking.

And the sticky notes said, "Be present." It said that on my sticky notes. In fact, there's probably some still floating around my house. I'd walk out the door and I'd see it, and honestly, if I was having a hard day and I was living in the past, or going too far in the future, I'd see those notes and be like "What can I do now? What can I do now?" So, put reminders in your life, people, sticky notes, things. Ask your friends to remind you and hold you accountable to live for now.

And the other thing that I did, speaking of relationships that I wanted to heal, that needed to stay in my life, I had a really powerful mentor who encouraged me, those people who may have hurt me or we have had a falling out, or we've had hard relationships, to write a letter to them and burn it and never send it. Write it, read it out loud, burn it, and leave it in the past, and believe in what can happen now moving forward. I've written letters to myself, and I've written letters to other people in my life.

So, these are only two things that I've done. This has been a couple of years in the making that I've been working on some of these things, and I have a long list of things I've done in letting go of the past and not focusing on the future that I've had to work on. And again, it's been some of the hardest work I've ever had to do in my life but some of the most rewarding.

My third tip for today is to put your body and your physical health at the top of your list when you're investing in yourself. Going back to how sick I was, it has been a science experiment coming to where I am now with my body. I have changed and evolved so much over the last two years, and what I can tell you is that the more I invest in my body and my physical health, the better my mental, emotional, and spiritual health has become.

Not only through doing work on my mental and emotional side of things, but coupled with really putting my physical health, nutrition first, my life has exponentially changed. I currently work out in the gym

every day. I used to run a lot and do a lot of cardio, and right now, I'm lifting in the gym, and I've gotten to the point where I can lift very heavy.

And I actually have a quote for myself, and this is for me specifically, your health journey may be very different, but I have a quote with one of my very good friends that "Strong is the new skinny." The reason I use this quote is because as I become stronger in the gym, my body has become stronger, my immune system has become stronger.

As I've focused more on nutrition that's unique to my own body and what works for me specifically, and that's different for everyone, and fine-tuned my nutrition, my physical health, and my emotional, mental, and spiritual health, I am a stronger woman today than at any other point in my life. Strong is the new skinny is not just talking about the shape of my body or the number on a scale.

Being strong for me has helped me to be strong in every other aspect of my life. I cannot stress enough how much this shift in putting myself first in the morning, by showing up for myself, meditation, gratitude, reading, fueling my body properly, and then hitting the gym and really seeing my strength in the gym, has changed my entire mindset.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I agree 100 percent. I've seen a lot of the changes with you over the years, right? And I know a couple years ago, to you, being skinny was what was attractive, right? It was that model look and trying to be skinny. And so, I know you shared with me personally why that statement might mean so much to you, that strong is the new skinny, because you have to change your mindset, right, that skinny may not be attractive, that strong is what's attractive to you now.

I agree with you on changing your body and your physical health, and I know I'm going to go through my top three things. That's going to be something on my list as well. So, I won't go too far into it. What I will say, after being somebody that's been extremely overweight, extremely unhealthy, is a lot of times, we're taught to just accept yourself and love yourself and all of that, and I agree to that, to a certain extent.

I also agree that if you truly are going to live that way, then you're not loving yourself by eating the cheeseburgers and the French fries, you're not loving yourself by staying as big as I was, right? And so, it's easy like—and I'm not trying to fat shame anybody or anything like that, but it's very easy to go down that path in this whole PC world, that it's like it's great to be big, and this and that. Sure.

But once I lost more weight, I was a lot happier, not just emotionally, but physically, and I was actually loving myself for who I was. Now I don't think that I need to be six-pack and model. I don't think that women need to be that ideal image of airbrushed perfection or anything like that. But I do challenge the

idea of just be happy in whatever you are, because I think that is an excuse for being lazy, and I'm just going to go ahead and call it, and it's an excuse for eating crappy, it's an excuse for not putting yourself first, it's an excuse for valuing TV and non-movement over movement, I mean it allows all of these things.

So, if you're going to actually implement these three tips, and the first one is invest in yourself first, love yourself first, talking about taking care of yourself, you've got to take care of your nutrition and your body. And by doing that, your body will change, and it may not become the idea that the media wants it to be, but it'll be at a much different place than you're probably at right now, and you'll feel better. Even if your body doesn't change a whole lot on the outside, but it changes a lot on the inside based off of what you're eating, based off of exercising, right? Different things like that.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. Yeah, I couldn't agree with you more. And it's been a powerful journey for me, and I'm extremely grateful for it. So, just to close things out today, back to the two experiences that I shared, it's been an incredible journey which has been filled with incredible people for me and incredible experiences, as I've let go more, invest in myself, stopped focusing on what's ahead and focus on what's happening now, I'm really focused on getting my body strong.

It is the conduit to everything we do in our lives. It's the conduit to our experiences, to our relationships, to our food, to whatever spirituality looks like for us, to our emotions. And when it is strong, it can carry us through a much more meaningful and beautiful life. And so, are you the safest place you know? Are you the place that you love the most?

Do you trust yourself more than anyone else? And are you living your experience to being true to you and for you? As I've put these into practice more in my life, I've been able to have much more meaningful experiences with the world around me and the people around me, and I've been able to serve people in my life better because I'm a stronger, more powerful person, loving myself more.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, I think you've wrapped it all up. I think the way that you've put it is very elegant and I'm not going to add anything more to it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Thank you.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Other than if you want to watch this again and again, listen to it again and again, implement it in your life, go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com. We have all the show notes, we'll have full transcripts. Obviously, you can watch the video, download the audio. Follow us on iTunes, give us a nice big five-star rating.

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TeriAnn Trevenen: I hope that everyone learns to love themselves a little bit more after this.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Agreed. Thank you very much for tuning in, and we'll see you on the next show.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Thanks, everyone.

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