

## **Episode 01: Overcoming the negative and achieving self-love**

### **Part 1: Tessa Virtue on the importance of self-love**

In Part 1 of this episode, Olympic figure skater Tessa Virtue, talks with host Sophie Grégoire Trudeau about how she stayed committed to her ideals of health and strength on her path to becoming the best in the world. A great believer in the importance of physical fitness, she inspires young girls to remain active while encouraging them to focus on their accomplishments rather than searching for self-worth through physical appearance. Virtue stresses the importance of being kind to ourselves in the often-brutal world of social media, stressing that we need to stop comparing “our behind the scenes [life] to everyone else’s highlight reel” because “you just never know what’s going on behind the scenes.” Her message to young women is, “You’re enough, exactly how you are, every curve, every freckle, it’s perfect, because it’s you.”

### **Part 2: Megan Popovic on how being uncomfortable can help us grow**

In Part 2 of this WE Well-being podcast, Megan Popovic, Director of Athlete Wellbeing and Performance for the Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club, life coach and mother of two, shares tips on how parents can help support their kids in building resiliency. Popovic stresses that parents need to recognize that sometimes being uncomfortable can be good; it can help us grow. She emphasizes that the best thing a parent can do is to establish clear, authentic boundaries for their children, and then get out of the way. It’s only by allowing our children to experience challenging moments, Popovic says, that they will have the space to grow and develop their own values and decision-making capacities.

### **WE Well-being tips and actions**

#### **How to be your own BFF, no matter what**

Think about how you would greet an old friend. If we weren’t practicing physical distancing, probably with a great big bear hug! Now consider ways you can extend that same affection to yourself. Not sure where to begin? Stretch your arms wide. Cross your hands to opposite shoulders. Squeeze! You have every reason to be your own BFF. Being kind to yourself is a good place to start.

#### How to be your own BFF: 5 Tips from Meg Popovic and the WE Well-being Playbook

**1. Understand that making mistakes and facing challenges are all part of being human.**

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. When we begin to recognize when we’re uncomfortable, either we get an opportunity to look at what we’re doing and reflect, or we learn that what is making us uncomfortable is growing and expanding us as human beings. Embrace and celebrate challenge!

**2. Lend yourself a curious and compassionate ear. If you notice self-criticism, ask yourself: Is there a kinder response?**

Self-compassion is a life-long survival skill. Next time you notice self-criticism, try this: place a hand on your heart, notice the pressure and warmth of this kind touch, and ask yourself how this kind gesture influences your thoughts. This simple action can be enough to remind yourself to extend the same compassion, kindness and care to yourself as you would to a loved one.

**3. Seek to identify and care for your needs.**

Make your own emotional first aid kit! Gather a few treasures: photos, souvenirs, inspirational quotes or a sachet of tea. Next time you need a little TLC, this emotional first aid kit will be ready to provide you with a little comfort when you need it most.

**4. Realize your thoughts are just thoughts.**

The best part about our own thoughts is that we have the power to change them. Did you know that listening to pleasurable music releases ‘feel-good’ neurotransmitters that can lift your mood? There are lots of happy songs, but here are a few suggestions to get you started: “Don’t Stop Me Now” by Queen; “Dancing Queen” by ABBA; “Uptown Girl” by Billy Joel; “Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina & The Waves.

#### **5. Be kind whenever possible, to yourself and to others.**

As odd as it sounds, being kind to yourself can take practice. Here’s a little technique used by people all over the world: find a quiet place to sit comfortably and begin paying attention to your breathing. Rest in the quiet, repeating this simple phrase: “May I be peaceful and happy.” Research shows that even a few minutes of this practice can enhance your sense of daily joy, gratitude and hope.

#### **Additional Resources**

- Dr. Srinii Pillay, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, on how “Greater self-acceptance improves emotional well-being”  
[link to <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/greater-self-acceptance-improves-emotional-well-201605169546>]
- Free online “Mental Health 101” tutorials from CAMH (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)  
[link to <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-101>]
- How to find a psychologist in Canada: Canadian Psychological Association  
[link to <https://cpa.ca/public/findingapsychologist/>]

#### **Featured Guests**



#### **Tessa Virtue**

Tessa Virtue is one of the most decorated Olympic figure skaters of all time. Together with her ice dancing partner, Scott Moir, she has won five Olympic medals. Trained in ballet and modern dance, Virtue attended the National Ballet summer school at age nine before choosing to focus on skating. During their spectacular career together, she and Moir also published a book *Tessa and Scott: Our Journey from Childhood Dream to Gold* and filmed a TV show *Tessa and Scott*, which focuses on their training for the Olympics. Having announced her retirement from the sport in September 2019, Virtue is focusing on encouraging the next generation of athletes. Her favourite quote, as reported on the Canadian Olympic Team website is, “Don’t be delicate. Be vast and brilliant.”



### **Megan Popovic**

Megan Popovic is Director of Athlete Wellbeing and Performance for the Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club. She holds a PhD from the Faculty of Health Sciences at Western University and served as a faculty member in the School of Leadership and Social Change at Brescia University College. For over 15 years, she has worked with individuals, teams and organizations to develop resiliency, leadership and emotional well-being. A former elite-level figure skater, Popovic partnered with two former professional hockey players—her brother, Mark Popovic and long-time family friend, Andy Chiodo—to create workshops for players, coaches and parents.

### **Podcast Hosts**



### **Sophie Grégoire Trudeau**

Sophie Grégoire Trudeau is an activist, feminist, mother, and international speaker, who has dedicated her career to promoting women's rights and increasing awareness on youth and adult mental health issues. As Ambassador and Ally for WE Well-being, Sophie has spoken at several WE Day events around the world, sharing with audiences her own inspiring story of struggling with an eating disorder, and her journey towards self-love. Sophie was named recipient of the 2013 UN Women National Committee Canada Recognition Award for her contribution to human rights and is an active member of Women Deliver, Deliver for Good campaign—an initiative seeking to empower women and girls through education on sexual health, human rights and climate change. She studied Commerce at McGill University, and finished her B.A. in Communications at the Université de Montréal. She completed her course at the École de radio et de télévision Promédia in Montreal. After her studies, she worked in sales, public relations and advertising before becoming a television and radio reporter. Her intrinsic curiosity and her willingness to explore spirituality motivated Sophie to study hatha yoga and attain her certification. A devoted sportswoman, she pushes boundaries by exploring the great outdoors and encourages all Canadian youth to get out there and move.



**Leysa Cerswell Kielburger**

Leysa Cerswell Kielburger is a faculty member at the Centre for Mindfulness Studies, where she trains educators, health care practitioners, and corporate leaders in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and stress reduction. She also runs the Centre's Psychology Aid program for homeless and unstably housed youth. Leysa has taught and worked in North America, Southeast Asia and East Africa. She is completing her PhD in Clinical Psychology, with her research and dissertation focus on mental health care for underserved and marginalized populations. Her first book on strategies for self-care and mental well-being will be published in fall 2019.

Are you experiencing a mental health crisis? Go to the nearest hospital or call 911.

WE Well-being podcasts are not intended as medical advice or treatment and should not be seen as a substitute for therapy or medication.