

The Flying Free Podcast with Natalie Hoffman, Episode 342 - The "Let Go, Accept, and Love" Tool (and what a mother learned in her custody battle)

Heads up, friend: What you're about to read is a raw, unedited transcript straight from the robots. That means you'll find some weird words, funky punctuation, and moments that make you go, "Huh?" If you want the real experience (and to actually know what's going on), I recommend reading the polished article, listening to the full episode, or watching it on 1.5x speed with captions on. Your brain will thank you.

Natalie: Do you ever feel like you're drowning in guilt while trying to be a good Christian in a toxic marriage or a messy divorce? What if I told you that believing the actual good news and learning to let go, accept and love could change everything for you? Today I'm gonna share the real steps that help women like you finally reclaim their peace and sanity and stand strong no matter what storms are raging around you.

So if you're tired of white knuckling your faith while trying to survive dysfunction, this one is for you.

Last week I said that I was gonna share three tools taken from things that have been shared or taught within the Flying Free Kaleidoscope. But then I started to lose my voice toward the end of talking about the first tool, it was just getting over a cold, and I promised that I would share the other two tools this week.

So here we go. In our Bible study, in my Flying Hire mentorship group, we have been working through the Book of Luke using the Mirror Bible. Now this translation, uh, is so refreshing. It truly presents the good news of Jesus Christ, and it has been a game changer in my own life and in the lives of the other members who are part of this study, who have maybe in the past had the Bible weaponized against them.

The good news is actually good news. Jesus Christ has already paid the price for us, so it's finished. His love and sacrifice were sufficient and powerful, and we are saved now. Now, but we don't always experience or feel that salvation in real life in real time. But what salvation actually is, is simply knowing who we are in Christ, understanding our true identity.

Because of what Christ did for us and then living into that reality again, we don't always feel or see this reality until we believe it. We have to have buy-in with, you know, cognitively. That's why scripture constantly emphasizes the need to believe and to transform our minds because God knows that we're never, that.

We're not gonna experience that until we actually make that connection. Now. When you believe this truth in your mind, that is when you begin to feel and experience the results in your body. It's like anything. We believe this is, uh, cognitive behavioral therapy. We learned this, right? What you believe is going to create feelings and emotions in our bodies.

So for example, if we believe that we are bad and we are dirty, rotten worms and that we are undeserving and unworthy and that we, you know, we're terrible people, we are going to, what's gonna happen? People who believe that we feel shame. I know I grew up believing those things. All I felt inside of myself was shame and I wanted to hide.

That's what Adam and Eve wanted to do. As soon as they realized that they were naked, they're like, oh my gosh, we gotta hide. Shame flooded their bodies because of what they now believed. When we believe we are loved and worthy, though we are gonna feel in our body, we're gonna feel safe and secure.

And when we feel safe and secure, we can hold space for ourselves and others. We are able to drop out of judgment and shame and into love so that others also feel safe and secure. You. You guys, what we believe matters. It makes a difference in how we live our lives. Whether you believe the reality that you are complete and whole in Christ or not.

It doesn't change the actual truth, just like the sun continues to shine even during a storm. Even when the storm clouds block our view and everything seems dark, the sun is still there above the storm, we can't see it. We can't experience it because we're in the middle of a storm, but the truth remains unchanged regardless of what we are feeling or experiencing.

So it's the same with our position in Christ. We are saved. We belong to our creator God, and he has redeemed us. But whether we experience that amazing beauty and freedom and healing, and the feeling of being loved, accepted, and known, all depends on our ability to believe that it's true, are choice.

Really to believe that it's true. Humans who believe this are transformed because of this belief that they have. It meets the reality. It mirrors the reality of

how Christ sees us. Then when we believe it, we see ourselves reflected in that truth. Those who don't are gonna struggle with personal shame, insecurity, blaming themselves and others, hiding, fighting, victimizing others, or taking on the victim role.

They're still saved because that's what Jesus Christ did and has nothing to do with us and what we do. But they don't get to experience their salvation unless and until they believe that it belongs to them. And this includes all the Christians who are haters, shamers, and blamers. They're not experiencing their salvation any more than someone who is a rapist or a murderer or thief.

I honestly believe that one of the darkest places on the planet are in Christian homes where people living there don't believe in the good news. They believe in a another world religion that's just like all of the other world religions that offers salvation based on what you have to do and the hoops you have to go through and the rules you must obey instead of the good news that focuses on what is already yours because of what Christ did, not what you did.

It's finished. It's done. There is no more to do except to believe and accept your true identity. Through the Bible study, uh, along, along with the classes that I've been teaching in Flying Higher, which is my live mentorship group and the books we've been reading there together, I have noticed a consistent pattern emerging, and this pattern involves three essential steps that we need to embrace.

The first step is letting go. We must let go of everything that we cannot control. That means other people. We can't control other people. We can't control our husbands. We can't control our friends. We can't control our church leaders. We can't control our children or our adult children. We need to also let go of our dreams and desires for how things should be, how we believe things should be.

How we believe life should go, how we believe life should unfold. We need to let go of the circumstances that are beyond our control, beyond our scope of influence, and we also need to let go of our magical thinking that believes things should be different than they actually are. There is so much we need to release.

Whenever you are struggling in your personal life, ask yourself. What am I hanging onto and what do I need to let go of? This is the work that I had to do that I teach you how to do inside of Flying Free and Flying higher. So here's an example. In my recent divorce this last year, at one point my ex who had

squandered copious amounts of money was threatening to take half of everything I had saved for retirement and half of my business account.

So for one week I did not eat or sleep, and I broke out in a rash all over my face. I found out later it was a stress rash. I was literally making myself sick with resisting this reality because legally in my state of Minnesota, he had a right to half of everything that I had saved, and legally I would be required to take on half of his debt.

At the end of the week, I realized I was gonna end up in an early grave if I didn't just let go. That meant I had to let go of my financial security. I had to be willing to let go of my home where I was raising my children. My idea of where I wanted to raise my kids. Now, as it turned out. Fortunately, my second husband was not abusive and he did take responsibility for his debt, and he let me keep all of my accounts and he kept his accounts, including his own debt, and he committed to paying off his own debt.

But when I made the conscious decision to let go of everything that I had built and poured into, including our relationship for the past seven years. I finally felt a sense of peace, which brings me to step number two, and that is to accept. Now acceptance goes beyond just letting go. We need to look around at what is actually true and accept that reality.

So when I got to the place where I was letting go of what belonged to me and what I had worked to build, I had to accept then what was left. I had to accept that my husband had consistently made these choices when it came to money and that he had worked hard to hide that from me. For during our relationship.

I would need to accept that this was his choice. He had a right, an adult right, to make those choices. He had a right to hide it from me. Our entire relationship, he's an adult. He can make that choice. I would need to accept that these were the choices he made rather than to pretend that this wasn't happening anymore and I had been living in denial for a long time before.

Finally, the truth was just so obvious that I could not live in denial anymore. I would need to accept that. Now my four kids who are still at home with me. They and I would need to live in an apartment, and I would need to sell the car to pay off his debt. I would need to start over with my retirement.

I would need to accept my life as a single, divorced woman, uh, twice divorced. Now, I would need to accept the social stigma that goes along with that. And again, like I said, he chose to take responsibility. He's co-owning our house with

me. So we're both sharing the responsibility of the financial aspect of our home so that I can finish raising the, my own kids from my first marriage here, which that is to his credit.

Um, but when you are done asking what am I hanging onto and what do I need to let go of? The second question to ask is, what am I living in denial about? What do I need to accept about what's actually true in my life? And then finally, the third step in this pattern that I've been observing is number three, love.

We need to learn how to love ourselves. That means all the parts of ourselves, the parts about ourselves that are amazing and badass, and the things about ourselves that are weak. Problematic and gets us into trouble and keep us stuck. We have a class in Flying Free called The Healing Your Relationship with Yourself Course.

And you can also read my own journey along these lines in my book, all The Scary Little Gods, which you can get on Amazon. We need to learn how to love ourselves, and that means in relation to my recent divorce is I had to go back and go, okay, what were the things that I was living in denial about, and I need to forgive myself for those things and understand.

That was that version of myself, that relationship taught me so many things that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. And so for that, I can be grateful for the relationship. I can be grateful for the version of myself that got into that relationship and all the things that I have that I took away from that relationship, and, and I can accept and forgive myself and him and move forward.

So that is showing love for myself, showing love for my ex, and showing love for the people around me. But then we need to learn also how to love our creator God. And that means getting to know who that creator actually is and not just buying into this idea of the kind of God with a small G, that many religions, including Christianity, say that the creator is because here's the thing, religion.

Cults and things like that. Always paint God out to be just like that. Religion's most pious and often well-paid leaders, we all know how that turns out. God isn't like men and Jesus did not come to start another world religion to compete with all of the other world religions. He came to set everyone free.

This is something beautiful that we're seeing unfold in the Gospel of Luke in our Bible study. That is the good news. I think when we see this and really believe it, then we can't help but fall madly in love with that God, capital G.

Big, powerful, amazing, unstoppable. And then finally, we need to learn how to love other people.

But loving other people does not mean placating them or agreeing with everything they say or do. True love means that we stay on firm in our authentic selves. We love ourselves and we love others by respecting both their boundaries and their choices. As well as our own. I recently heard Mel Robbins coaching a young man who was harmed by his Baptist church, and he ended up in his late twenties not being able to get off of his mother's couch.

Now he blamed it. He blamed his stuckness on the church, but Mel helped him to see that he was doing this to himself because instead of leaving his abusive church, he chose to stay. And lie to them about who he was. He chose to pretend and manipulate them into believing that he was buying into their beliefs, and that wasn't true.

That's not love. That's not love for himself, and that's not love for them. Love for them would be letting them believe whatever they wanted to believe. And then love for himself would be to find a church that aligns with his own core values, but lying and denying and pretending doesn't serve anyone. And he is only responsible before God for his own choices, not theirs.

We could say this about even some of us survivors who have been part of churches and when we tried to say, Hey, our relationship is abusive, can you help me? And they would not do that, and then we ended up getting excommunicated. We could say, well, are we going to respect their right to believe whatever asshole things I wanna believe.

I mean, I have to, I had to eventually get to that point and go, you know what? That's who that church is, and I need to respect their right to be the kind of church that they wanna be, even if they're all acting like assholes. And then who do I wanna be? I let them go, and then I go somewhere where I can be myself and where I can make a contribution in a place that truly aligns with my own core values.

Alright, now I go into all of these things and how it plays out in our actual lives, our actual, practical, daily nitty gritty lives in the courses in Flying Free. And then I've also been teaching more advanced classes this year in my mentorship group Flying higher. But I just wanted to give you a high level summary.

I wanna share how one of our members applied this concept of Let go, accept. Love, and she shared this in our private forum, she said. I listened to the most

recent Bible study tonight. I love the let go accept love concept instead of LOL. It's LAL. Natalie encouraged us to try it, so I found the LAL to be so affirming to me.

It put a structure to what I've been doing these last several months with one of my kids. I've rarely heard from this child since Christmas. I haven't known why this child wanted a separation from me, but I had decided that this child must have their reasons. It was a struggle for me initially, but I decided to accept it except that's the A part.

Then the past several weeks, whenever I think of this child and how hollow the separation feels to me. I say that when I give this child space, it is my special gift of love to this child, and that has changed everything for me. It changed the situation from this child is doing this to me to, I am doing this for this child.

I'm giving this child a gift, which is my love to let this child be, all the while knowing that I'm playing the long game and that the story isn't over yet, and praying that one day we will have a mutually loving and caring relationship. In the meantime, having let go accepted and loved. My heart is free, and this is of the greatest value to me.

Even though the struggle keeps popping up, this perspective change is keeping my heart free. I'm so thankful and would never have been able to come to this place without all that you've taught us, all that you've shown us, and all you've invested in us. Thank you a zillion times. Let's go to the third tool.

This is, uh, lessons from a custody evaluation. So what I just shared with you is tools that we learn in Flying Hire. And if you are interested in joining my mentorship program, Flying Hire, you can go to join [Flying hire.com](https://flyinghire.com). If you wanna join Flying Free, you can go to join [Flying Free dot com](https://flyingfree.com). All right, so this third tool is going to be more for you if you are thinking about divorce or if you're in the middle of a divorce.

And you might learn some things even if you're not in this next tool. And this is lessons from a custody evaluation. This is, uh, this is was actually from a post from one of our members who recently went through a custody study and I think her insights. Her personal insights as well as her insights about the courts are incredibly valuable.

I'm going to read her post, but I have removed any identifying details in order to protect her privacy. So she said this. I got to see the very long report from my custody study today, and I wanted to share a few remarks and thoughts that I

have. The interviews were hard. They were so hard, the doubt, the worry, the regret that I had failed to present something correctly or forgot completely, to mention some key detail, wondering if I was too nice about my ex or if I was too hard on myself and a host of other things.

I just wanna jump in and say it's true. Divorce is really messy and these are some of the messy things that we feel, think, and feel when we're going through that. Some of the report is difficult to read. It brings to the surface the pain of the ways that I haven't been a great parent during the last two years.

Some of that's on me. The rest, how could I have done any better when I was struggling to survive afraid and paralyzed and freeze mode? Sometimes I still dissociate and sometimes I'm snippy. This goes back to what I said earlier. We need to learn to love all the parts of us, including the darker parts of us that come to the service a lot when we're going through moments or periods of time of high stress and fear.

Divorce is messy. You're not gonna be the perfect parent when you're walking through divorce. That is just simply reality. Now, if you manage to be, that's amazing, but I certainly wasn't, and I have yet to meet anyone who navigates divorce like a perfect angel. But anyway, let's just continue here. She says, the more internal work I do, the better I show up for my life.

That is why this work is so important. You guys. Sometimes I'm frustrated with my own self for being too exhausted to read another lesson or listen to another coaching session. I think I was hoping there would eventually be more calm and more time, but now I'm realizing. I have to embrace the insane workload of being single and still documenting everything and just choose when and how.

I'm going to stay consistent with the coursework and practice to keep making progress on my healing journey. The evaluator remarked that both myself and my soon to be ex needed to do more internal work. However. She did say that I was further along in my processing. The evaluator wrote that we weren't great at co-parenting, but I was the better co-parent.

So that's validation. Now I wanna add something here. When you go through the preparation for divorce course in Flying Free, you are going to learn the strategies and tools to become that better co-parent so that the courts and other people on the outside will be able to see that this training is gonna help ensure that these outside observers will recognize you as the one who is coop, cooperating most effectively without you having to throw yourself under the bus.

Right? I'll teach you these specific skills and tools. So if you're thinking about divorce or currently going through one. You are already a member. Make sure you complete the Preparing for Divorce course inside Flying Free, just like this member did. You can access that course along with so many other powerful tools when you join us.

I also want you to notice this member's attitude. Pay attention to how she's not drowning herself in shame. And this is something I work hard to teach everyone in our programs. Yes. There are gonna be parts of us that will feel shame, but we wanna minister to those parts with compassion and love, because shame doesn't ultimately serve us.

It doesn't serve our children, and it doesn't serve our legal case. Shame is a destroyer. It shuts us down. It prevents us from being our authentic selves. It creates a disconnect between our core values and how we show up in the world. Shame is devastating and there is no point in embracing it. However, embracing our mistakes, embracing the messiness, and embracing the fact that we're doing the best we can with the tools we have in each moment.

Now that approach is gonna serve us much better. Then she went on to say, the evaluator said that my soon to be ex's disregard for me and my parenting is front and center. That his inability to see how he added to the issues between him and me and him and the children are hindering his ability to be the best parent that he can be.

That's a big deal to me. It would've been so easy for me to make him front and center, but I didn't. I followed the advice from Natalie and from Gretchen Baskerville. Now she's ref Gretchen. She's referring to the author of the Lifesaving Divorce book. We have. Interviewed Gretchen on this podcast several times.

You can look her up on the Flying Free po uh website flyingfreenow.com dot com and find all the podcasts where Gretchen's been interviewed. If you goes on YouTube and search Life Saving Divorce book, you will find her YouTube channel. All right, so then she goes on. It was hard to figure out how to state my contributions to the issues in a way that felt genuine, but also didn't throw my own self under the bus like I had been doing my whole marriage.

It was hard also to come up with any parenting strengths for him because honestly, he's a really terrible parent and an evil person, like really, really wicked. But I did it and it paid off, thankfully. So you guys at this point, she's able to give him credit for some benign activities that she mentioned.

I'm not gonna read them. Um, and the evaluator noticed that while she could acknowledge his positive qualities, she noticed that he was completely unable to say anything nice about her. Now that says something to a judge that says something to the attorneys. She goes on to say, the evaluator remarked that I could see him as a whole person, both as he was before separation and as he is now.

But she said that my soon to be ex rejects completely that I bring any positives to the table. She said that he is not capable of seeing me as a full parent and that this is bleeding over onto the children and hurting how they see their mother. I could never have expressed myself in a manner that would've conveyed that to the evaluator without the work I have done in Flying Free.

I just wanna say, you guys, we hear testimonies like this constantly. If I could get on my hands and knees and beg you to believe me when I say this. If you come into this program and you apply yourself and you're willing to invest just a little bit of your time, not even a lot, just a little listening to content through your earbuds while you're getting ready for the day or where while you're getting ready to go to bed at night, your life will transform.

You don't need to sit down for formal study time. This is not forcing yourself to sit for an hour to watch a class. Good heavens, I can't. I can't do that. And I understand that you can't either. We are busy people. I understand you don't have time for that. All you have to do is put in your earbuds, or if you have privacy, you know, press play on your phone.

That's it. Everything is available on an app on your phone. Everything you need is literally at your fingertips. Press play on a lesson and listen while you're getting ready, while you're taking your makeup off, while you're brushing your hair, while you're putting your pajamas on, or lying in bed trying to fall asleep.

Listen to the coaching calls. Listen to the classes, listen to the workshops. You'll learn by osmosis. You don't have to go through the content in order. You can skip around. There is no set process and you don't ever get graded. There are journaling ideas if you wanna go deeper and you're a big journaler, but you don't have to do what you can.

Even if you do a little bit, I promise you, your life is gonna change and when your life changes, when your thinking changes at this level. It's gonna show up in practical situations like custody evaluations. You'll be able to see how different you are from the past version of yourself, and it's gonna make a difference in your custody case.

She goes on to say, I never asked for full custody. I consistently said I wanted our children to have a healthy relationship with both parents. I said it over and over. I acknowledged my reactivity at the start of the divorce process. Okay. You guys notice how she's leaning into her weaknesses and acknowledging areas where she feels messy instead of denying problems or pretending to be this perfect mother and, and the total victim.

This is humility and action, and I'm telling you, it goes a long way in a custody case. Then she said, I acknowledge how I handle litigation had not been the greatest for the kids. I also though acknowledged the work I had done and how much more regulated and calm I am now and that I have learned to recognize when I dissociate and I named some of the tools and ways that I handle that so that I can stay present as a parent and compartmentalize the other stuff to deal with later.

Thank you Natalie Hoffman for helping me to learn some tools to stay present. The evaluator recommended and then she lists several specific things here, which I'm not gonna say for privacy reasons, but, and then she says she recommended that if the parties are not willing to follow these, you know, X, Y, Z recommendations, that custody of the children would be given to me.

The report concluded, if my husband can't see how he contributed, then custody exchanges will not get better and the kids will all need to be with me. Isn't that the central issue? For most, if not all of us, the husband cannot see how he contributed. So here's my takeaway. She says, do the work on yourself.

Conduct yourself with honor regardless of the outcome in court custody studies. It pays off. My biggest regret is not doing more work on myself. Early on, earlier on, ladies who are listening. You don't have to be thinking about divorce to get started on this work so that no matter what your future holds, you will be a more regulated, confident person.

Then she says, I didn't have the luxury of prep time. I made so many mistakes early on. And here's the second, and this may seem unrelated or the second takeaway, I'm sorry, and this may seem unrelated, but hire someone like Rhonda Nordic. She's a certified divorce financial analyst, or find a good CDFA before you final file or as soon after you file as you possibly can.

She will save you money working with your attorney on finances. He knows nothing about and the peace of mind you will have knowing you have a real financial advocate. If I had not been terrified about my financial situation, I

probably would've made better decisions around how I handled the massive custody battle That was going to be my lot.

Regardless, I wish I had started working with Rhonda sooner. PS I am well aware that not every custody evaluator can see through the sham. Yes, she did have a good custody evaluator, right? Thankfully, mine saw through a lot of what was going on. Maybe not everything, but a lot. Alright. You guys, this is the kind of stuff that we get to read in our private forum.

This is the kind of contributions that our members are giving. It's a great resource. Our private forum is not on Facebook. It is a private forum on a different platform that you can access on an app on your phone, and all of the courses and workshops are also on there. This is a great resource for connecting with other Christian women.

There are hundreds of them in there. It's a hopping forum. It's very active. You can connect, you can ask questions, you can process what you're going through in real time. But we also have a rich library of other resources like our extensive coaching library with I'm coaching other professional coaches.

Our coaching, you'll get to hear them coaching people in your exact situations, like hundreds and hundreds of sessions. And then we got a big vault of courses, and each course contains specific life-changing tools and strategies for survivors, and they all build on each other. It's not the same tools in each course.

Each course has different tools, and when you keep collecting these tools in your toolbox, you are gonna go from feeling insecure, anxious, fearful, and guilt ridden in your body and indecisive. To feeling confident, loved, safe, secure, and free. And that changes everything. When we are emotionally, spiritually, and physically feeling well, we are able to live our best life.

By the time you have completed the courses and the workshops, you will not even recognize who you are. Now, of course, you could join and never go through the courses. And if you're listening, if you're part of Flying Free and you're listening right now and you've never tried a course. That's not really gonna help you very much, right?

So this is really mainly for you if you feel ready to take the time that it's going to take. And again, like I said, it's not gonna take a lot of time, but you do have to be willing to put your earbuds in CO two or three times a week. And when you're taking your makeup off, listen to something from the Flying Free Kaleidoscope or the, or Flying higher.

Listen to something. Take it in. All right? You're gonna need to take that time to learn and change. Again, if you're not there yet, there's no shame in that. But just know that we are always here if you ever feel ready to take that next step. One of the many courses that members get access to that is related to that last tool I shared regarding custody is the preparation for divorce course.

Um, and I, I highly recommend joining if you're thinking about divorce, just so you could take that course for sure and be prepared. Knowledge is power. It might even help you make the decision right. Now if you're not considering divorce, that's okay. You don't have to take that course. It's just one of many courses.

We also have courses that will help you with everything from parenting to recovering from complex post-traumatic stress disorder, order to addressing spiritual abuse, to addressing skills and strategies for dealing with an abusive husband. If you wanna join us, go to join Flying Free dot com to learn more.

All of the information you need is on that page with a link to the application form. We do have an application process before you can join us, but once you complete that application process, we will send you an invitation. And then if you're already divorced and you've already done a lot of this healing work, I do have a me, a more advanced mentorship group where you will have access to more advanced courses that will teach you even more strategies and tools for dealing with life in general in the areas of your finances, your friendships, new relationships, your spiritual health, managing your time.

Maybe starting a new business, building a new career, and so much more. And then you'll also have, in addition to all of those courses that are in our vault, you'll also have a couple of opportunities every week to hang out with me live, because I teach advanced classes every month. I do group coaching with this mentorship group.

I facilitate bible studies and book studies. You can be involved as much or as little of that as you want to. So if you wanna make new friends and grow this online community with me and over 200 other divorced Christian women that are in this smaller group, come join us and you can go to join Flying hire.com to learn more about that.

Also, if you're divorced or getting divorced, you may wanna check out our new divorced Christian Woman podcast. It's on your favorite podcast app. You're gonna hear from divorced Christian women who have done this work now for a while. These are all women that I've worked closely with over the years, and

you're gonna get so much wisdom and insight from their experiences and their wealth of knowledge and growth.

New episodes get released on Fridays. Just look it up on your app. Divorced Christian Woman podcast and you can subscribe today. All right. That's all for now.