

# The Flying Free Podcast with Natalie Hoffman, Episode 349 - Toxic Beliefs That Keep Christian Women From Their True Identity (A Story about a Runner)

**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:** If you've ever wondered why trying to solve the problems in your marriage feels like running through quicksand, this story is for you because that crushing weight that you feel. We're gonna unpack that together today.

Are you a runner? I'm not a runner, but I'm gonna tell you a story about a runner today. Sarah stood at the edge of the park's running trail. Her heart was pounding, not from exertion, but from something deeper. She had been wanting to start running for months, but every time she laced up her sneakers, something held her back.

Today she felt different, but she couldn't quite name why, excuse me, came a gentle voice behind her. Sarah turned to see an older woman with kind eyes and a warm smile. I'm Elena. I couldn't help but notice that you've been standing here for a while. Are you okay? Sarah's cheeks flushed. Oh, I, I wanna run, but I just can't seem to get started.

Elena's gaze move to Sarah's shoulders and her expression grew thoughtful. That's quite a backpack that you're carrying. Do you mind if I ask what's in it? Sarah looked down. Surprised she'd grown so accustomed to the weight that she'd almost forgotten she was wearing it. The straps had left permanent indentations in her shoulders and the pack bulged with years of accumulated.

What exactly? I'm not really sure. Sarah admitted. I guess I've just always carried it. Would you mind if we sat down and took a look together? Elena asked. Gesturing to a nearby bench. Sometimes it helps to see what we're

carrying before we decide if we wanna keep carrying it. Something in Elena's. Voice free of judgment full of understanding made Sarah Nod.

So they settled on the bench and Sarah carefully removed the heavy pack. Elena's hands were gentle as she opened the first compartment. Let's see what's in here. She pulled out a smooth, dark stone and held it up to the light. What does this one feel like to you? Sarah stared at the stone and suddenly words tumbled out.

A good wife never questions her husband's decisions. Ah, Elena said softly. And where did that one come from? My mother, I think, and Pastor Williams used to preach about it. My husband reminds me of it whenever I, Sarah's voice trailed off. How is this belief serving you now? Elena asked. Her tone was curious rather than challenging.

Sarah was quiet for a long moment. I don't think it really is. I used to think that it kept peace in my home, but really I think it's just keeping me silent when I should speak up. When he yells at the kids, when he controls our money, when he tells me I'm imagining things again, her voice began to grow stronger.

This isn't keeping peace. I think it's keeping me trapped. Elena nodded and reached into the pack again, pulling out a heavy chain. Sarah gasped as she recognized it. God won't give you more than you can handle, Sarah whispered. And where did this one come from? My church. My women's Bible study. My counselor even said it once.

Sarah's hands trembled as she touched the chain. But Elena, I can't handle it. I lie awake at night wondering if I'm losing my mind. I jump every time I hear his key in the door. I've stopped singing, stopped dreaming, stopped living. What if Elena said gently? What if God never meant for you to handle abuse?

What if this belief is keeping you from seeking the help and safety that he wants for you? Elena continued pulling items from the backpack. A heavy book labeled, submit and Stay Quiet, A Mirror That Only Reflected Flaws, A set of Chains Marked. What will people think? Each item came with a story, a source, a weight that had been crushing Sarah's spirit without her even realizing it.

I don't understand. Sarah said tears streaming down her face. These are all things Christians are supposed to believe, aren't they? Elena sat down the pack and took Sarah's hands. Tell me, dear one, if Jesus were sitting here right now, do you think he would want you to carry all of this? Do you think he would want you running toward the life he has for you?

Weighed down by beliefs that keep you from even taking the first step. But if I let go of these beliefs, what will I replace them with? What if I'm wrong? What if you're not Elena? Counter gently. What if there are truths that could set you free instead of weighing you down? What would it look like to carry I am beloved instead of I am worthless.

What if instead of God wants me to endure abuse, you carried, God wants me to be safe and whole. Sarah looked at the pile of beliefs scattered all around the bench, and for the first time in years, she lighter. I'm scared she whisper. These beliefs feel familiar even if they hurt. What if the new ones don't work?

What if I can't handle the change? Elena smiled knowingly. Tell me more about that fear. What exactly are you afraid might happen? I don't know. I guess I'm afraid that if I stop believing that I deserve this treatment, and if I start believing that I deserve better. Then I'll have to do something about it, and I don't know if I'm strong enough.

If you had to know what you're strong enough for, what would it be? Sarah was quiet for a long moment and then lifted her chin. I would be strong enough to protect my children strong enough to find help, strong enough to believe that God loves me enough to want better for me. Elena began placing new items in the backpack, lighter things like a feather labeled.

I am worthy of love and respect, a smooth river stone. That said, I can trust my own perceptions. A small compass marked God's voice is the one that leads to peace, not fear. The pack still has weight. Elena explained, but now it's filled with truths that will help you run, not beliefs that keep you stuck.

Sarah stood up and settled the new pack on her shoulders. It felt different, substantial, but not crushing, supportive rather than burdensome. Some people in your life might not understand when you start running. Elena warns gently. They might tell you that the old pack was better, safer, more familiar. They might ask you why you're changing and why you can't just stay the way you were.

And what do I tell them? You could ask them why they're asking. Elena suggested with a knowing smile. Sometimes the people who fight hardest against our healing. Are carrying their own heavy packs that they're not ready to examine. Sarah took a step toward the trail, and then another, her legs felt stronger than they had in years.

Elena, she called back, what if I fall? What if I can't finish the race? Then you get back up and try again. But Sarah Elena's voice carried across the distance between them. You were never meant to carry that weight. You were meant to run. As Sarah took her first running steps in years, she felt something she'd almost forgotten about hope behind her.

Elena was already approaching another woman standing at the edge of the trail. Another woman with a pack too heavy to bear, another woman ready to discover what it meant to run free. If Sarah's story resonated with you, you might be thinking, I wanna empty my backpack too, but I don't have time for this.

So tell me more about that. What are you two busy doing? If you are anything like the thousands of women that I've worked with, you're busy managing everyone else's emotions. You are busy walking on eggshells and avoiding breaking them right. And you are trying to hold your world together. The busiest women in my Colle Flying Free Kaleidoscope program are often the ones who get the most life-changing results.

Why? Because they're finally investing all of that energy in themselves instead of pouring it endlessly into everybody else. What about this? I don't have the money. But think about what you've tried so far. How much money have you already spent on marriage books, counseling sessions that ended up blaming you or trying to fix something that was never yours to fix in the first place?

The Kaleidoscope program costs less than a dollar a day, probably less than your daily coffee. Compare that to the cost of staying where you are today, your mental health. Your physical health, your children watching you disappear a little more each day. What is the real price that you are paying for not getting the help that you need?

What if it doesn't work for me? If you had to know why you're asking that question, what would it be? Maybe you've been disappointed before. Maybe you've been told The problem is you for so long that you can't imagine anything actually helping. Here's what I know. You wouldn't have listened this far. If something inside of you wasn't already stirring to life, that's stirring, that's not broken.

That is your soul recognizing truth. But I'm scared to try. Of course you are, but what exactly are you afraid might happen that you'll discover that you really do deserve better, that you'll have to make some hard choices. If that could happen, but fear is often a sign that we're moving towards something important.

The women in the Kaleidoscope program will tell you that the scariest part for them ultimately was staying stuck, not starting that journey toward freedom. You've been carrying that heavy backpack for years. What if instead of continuing to carry beliefs that crush your spirit, you could learn to carry ones that help you soar.

Your pack might be heavy, but you don't have to go in there and examine all of those beliefs by yourself. That is exactly why I created the Flying Free Kaleidoscope, because spiritually grounded trauma-informed education community and coaching is the most effective way for Christian women to unpack their beliefs, one belief at a time.

They can find hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse and start feeling more confident in their bodies so they can make empowered adult choices for their lives. If you're like many Christian women, you don't wanna get a divorce. You also don't wanna live in your marriage the same way that you have so far, so far, because clearly it's not working.

So let's unpack your backpack together and then repack it with beliefs that are gonna give you courage and confidence in the middle of your marriage. You can learn more and complete an application by going to join Flying Free dot com and also this podcast and this YouTube channel is supported by our Kaleidoscope members.

So if you'd like to be part of supporting this podcast and be part of our healing community, again, head over to join Flying Free dot com and complete an application. And until next time, fly free.