

# Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Kori Linn**

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

This week we're talking about triggers and glimmers.

The *Satisfied AF* podcast is the place to learn how to create a life and career that's wildly delicious. Want a steamier sex life? We've got you. Want a more satisfying career? We'll cover that too. And you can be sure we'll spend lots of time talking about how to build connected, fun relationships that can handle life's ups and downs. No matter what goals you're working on, this show will help you create a one of a kind life that is just right for you. Join me, life and career coach Kori Linn and each week I'll give you lots of practical tips, tools, and proven strategies to help you create all the satisfaction your heart desires.

Hello, hello, hello, happy Wednesday. I am having a glorious day and I hope you are too. Something that I've been thinking about, and I may do a full podcast episode on this sometime, is just this idea that what used to be true isn't necessarily true now. But sometimes we get stuck in this mindset of thinking that things that used to be true are still true just because they were true once.

A really easy example just to illustrate this is like when I was a little kid I didn't like the taste of onions, cooked or raw. Raw onions were like spicy and cooked onions were sweet in this way that I found to be really soul-level upsetting as a child. It's interesting because as an adult I love cooked onions, so I'm not sure why that was the case. But I just remember somebody trying to get me to eat them and being like, "They're sweet." And I was like, blah.

So that's a really obvious example, although for some people even that might be a little mind-bending. Yeah, food I used to love, maybe I don't love anymore. Like maybe there's something I tried before and didn't like it, but I'd like it now. So that's just a little nugget to think about. And if y'all are interested in that, write in, and let me know because we can do a whole podcast episode in it.

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

But let's get into this week's topic because I think it's a really good one. And the topic is triggers and glimmers. So you may have heard about triggers. Triggers are generally a situation in which you're reminded of something painful, whether that's a painful experience from your past or a painful belief you might have about yourself or the world, and then you have a reaction in the now.

And the way I kind of think about this, and I got this way of thinking from a book that Alex gave me one time for Christmas called *How To Be An Adult* by David Richo. It was so funny, y'all, because she wrote this note in the front that was like, don't be offended by the title of this book. And she gave it to me because it had been a really impactful book for her. And it's been a really impactful book for me too, both personally and also in my coaching career.

Anyways, what he says in the book is if you find yourself having a reaction to a situation that is outsized or not proportional to the situation at hand, like that's bringing up something for you and that is your responsibility to look at and explore. And I remember I read that, and I took that information in and then Alex and I had a conversation like one day later and it was kind of a conflict.

This was like a long time ago when we first got together. Or I guess we had been dating for a little less than a year because she gave it to me for Christmas. And I had this huge reaction and then I was also so mad because I was like, oh, I'm having this huge reaction, which means this is bringing up something for me that's not about this situation, therefore it is my responsibility because David Richo says it is.

And I'm such the kind of person that if this author and this book says it's my responsibility and I have to deal with it, then I'm like, oh, David Richo said so, so I guess I have to, versus I could have totally rejected that idea.

But anyways, that's kind of how I think about triggers. There's a situation that's happening and some part of you is bringing something else to the

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

situation, whether the thing you're bringing is a painful experience from your past or whether the thing you're bringing is like, ooh, this is bringing up a belief I have that's really painful or uncomfortable.

And just because I'm saying you're bringing it and just because I'm saying like David Richo says it's your responsibility, that doesn't mean it's your fault. I want to be really clear about that. Sometimes we've gone through really terrible things that were not our fault. Sometimes we've gone through abuse or sometimes we've gone through trauma and then we may carry something with us after that from that experience.

So it's a little complex, right? Because you're carrying it with you, but it's not your fault that you're carrying it, but you're the one that's bringing it. And so then it often will, I'm not going to say it has to be dealt with, but often we get to a point where we want to deal with it because the carrying of it is becoming laborious or disruptive to our life or to the goals that we have.

As an example, I was carrying stuff with me when I met Alex that then I brought that stuff into the relationship and then things in the relationship would happen and then I would bring all that with me. And it was disruptive to me being as close to Alex as I wanted to be or having that kind of relationship with her that I wanted to have. And so I chose to look at that stuff and unpack it and figure out what was in there and figure out what I wanted to do about it.

And I'm not going to get into specific examples of that right now, but all of that to say, just because it's my thing I'm bringing with me, doesn't mean it's my fault or that I've done something wrong to have that. And often it's the exact opposite. Often something happened to you and that is why you have the thing you're carrying with you. But now it's yours, even if someone gave it to you and it's not a present you wanted.

Oh, and one more thing about a trigger too, is like a trigger can even be something intense enough that you're in a situation and the trigger happens

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

and then you find yourself in a fight or flight response or a freeze response or a fawn response, not necessarily because of the situation you're currently in, but because the situation you're currently in for some reason reminds you of this other situation.

And so this can happen a lot where like someone says something that could be innocuous to many people, but the person they said it to, it is a trigger for them, or it touches a trigger in them or however you want to phrase it. And then that person has a stress response, even though some other people maybe wouldn't, or the person might be surprised that the person's having a stress response. So that's something important to know about the trigger as well.

I also think – I probably should have said this at the beginning, but I think it's important to say I'm talking about these terms, but I'm talking about them as a lay person because I am a life coach, and I am not a therapist. And there is a certain level of this conversation that would be better served to have with a therapist, a clinical psychotherapist, a psychologist. But I think there's a lot that we can still glean and gather even in a more casual lay person conversation around it. So that's what we're going to be doing here today.

Okay, so that's a trigger. What is a glimmer? So a glimmer is kind of the opposite of a trigger. It's something that happens or a situation in which you feel positive emotions like safety or joy instead of negative emotions or stress.

And so a glimmer can be something that is just enjoyable in its own right. Like when you read up about glimmers, one of the ones that is commonly cited is the sensation of sunlight on your skin. That's a glimmer for a lot of people. It's pleasurable and it creates a sensation of safety or joy. Again, not necessarily for everybody. Maybe you hate sunlight. That's fine, I have no judgments whatsoever. It's just a common example.

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

And also if you want to research any of this more, glimmers and triggers are ideas that came out of polyvagal theory. And I think the term glimmer specifically was introduced in 2018 in the book, *The Polyvagal Theory In Therapy: Engaging The Rhythm of Regulation* by licensed clinical social worker, Deb Dana. So that's where these ideas come from and that's something you can look into to get a deeper understanding of what we're talking about here if you want to do that.

Okay, so back to what are glimmers and how can you use them to have more joy and delight? So basically glimmers can be lots of different things and you're going to want to figure out what your particular glimmers are. But here's a list of some common glimmers that I am reading from an article on [verywellmind.com](http://verywellmind.com).

Feeling the warmth of the sun, like I just mentioned. Feeling the cool, salty ocean air. The smell of cut grass. Oh my gosh, all of these actually are glimmers for me so far. Seeing a rainbow, sunlight sparkling on water, smelling lavender or some other relaxing scent. I think of lemon, myself, for some reason. I just like the smell of fresh cut citrus, it really delights me. Petting a dog or a cat, being in nature, a stranger smiling at you in public and the perfect cup of coffee.

Some of my specific glimmers, like I said, there's the smell of fresh cut citrus, but also there's a certain kind of glass of wine that I get just such a delight from, like a really nice glass of wine. Champagne is something I like, just delicious. And they can be all kinds of things. The smell of baking bread, I think for me also. And the smell of onion cooking, like what you cook at the beginning of making a meal like onion, onion, and garlic.

So for you, something that you can do is to kind of think through like, where does this happen for you? Where do you get these micro moments of joy, safety, satisfaction? And this is going to be good for a few reasons. Reason one, it's just going to feel really good to look for glimmers and enjoy them and notice them. But reason two, this can actually have an impact on your nervous system, just like a trigger can, right?

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

So a trigger is maybe going to push you into a stress response, whereas a glimmer can maybe pull you into like whatever it's called, like a calmer state, right? It can be regulation. And so I love that because I love anything that's just enjoyable in its own right. Just like yummy, delicious. And then also it's having this second layer of benefit on you and your body and your wellbeing. I guess sleep is kind of like that. Like sleep in its own right is yummy and delicious, but sleep also has really great impacts on your wellbeing.

So when I'm inviting you today to look for glimmers and spend time noticing them and enjoying them, it's not just because that's going to feel good. It's also because of the long-term benefits of doing that. But it will also just feel good, and I think that's enough of a reason too.

Okay, let's circle back to triggers though and then we're going to circle back to glimmers again. So we're doing a lot. We're doing a lot of tangential thinking in this podcast episode.

So something I think is really interesting about triggers, like for a lot of people, if they have a trigger, they may be trying to avoid it. And that's totally understandable because it's unpleasant and it doesn't feel good. And sometimes for certain people, encountering a trigger can also make them lose control. Like it can make you have a stress response and maybe respond in a way that isn't aligned with who you want to be in the world or doesn't align with your values, right?

But I think triggers are also really interesting things to study. And again, I'm going to make that caveat that you get to decide, if you have a trigger, whether that's something you feel comfortable studying on your own, studying with someone like me, a life coach, or if you really feel like you need the full support of a licensed mental health worker. And I think there can be different layers that make sense or are appropriate for different levels.

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

But I have a lot of things where the trigger for me was just like, I'm going to maybe have a big feeling or an emotional outburst or I'm going to cry or I'm going to feel really ashamed or really embarrassed and no one's in danger or anything like that. And so those are things that I feel very comfortable tackling on my own or with my own clients.

Whereas if the trigger is leading to something like violence, I feel like that's something where you maybe need a little more heavy duty support to make sure everyone's safe as you either decide to explore it or don't.

So if you have a trigger that you think is safe enough for you to explore on your own, here's something you can do. You can think about what comes up for you in that trigger. So if you want an example, I also have a podcast that I call Spicy Information, which is about how anger can be spicy information.

And in that episode I talk about how I was reading a book and something in the book happened, and I found it to be too upsetting to continue reading the book. I've actually never gone back and finished that book, or I haven't so far, because what happened was too upsetting. But also all that was happening to me was I was a person reading pages, well not pages because it was an audiobook. So I was a person listening to sounds.

So nothing was actually happening to me, and I wasn't in danger in any way physically. But hearing about the situation that this fictional character was in was really upsetting to me and I thought that was really interesting. So I did this whole podcast about that. So that is also kind of like a trigger.

But let's take a different example since we already explored that one in a different episode. So let's look at a different example. Let's say either a friend or someone you're dating sometimes doesn't text you back in a timely fashion.

Now, first of all, the whole idea of a timely fashion is made up and everyone has their own ideas of what that means. But let's just say you prefer for people to text you back within 24 hours. And maybe let's say it's the early



## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

stages of dating and someone doesn't text you back for like three to six days. And that could be a situation in which someone could feel triggered.

And they could feel triggered either because they've dated someone before who behaved like that, in which case the trigger is the current thing that's reminding them of something in their past. But something I also see really commonly is that the trigger is more like what they think that the situation means about them, right?

So if someone takes three to six days to reply back, it's like maybe even that's never happened to you in the past, so it's not reminding you of a previous experience. But maybe it's bringing up this idea of like they don't care, or I'm being disrespected, or this is rude, right?

So in this way, the situation that's happening, like you're having a big emotional response to it, but the emotional response you're having to it isn't just about how long it's taking the person to text you back in the neutral format. It's either reminding you of something else that happened in your past that you also have big feelings about or it's touching on a belief or a fear or an insecurity you have that's making it feel extra loaded.

So in that case, it could be like we could examine the trigger and say like, oh look, when this happens, the thing that comes up is this idea of I don't matter or I'm not important or they're treating me badly. And then we could kind of look through it like, well, do we like how they're treating me? Okay, if we don't, we don't. But we don't have to bring all this extra emotion to it. We could just be like, oh, this isn't a good fit.

Or sometimes it also happens where we decide, oh, there's actually nothing wrong with the behavior. It just feels really shitty to me because it reminds me of this other thing, whether the thing it reminds me of is a situation from my past or whether the thing it reminds me of is this mental concept, like maybe they're just not into you or maybe I'm being disrespected or like this idea that taking a certain amount of time to write back is just inherently disrespectful, when in reality it's totally neutral. It

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

might just not fit into your social construct ideas of what is an appropriate timeline.

And there might even be situations where if the other person was like, oh, I lead these outdoors trips and I'm totally off grid for six days, then it'd probably feel totally fine that someone didn't reply to you.

In this framework it's just interesting to look at like when this situation happens and you have this big response to it, why are you having that big response and what's actually going on? And do we want to keep all of that stuff in there about what's going on or would it actually feel more delicious to you and allow you to show up more as who you want to be to change some of that out, right?

So what identifying and exploring your triggers allows you to do is basically just scientifically look at them and decide if you want to keep them on purpose or not. And a lot of times, even if someone is doing something rude or disrespectful or downright dangerous, we may still want to change the response because the thing about being triggered is it usually makes us have a very emotional response. And it may even have us responding in a way that just doesn't feel good or isn't who we want to be in our lives.

So, for that reason, I think it's really useful to just dig into this and see what's in there. And so this is a metaphor I use with my clients sometimes that sometimes when unpleasant things happen, even if they're no fun, even if they feel really bad, what they can actually be doing is being like a magnet to pull stuff that's not working to the surface.

And then when stuff's on the surface, we can examine it, we can revise it, we can let it go, or we can make changes so that we can have more of what we want. So while I would never prefer to have situations that don't feel good in my life, they're probably going to happen anyways.

And then it's just like, oh, since this is happening, do I want to examine what's coming up and see if there's a way for me to be having a better experience? Either by asking other people to do something differently or

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

changing the way my brain is layering meaning and interpretation onto the things that are happening or even separating out what's happening now from something that happened in the past.

If maybe there was something that happened in the past that really was dangerous or not okay, but the thing that's happening now just reminds me of it, maybe I want to create a separation between those two things. And that's the kind of thing we can do in coaching when we work together.

Now, before we end this podcast, let's also circle back to glimmers because I want to teach you a new concept that I'm going to call glimmer seeking. Basically first, I want you to look through your life for where your existing glimmers are. And we talked about the list of common ones, but where are your micro moments of joy that you're just like, oh, life is good. Things are okay. I feel safe. I feel good.

And then what I want you to do is think about if I like this, what else might I like? If I like this, what else might be fun? If this is a glimmer for me, what other things might be? And then I want you to go searching for them. I want you to go on like a treasure hunt for new glimmers and see how many you can have, because the more glimmers you have, the more micro moments of joy and satisfaction, the more positive impact on your nervous system.

And the more of that, I think just the more happy and motivated you feel. And then it's just easier to, first of all, have a very satisfying life. And second of all, go after your goals, which is going to lead you back to having a very satisfied life.

So that's what I have for you today. I think triggers are ways to get to know ourselves better and explore the layers of meaning and interpretation we add onto things and see if we want to change those. And I think glimmers are ways to just really enjoy the things that we already like and then seek out and find similar things that we can also really enjoy, which is going to feel really good in the moment and is also going to have those positive long-term benefits as well.

## Ep #180: Glimmers & Triggers: Little Moments with Big Impact

And if you want to be doing this work with someone like me, you can scoot over to my website, sign up for a free consult call, and we'll have a conversation about what's going on with you, what would be your very satisfied life and how we could create that together. And I'll tell you if I think I'm the right fit for the things you want to work on. Or if I think someone else is better suited, I will tell you that too.

All right, that's what I have for y'all this week. Thank you so much. Have a nice one. I will talk to you next time. Bye.

Thank you for joining me for this week's episode of *Satisfied AF*. If you are ready to create a wildly delicious life and have way more fun than you ever thought possible, visit [www.korilinn.com](http://www.korilinn.com) to see how I can help. See you next week.