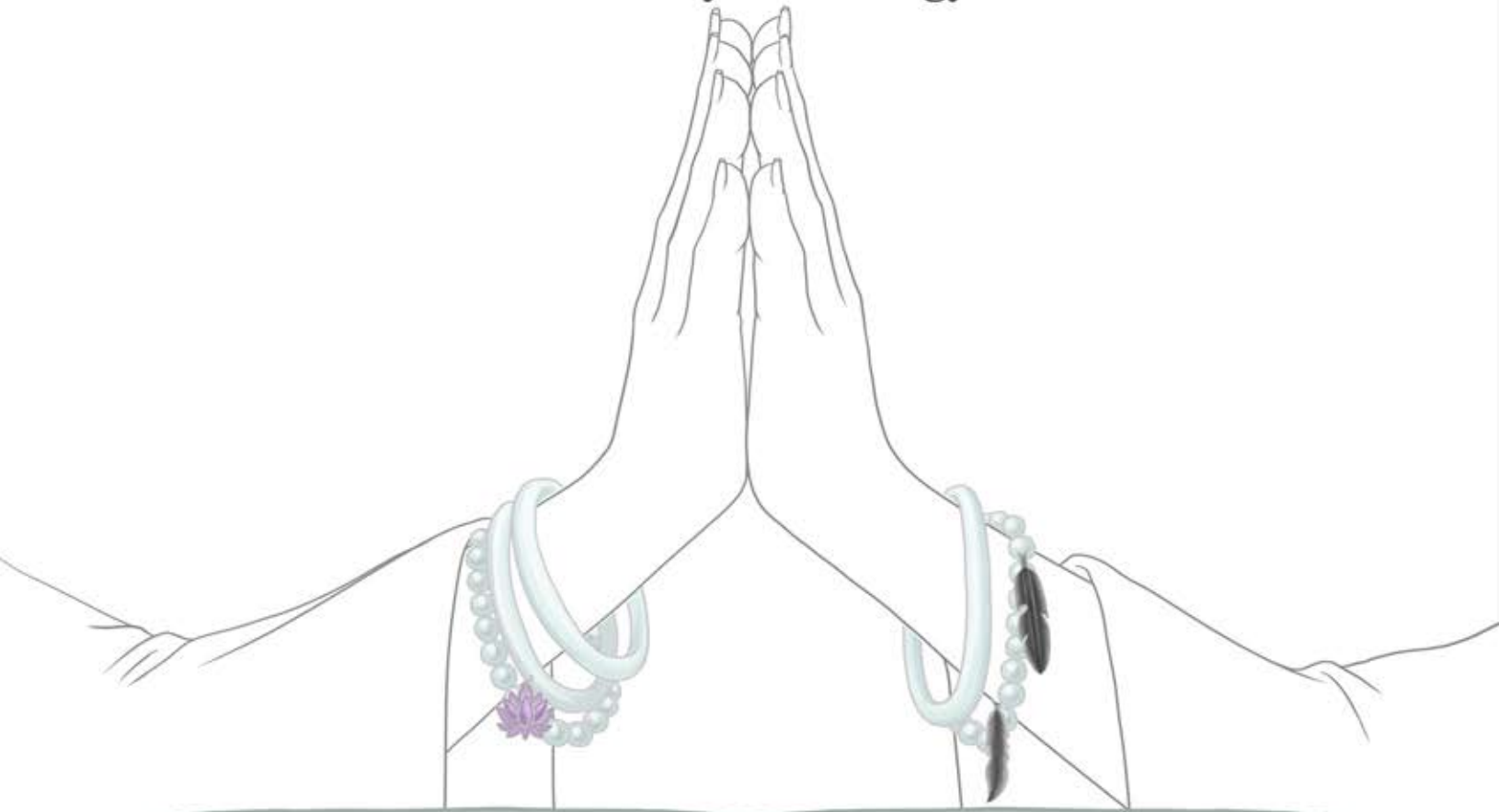


INTENTION OF LOVE

A Poetry Anthology



BONUS SECTION:

**"The 5 Principles for Self-Love Practice"
By Dr. Darcy Lord, Self-Love Expert**

The 5 Principles for Self-Love Practice Dr. Darcy Lord

It's an honor to share space with the other writers in this collection, and especially to be part of ZenJen Brown's continuing journey of lighting the path of love and healing for so many. The Intention of Love? What a powerful concept! I truly believe love can heal all things – even situations on the planet that look unsolvable. But we must start with ourselves, because we are the vessels through which love must pour. In honor of that knowing, here are the 5 Principles for Self-Love Practice. May they guide our way to remembering the sacred essence of light and love that is our true nature.



Principle #1 for Self-Love Practice:



Rescue Yourself When You Feel Bad

To love yourself is to honor the deep sacredness of your soul, hold yourself precious within your own heart, and treat yourself with the same kindness you bestow on others. To do that you must learn to care about how you feel – the same way you care about how others feel – and then to rescue yourself when you feel bad. When you care about how you feel, you will work to change situations that drain you, deplete you, or make you feel bad. In order to do that, you get to first learn to be present with your body and emotions, noticing how you feel.

One of the most unkind, unloving things many of us do is never slow down enough to notice how we're doing. We rush from one thing to another, rarely turning our attention inward – selfward – enough to notice how we are doing.

How are you doing right now?

As you read this, slow down for a moment and check in with you. Take a deep breath and then invite yourself to notice anything and everything you can about your body. Are you comfortable or uncomfortable? Does your body feel tired or tight anywhere? Or at ease? How's the temperature for you? Too warm, too cold, or just right? Do you need to use the restroom, or have some water or nutritious food?

Next, check your breath. Where can you feel it? In your nose? Mouth? Belly? Chest? Watch it for a few rounds and see what can you notice about its flow?

Now shift to your emotions. How do you feel emotionally right now? Any negative or depleting emotions like feeling anxious, self-critical, annoyed, sad, overwhelmed, frustrated, hurried? Or any of the positive or renewing emotions like peaceful, grateful, loving, happy, at-ease, proud, compassionate?

Principle #1 for Self-Love Practice:



continued

Rescue Yourself When You Feel Bad

There's nothing wrong with negative emotions. They help make up our human experience, and all emotions – even the negative ones – offer gifts and play a part in the richness and depth of our lives. It's also true, however, that *negative emotions are depleting – physically, emotionally, and spiritually.* Fortunately, it is possible to shift our emotions “On Demand” which is what Principle #1 is all about.

Once you have felt, processed, or had enough of a negative emotion, you can help yourself stop feeling bad. When you decide you care about how you feel, you will be inspired to rescue yourself from feeling bad by shifting away from draining emotions.

In every moment, you have the power to soften your pain and shift away from hurtful, depleting, or painful moments.

There are many ways to put Principle #1 (Rescue Yourself When Your Feel Bad) into practice. Here is a 2-step practice to get you started.

Step 1: Place your hand on your heart and say 3 times aloud: “I’m willing to care about how I feel and rescue myself when I feel bad.”

Step 2: Answer this question, “What is one small, doable thing I have access to in the moment that could help me feel better?” And then do it! Here are some examples to help get you started: Take a few deep breaths? Text someone that you need support? Walk outside and look at something in nature? Write down 3 things you’re grateful for? Turn on a song you love and sing along or dance to it? Tell someone “Thank you for asking, but no”? Forgive yourself for not being perfect? Do something nice for someone else? Look in the mirror and smile at yourself? Give yourself a big hug and say, “I love you sweet girl” or “I love you sweet boy”?



Principle #2 for Self-Love Practice:

Make Your Inner Guidance Your Highest Authority

You have an ever-present inner guidance that is always within you, always available, and is always guiding you toward your highest good! Whether you call it the still small voice, Mother/Father God, your intuition, Universe vibes, Higher Self, Spirit, Source, Inner Being, or something else... it's always there and Principle #2 invites you to make it your *highest authority*!

So many of us got pulled away from noticing and trusting our inner guidance. We learned to substitute messages from parents, teachers, coaches, religious traditions, friends, spouses, and others in place of the messages from our own inner guidance.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I relied on being the “good girl” to get everyone’s love and approval. Instead of aligning with my spiritual knowing, at a young age I learned to make most of my choices based on wanting *other people* to approve of me and love me.

I’m still working on releasing the habit of wanting everyone to love me, and *never disapprove of me, or be mad at me* (ewww, right?) – for me to feel safe and worthy.

The practice of listening to my own inner guidance has been a huge part of unhooking from the need to get everyone else’s approval. How about you? How did you first give up listening to your inner guidance? Who or what did you put in its place to get your answers, safety, love, or approval?

Luckily, there’s no need to fight with or be mad at yourself (or others) about it. The fact is that at some point most of us got more comfortable getting our guidance, approval, and love from outside ourselves. The beautiful thing is that your own inner guidance – whatever you like to call it – will never go away. And it can never be silenced!

Principle #2 for Self-Love Practice:



continued

Make Your Inner Guidance Your Highest Authority

It's time to open to your inner guidance again and learn to trust that living your happiest life comes from making those inner inklings your highest authority. Your inner guidance knows all the answers you need, no matter the question, challenge, or problem. It's always talking to you about how to get from where you are to where you want to be, and about how precious, lovable, valuable, and worthy you are!

No matter how long it's been since you've tuned into your inner guidance, the *moment* you turn your awareness within with a willingness to connect with it, you will have access to messages, inklings, intuitive knowing, support, love, and assistance of all kinds!

To get started putting Principle #2 (Make Your Inner Guidance Your Highest Authority) ask yourself these questions and write down your answers even if you're "sure" you're "just making it up":

“What has the Universe been trying to tell me?”

“If I wasn't scared, what do I know it's time for me to do?”

“What is my soul calling me to know?”

By the way, even if you just jot down your answers on a piece of scrap paper – the power really is in writing it down.



Principle #3 for Self-Love Practice:



Offer Yourself Kind Words and Kind Actions

Think about the kinds of words you use with people you love, especially with a best friend or when talking to a young child. “Hi sweetheart!” “You’re awesome!” “Great job!” “You’re a good kid!” “Nicely done!” “You got this!” “I love you!” “I’m so proud of you!” “You’re such a dear!” “Thanks for making me laugh!” “I pick you!” “I’m grateful you’re in my life!” “Bless you!” “You’re so good!”

Feel what happens when you read those. They feel good! Children love to hear those affirming messages, *and you still have a little child inside you*. We *all* still have a little kid inside us that loves to be seen, appreciated, and talked to with those same types of kind, happy, uplifting words.

You can choose to start saying kind things to yourself, even if it feels unfamiliar, silly, or weird. You can choose to say kind things to yourself even if you don’t believe those things (yet!). As you move forward on this journey to loving yourself in bigger, bolder ways, decide today to stop waiting for others to offer you kind, affirming words, and instead start offering them to yourself.

Read the below phrases as if talking to yourself. If it’s easier, you can imagine you are talking to a younger version of you. The intention is simply to be kind to you. Put your hands on your heart and speak these words aloud to yourself.

Say:

“Hi sweetheart...”

“You’re awesome...”

“You’re a good kid...”

“Great job...”

“Nicely done...”

“You got this...”

“I love you...”

“I’m so proud of you...”

Principle #3 for Self-Love Practice:



continued

Offer Yourself Kind Words and Kind Actions

“You’re such a dear...”
“Thanks for making me laugh...”
“I pick you...”
“I’m grateful you’re in my life...”
“Bless you...”
“You’re so good...”

Along with using kind words, Self-Love Principle #3 guides you to take “kind” actions. That doesn’t always mean actions that “feel good.” Sometimes they are the same, but sometimes they are different! There are “real life” things that must be done. Taking *kind* actions will help you get to those things because your inner guidance knows where you are, where you want to be, what you need to do, and the best way to do it.

In addition to the loving affirmations you just said out loud, a beautiful way to put Principle #3 (Offer Yourself Kind Words and Kind Actions) into action, deciding which actions (or non-actions) are kind, is by using others as your template. What action would you want your child to take? Which action do you wish your best friend or spouse would pick? If they were in the same circumstance as you, which actions do you wish they would choose to be kind and loving to themselves?

After thinking through the above questions, ask yourself:

“IF I chose to be kind to myself, what do I need right now?”
“What is one kind action I could take right now?”

Now follow one of your answers!



Principle #4 for Self-Love Practice:

Practice Self-Compassion and Self-Celebration

When something bad happens to someone else, we show them compassion; when something good happens to someone else, we celebrate them; when something bad happens to us, we're often hard on ourselves; when something good happens to us, we downplay it.

Principle #4 (Practice Self-Compassion and Self-Celebration) remedies this soul-squishing habit with this simple guidance: when you experience a situation that feels bad in any way, it's time for self-compassion. If something feels good, it's time for self-celebration.

There's a simple way to put this principle into action. When something painful or difficult happens to someone you care about, what kinds of words do you use with them? Maybe, "I'm so sorry that happened," "If you need me I'm here," "I'm sorry sweetheart," "I love you," "Is there anything I can do?" "I'm sorry you're hurting," "I'm surrounding you in big love and light," "That really sucks," "What do you need right now?"

And with your actions maybe you'd let them tell you about the situation and not judge them for it, or maybe you'd just be present with them giving them space to feel however they feel, or give them a hug or a squeeze on the shoulder, or text or call them, or just sit quietly beside them, or ask them what they need.

To practice self-compassion, use those same words and attitudes toward yourself when you experience a painful, depleting, or difficult moment.

Are you feeling emotionally exhausted? Are you being self-critical? Are you worried about something? Did you mess something up? Are you mad at your body?

Principle #4 for Self-Love Practice:



continued

Practice Self-Compassion and Self-Celebration

Anytime you have a painful or challenging day, place your hands on your heart and say to yourself some of the compassionate phrases you might use with someone else.

Say:

“I’m sorry you’re feeling bad. I love you.”

“What do you need from me?”

“I’m so sorry sweetheart. You’re going to get through this.”

“May I give myself the compassion that I need.”

What about when things are going well? You completed a task; you’re having a good day; you’re proud of yourself for completing a project; you know you’re a great mom/friend/spouse; you got through a tough day, etc. Place your hands on your heart and give yourself some kudos!

Say:

“You rock sweetheart!”

“Well done!”

“I’m really proud of you!”

Principle #4 for Self-Love Practice reminds you that moment by moment you can practice either self-compassion or self-celebration – the same way you offer compassion or words of celebration so generously to others you find precious, valuable, lovable, and worthy!



Principle #5 for Self-Love Practice:

Hold Yourself Accountable and Let Yourself Off the Hook

To practice self-love, you must be willing to balance holding yourself accountable with letting yourself off the hook.

Sometimes the most self-loving thing is to hold yourself accountable by taking action steps. We're humans and we need to get things done – even if we're nervous about it, or tired, or in the pouty little kid mode that I can get in that says, "I just don't *wanna* do it."

Are you procrastinating on something you feel is important? Are you sticking your head in the sand about something your inner guidance is calling you to do? Are you doing less important tasks while the big, important thing is staying undone?

Those are wonderful guideposts telling you it's time to hold yourself accountable and *take some action!* Get started with baby steps. You can do it! If you know it's time for you to hold yourself accountable, but you feel scared or stuck, try any of these:

1. If there's a project you're procrastinating on... set your phone timer for 10 minutes (not more!). Do something on that project, but only for 10 minutes.
2. If someone you loved said to you, "I'm procrastinating, and I need your help. Will you work with me to figure out what I can do to get started?" Imagine your inner child is asking you the question. What would you say to her/him/them?
3. Close your eyes and say to your inner guidance, "I think I'm supposed to hold myself accountable right now. How can I do that? What is my very next small step to do?"

Yes, we need to hold ourselves accountable and get things done!

Principle #5 for Self-Love Practice: *continued*

Hold Yourself Accountable and Let Yourself Off the Hook

And... I promise that sometimes the self-loving thing to do is let yourself off the hook regarding something you've been trying to energetically wrestle to the ground.

Have you had times when you've been taking action steps, but nothing is working? Or you feel energetically beaten up from all the effort? Or you're having to make yourself do something and it all feels clunky and hard?

I call that "mush doggie" mode and it's exhausting. It's also a sign that it's time to let yourself off the hook. Not forever. Maybe not even for long. But for some moments.

If it's time for you to let yourself off the hook, but you're not sure how to do that, here are a few ways to practice letting yourself off the hook.

1. If there's a project you're spending more time and energy on than you know is balanced or healthy... say aloud, "Done is better than perfect," and bring it to closure... *imperfectly*.
2. If there is something you're only doing because someone else thinks you should be doing it... consider letting it go completely (yes, even if it's a job or relationship).
3. Bring to mind something you know you messed up. Take a big breath and say, "I don't like that I messed this up, but just like everyone, I'm doing the best I can."





You're doing beautifully! You're already enough! You're already doing it right!

When you utilize the 5 Principles for Self-Love Practice you'll be living The Intention of Love by transforming your own life and helping uplift everyone else too. Amen.



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