

Self Love

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As I began to love myself, I found that anguish and emotional suffering were only warning signs that I was living against my own truth." Charlie Chaplin

Self-love might initially seem indulgent or dangerous. No one wants to be a fool. No one wants to be a narcissist. Yet foolishness and narcissism seem to come from lack of judgement and deep inner imbalances, not self-love. The more you truly love yourself, the less you need the world to proclaim how great you are. You already know you are OK. The Charly Chaplin quote above speaks to internal problems arising when we live in self-judgement and self-abandonment, not the presence of self-love.

If you grew up in an environment where you were loved and treasured, self-love might come easier to you. If you were disregarded as a child, or even abused, self-love will feel like a foreign language. However, foreign languages can be learned, so don't despair.

Write down how you felt in your family upbringing. This might feel painful or it might feel like you're blaming people. However, this exercise is not about blaming others or your circumstances. It's about you and finding out what negative messages you might have internalized.

Eg. I felt special on my birthdays and when I got A's on my report card. Most of the days I felt in the way because everyone else was busy. I felt I needed to be good to be wanted. etc.

Now write a letter to your own inner child explaining your family culture and what you want your inner child to understand about itself. You might need a separate sheet of paper.
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Eg. Dear inner child. You are right. You grew up in a stressed family household. I believe your parents loved you in their own ways, but they weren't able to focus on you the way you wanted them to. You ended up believing you are a bother and you were not good enough. I am so sorry. It wasn't that you weren't good enough. Getting frustrated and sad was not a sign of your ungratefulness, those were normal reactions for a child.

Think of affirmations that would help you. Sometimes you start with a statement of what you no longer want such as: "I no longer want to believe I'm bad." You're halfway there! Now turn that statement into a full-on positive statement: "I believe that I am a good person."

Affirmations are great ways of finding a new language. I love writing them on sticky notes. Start with 1-3 affirmations and read them daily. Once you believe them, move on to new statements.

My affirmations:

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The mirror exercise.

Looking at your own face in the mirror and telling yourself that you are lovable and worthy can feel pretty overwhelming. However, it is a really powerful exercise that can help you overcome years of negative programming. Try it out. Admit it if it seems silly, but only the most courageous persevere. You are that kind of badass, right?!

Plant yourself in front of the mirror and tell yourself anything in the vein of:

"I'm worthy of love and regard. It's no longer okay with me that anyone treats me with anger and disrespect, least of all myself. I'm starting by showing up to that truth right now. I love myself."

Using "more and more" can make it more possible for our subconscious to agree with new self-statements. Try it out:

"More and more I believe in myself. More and more I am courageous. More and more I love and respect myself. More and More I accept love and compassion. More and more I am grateful for my own loving heart."

The more you accept and love yourself the less you will be looking for approval and the easier it will be to live in your own company.

"You're always with yourself, so you might as well enjoy the company."

Diane Fürstenberg

"To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself." Thich Nath Hanh