

# SELF LOVE NOW



54 ANSWERS TO THE SAME QUESTION

CURATED BY  
Simon Paul Sutton



SELF  
LOVE  
NOW  
→

54 ANSWERS  
TO THE SAME QUESTION

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RELOVEUTION  
PUBLISHING

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**With Gratitude**

To Dara Stara, my passionate green eyed dream and partner in shine, for all that you be and your unconditional love. Lu Lu Paste for allowing your loving HeART to make this offering more colourful. Malcolm for bringing this idea to completion with your gentle creative presence. Marcelle for encouraging and supporting my initial spark to make this happen. Trina for choosing this idea to gift your energy to help us compile the writings. Alan and Michelle for helping me proof read. To all who said yes to this beautiful co-created loving offering. To all heARTists who sent me your HeArt work, shine on. To anyone I've not mentioned, it happens! And to all who read, gift, and share this book around the world. Together Everyone Achieves More.

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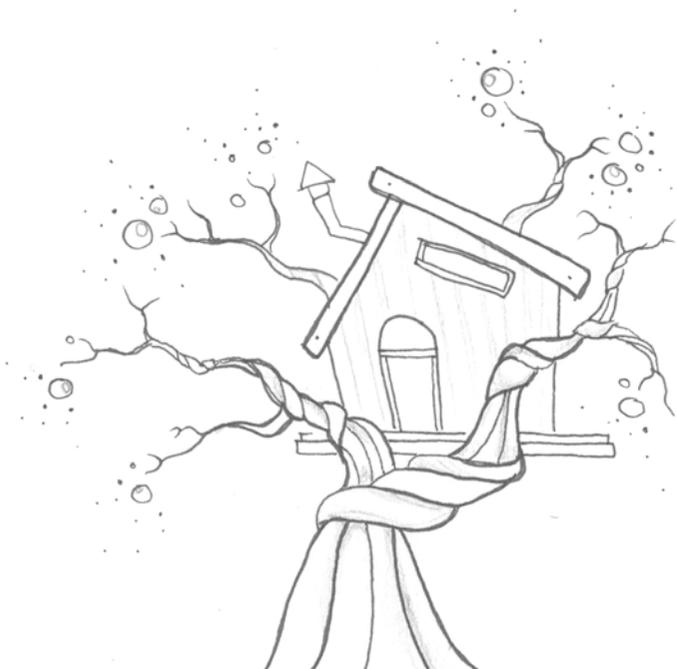
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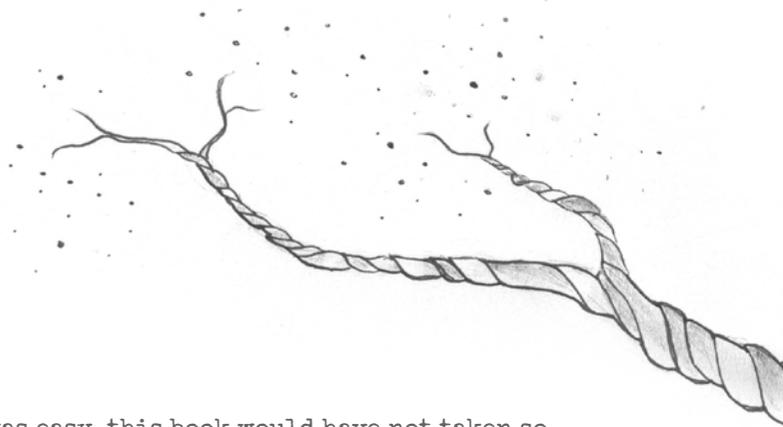
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# Why this book emerged into existence



If Self Love was easy, this book would have not taken so long to come to life. Years ago, Simon posed a spontaneous question into a sharing circle on an event. “Why is Self Love so important today?” and he was profoundly moved by the answers of those in the circle, so much so that over time that movement continued to birth an idea of a book of diversely selected co-creators expressing their individual answers to the same broad and important question. Inspired by the vision, he started cutting into the soon to be discovered jungle of obstacles. Editors coming and going, designers changing, artists and writers dropping short.

A simple idea grew from a molehill into a mountain. And at the end? There was you - reading this book. Perseverance won. How could it not, since on the path to loving ourselves we are over and over called to stretch into that which wants to hide, run away, contract or withdraw.

As Simons partner in shine, I saw him struggle and persist over two years. I witnessed him loving himself by tending to a vision that was bigger and beyond just him. The very act of service to a greater experience kept him going and this in itself is such a meaningful metaphor for what this whole book is about. The paradox of Self Love lives in loving the self by extending into others. Into the greater self, the interconnected whole.

This book is an experience, a snapshot in time, floating words pointing to the ever unexplainable. Let us open it randomly, when we need a breath of inspiration, when the loud voices in our heads are threatening to take over, screaming the good old ‘you are not enough’ litany. Let us find the stillness under the waves of this motion picture we call life. Our true selves are already love. In a strange and magical way, we cannot love the self, for we are in essence already way too close. But what we can do is fiercely loving all that is. Loving the one who feels far from home, the one who doesn’t know how, the one who stumbles and falls, holds on or gives up.

Simon has produced “Self Love Now” a book based on the principles of the ‘Gift culture’. This Gift culture thrives on the idea of circulating resources and is connection and heart based rather than fear and competition driven.

We cannot put a fixed price tag on love. Any amount would be too small. With this in mind; where possible we also offer this book in the spirit of the ‘Gift culture’. Which means we are not the ones to determine the price. Rather, each reader will decide for themselves what amount feels right, clear, and fair, reflecting your financial condition as well as your feeling of value and gratitude. This opens the space for more creative ways to exchange and serves those who may not be able to give anything at this time and just receiving this gift is what they need.

Therefore, we offer the book as a Gift, trusting the generosity of the readers to support us in developing and sharing more content in this way.

**DARA STARA**  

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Expressions  
*OF LOVE*



I was baffled by the question at first. I'm all about love. My whole life is about love: Family love for my children, romantic love for my husband, love for this beautiful planet, love for my friends and the Loving Kindness of Spiritual, Universal Love. The Love of God.

But Self Love? Oh my word!

I've been pretty bad at that over the years. I love to help others. Writing this is a service to Simon and to those who read the book. It's my gift...to others. But what of my gift to self?

I'm still recovering from burnout. I push myself to exercise and I beat myself up for eating chocolate. I can't say no to friends and acquaintances, even when inside I just want a long, hot bath and an early night.

I'm a giver. I like to serve and do for others but what I do for myself is woeful.

For many self-aware, awakened souls on the path of expanding consciousness, Self Love is the last frontier. After you've exhausted yourself loving everyone and everything else, you come to realise the value of Self Love.

It took years for the penny to drop: Self Love is not selfishness. Self Love doesn't mean always putting yourself first. It's not even self-will.

So, what is it? I had to dig deep.

## Expressions of love

It's looking after yourself with the Loving Kindness of God. The loving kindness with which you'd look after others.

I'm going to stop beating myself up for not attaining somebody else's standard of perfection or beauty. All is in Divine Perfection and Beauty.

When we look after our own needs through Self Love and self-responsibility, we stand autonomous. Without jealousy, without fear, without anger without war. We no longer blame others for our demise. When our own needs are met, we can go on to give to others. When we look after ourselves, we don't turn to loved ones to prop us up. We're beings of Love, within and without. When each of us has mastered loving the world, others and ourselves, then humanity will be in much better shape.

"Charity begins at home," so the saying goes. Love begins at home, too. Start with Self Love and build outwards. We might just wipe out jealousy, hatred, fear and depression in the process. If we're going to work in fellowship, collectively as one race - The Human Race - then we need to start loving ourselves as well as others. Loving ourselves, doesn't mean pretending it's all good. It means accepting our perceived flaws and loving ourselves in spite of them. It means forgiving ourselves. We're human, after all.

Come to a place of acceptance, warts and all. Then focus on what you have that's good.

As the old song goes, "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative and don't mess with Mr In-between". •



Without real Self Love, one is left with conditional self-approval. If I like and approve of myself, conditioned on being successful, being ethical, being vegan or low-carbon or liberal, then I am implicitly judging those who (in reality or in my perception) are not these things. I am holding myself superior to them, and I am reinforcing the division that generates so many of the world's problems.

However, Self Love is not just another thing you are supposed to do right. Can you love yourself through an effort of will? Can you do it by trying harder to do it? Can you love anyone more by trying harder to love them? No. The love is there already, but it must be awakened or unblocked. This awakening usually happens as a gift, an experience, a revelation; something from the outside.

Self Love is important for humanity too. First because the violence that we do to ourselves is mirrored in the violence we do to each other and to nature. Secondly, because part of Self Love is to embrace the purpose and gift we are here to enact. Self-rejection includes the rejection of our unique and sometimes culture-defying gifts and brings us into conformity with the world as it is. Self Love gives us the confidence to be free of that, and act in the outrageous ways the world needs most right now. •

A little heartfelt reply: until we can love ourselves completely, including our pain, sadness, anger, loneliness and frustration, we cannot love anyone else completely. Until we can love everyone else completely (this does not mean we have to be near them, physically), we will not create peace in the hearts of every living being.



When the wave of love is all that we know - our entire world will be healed, and we will awaken to something new in a never-ending journey with love.

I believe that everyone deserves to be loved. Not just the nice people. Everyone. Especially those who don't know what it's like to be loved. It's always been important in every moment of humanity and will always continue to be. I feel that in some dimensions of time we just don't know yet that Love is calling us home. It takes a while to wake up to that, and that's okay too.

However, in this moment, we are part of the revolution. Every day I put my hands on my heart and say I love you.

Every time I feel discomfort or even if I remember when I am feeling great, I say "I love you" to myself. If I feel I cannot love myself I hand it all over to God (divine consciousness) to work through me and do it for me. Then I know that every action I take is perfect and I am doing exactly what I am supposed to do.

I am learning to take my time and step back to love myself before reacting from a place of pain. I'm learning to meet my pain with love and help deliver it to light. I send blessings of love to others. I take time to choose things that are most loving for me. I make choices, however challenging, to detach physically from people who are unloving. I can still love them from a distance but then I can re-focus on myself, the one who feels unloved. •

The modern story of the world appears to be one in which people are too preoccupied with Self Love as they attempt to fulfil every one of their desires. A more careful examination reveals that the seemingly greedy actions are really desperate attempts to fulfil unmet needs of connection, intimacy and unconditional love.



To know ourselves, we must step out of the performance mindset that has been ingrained in us since we were too young to remember. We must step outside the conditioning patterns generated by the conditional love we are offered and fully validate ourselves as humble and imperfect beings. Once we do, we won't need the approval of others to feel good about ourselves. Self Love means recognizing and being aware of our needs and taking appropriate actions to meet them, which will change depending on each specific situation we encounter.

Self Love is a constant learning process. It means knowing the reasons why we do things and being aware of as many of the impacts of our actions as possible and checking in to make sure that our actions are in fact meeting our conscious needs. Once we have been down this path, we will begin to understand that Self Love is also about loving others.

For at the end of the day, love is a relationship, and while having a good relationship with yourself is important, it will never be enough to meet all our needs as social beings. Enlightened self-interest is when we recognize that by loving others, we also are loving ourselves too. •





Self Love is so essential right now for humanity as it is the 'saving grace' that will birth us from one paradigm to the other. Learning how to comfort, listen and counsel ourselves is the crucial medicine that will create and sustain real and meaningful relationships.

Without Self Love we are doomed. Just look at our past (present) models of relationships and marriage. What we see is endless compromise, people pleasing, half-living and lots of heartache and angst. With Self Love we can nurture, comfort, bless and inspire ourselves to reach for higher choices and more healthy environments, that sustain our safety, integrity and creativity.

Self Love is the barometer of integrity and innocence. In other words – clean living. There are no secrets, manipulations, guilt trips or blame, well, there might be a bit of that in the beginning, but with some good ole Self Loving, all of that will become a thing of the past!

This doesn't mean we become selfish, independent and self-important. No, not at all. It simply means we remember that we need to comfort, heal, bless and care for ourselves and one another in a beautiful and real way. The deeper we love our true self, our innocent essence, the more sincere and joyful our love for others will become.

Usually in relationships when we feel hurt by the other one we often seek ways of getting back by punishing them for not taking care of us properly. With Self Love, a huge dollop of humility and the earnestness to reach beyond our conditioning and mean-spiritedness, we will instead turn inwards, to the goodness of our own hearts for consolation and wisdom.

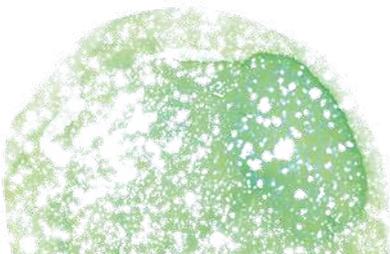
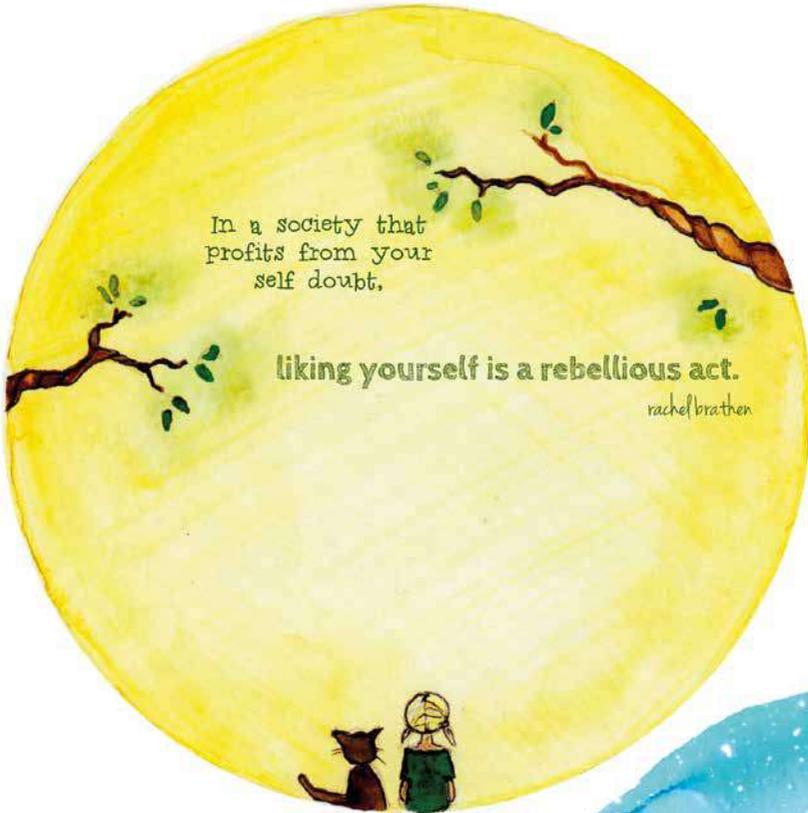
Another way Self Love will change the way we conduct ourselves in relationships is in the area of abuse and dishonour. The more we love ourselves the more we will hear the voice of our own innocence asking for safety and wellbeing. Slowly the exquisite inner voice of goodness will start to speak with a kind-hearted rightness to make choices that will keep us safe and in a trustworthy environment. Without Self Love we will carry on getting abused and hurt, staying in co-dependent relationships built upon the entanglements of control and fear.

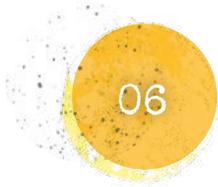
Self Love, consulting our innocence, plenty of joy and fun, along with not taking ourselves or the other one too seriously are the crucial ingredients for birthing the New Paradigm.

Then we can ask ourselves the questions:

- **How much more can I love you?**
- **How much more can I love myself?**
- **How much more can I love us?**

And get some really sexy answers. •





I battled with a lack of Self Love from an early age. As a teenager, I turned to drugs to help me cope with it. This only made things worse, and after a massive binge at 17, my dissatisfaction with myself was so intense I slipped into self-loathing and attempted suicide.

Nearly twenty years later I can honestly say that learning to love me has been my biggest challenge. I used to do so much 'work' on loving myself and could still never quite get it 'right'. I just never felt like I was 'enough', or that life was either.

By a miracle, all that changed five years ago when I came across The Dalai Lama's interpretation of what love is. He defines love simply as "the absence of judgment," and that's had a profoundly healing impact on me. It means when I stop judging others and myself, Love starts!

I've found this so freeing. Freeing because it's helped me to stop judging my truth and live more in alignment with what excites me most - my bliss.

I believe this is the most important thing anyone can do to be the change they wish to see in the world at this crucial time for humanity, and the most important thing we can teach kids. This, for me is the main reason that loving ourselves is so essential. It's not an easy road. I've experienced the path of bliss as a purifying flame that challenges all my most limiting beliefs, demands many brave decisions and burns everything that's not joy right out of my being.

I stumble often, but I have never felt more alive, more viscerally connected to the awe-inspiring reality of living in a universe of infinite possibilities. •

One day a girl walks out of her job and says “I’m going to take another path. I don’t know where it will go, but it has to be better than the one I’m on”. And so she does.



At times the path is precarious, there are pitfalls, hurdles, challenges and deeply dark moments. But there are also moments of great wonder and happiness. Sometimes she feels very sad when she taps into her deepest feelings and sees a world where so much harm is taking place. Sometimes she feels completely overwhelmed with the enormity of all that seems to be wrong around her. Sometimes she feels that no matter what she does to help, nothing will change.

But it will. And it is. It’s just that it’s not always easy to keep on loving herself, so sometimes she needs a reminder, a little nudge to say I love you and every moment gifted to the Earth makes a difference. It may be that we won’t know just how huge that difference is, and that is where trust comes into it. And she cries, for trust seems a long way away. And she says; “I choose to trust, come what may.” And in trusting, she has chosen Self Love. •



### Self Love?

So, who is ‘doing’ the loving and who is ‘receiving’ the love? To love myself, do I have to see my ‘self’ as separate from the experience of love? Where is the source of love and to where is it flowing?

I look in the mirror, into my eyes and feel many things that could be Self Love. Something wells up from my inner space, from the area around my heart. The clearest expression that comes to me when this wave rises is the presence of compassion.

What is compassion? It is the opposite of judgment. It is the very antithesis of self-evaluation and self-loathing. It has nothing to do with ‘Self worth’, because

that is just another judgment, another more positive evaluation and another separation. Compassion is not about comparison. It accepts everything. Need, desire, want, craving, addiction and anger. Even complete uselessness and apathy.

Everything is included in the realm of being, when I am in a state of compassion. From this place I am constantly reconciling with my demons, my expectations and my fears. It is a permanent state of inner forgiveness. I accept that in the battle with the self, I am always at the beginning. Always starting fresh in each moment.

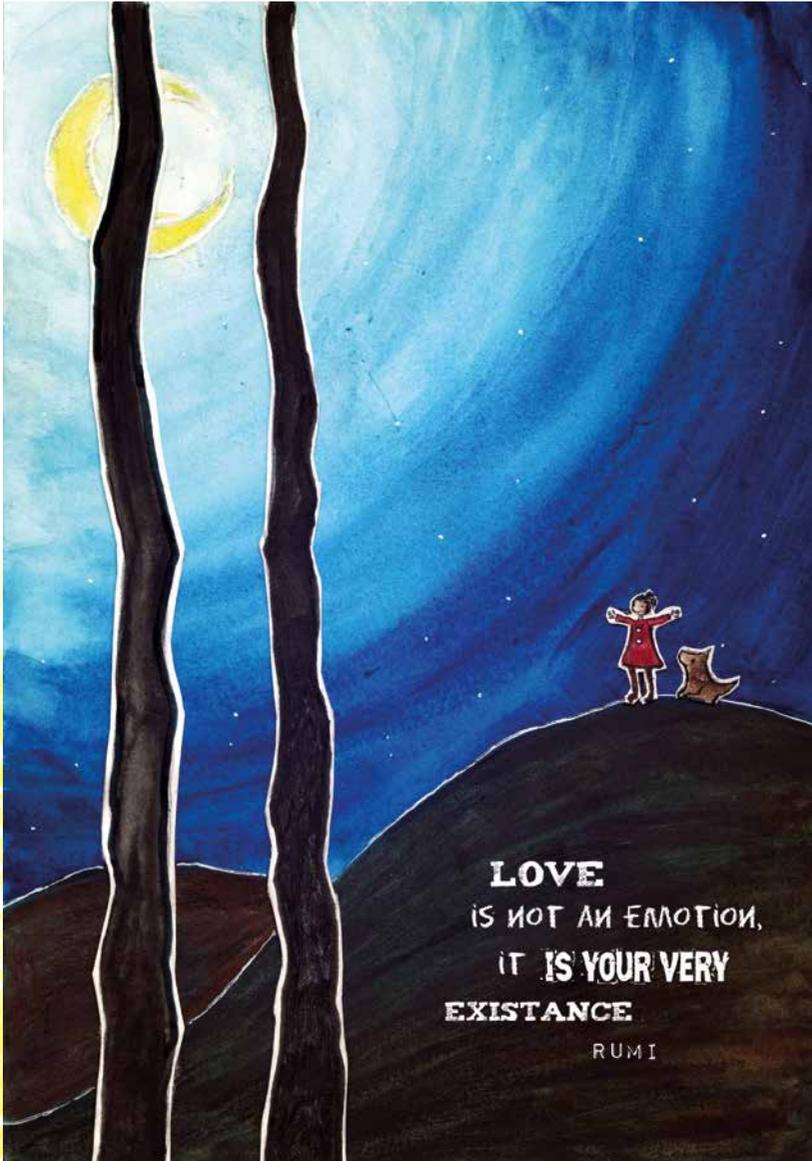
This wellspring of compassion is without limit. It is an infinite resource. Like sunlight, it just radiates and pours forth. My challenge is to part the clouds, to evaporate the blockages and the screens.

The sun of love is always shining, but our lives become overcast with the shadowy fear of the future and regrets of the past. The world is mostly a very un-compassionate place. It is a place of shadows and fears and distrust. A world of judgment, expectation and evaluation.

Set in this paradigm of competition and comparison, aggression and domination, (If I want more, someone else must have less), everything is seen as finite, as limited and as something to possess and protect. To express Love into this world, as a current of light energy, flowing on a wave of compassion, is to demonstrate the abundance and infinite nature of life itself. When a person feels my compassion, they feel the love they have for their own inner child, their own inner vulnerable being. This ignites the experience of love within them. Not as a recognition of their 'worth', but as a realisation of their own capacity for compassion, for forgiveness and non-evaluation. This transference, this current, that links us in our hearts, is the healing force that is so desperately needed for Humanity at this time. It is the energy of creation itself.

We are made from and belong to the Love force. It is in all of us all the time. Even in the crazed, the cruel and the disturbed. All we see is the various masks and all we can do to change it, is to flow more love from our hearts to others. To express and demonstrate compassion to all those we meet.

Love is a current, and when we are connected, we transmit automatically. Self Love is plugging into the flow that's always there, so it can pass to another. •



**LOVE**  
IS NOT AN EMOTION,  
IT IS YOUR VERY  
EXISTENCE  
RUMI



Self Love makes our soul work sustainable; it allows us to fill up our bowls to be able to continue giving to ourselves, others and the planet. Self Love creates the language which determines the way the world interacts with us; it's the reference we project of how we'd like to be approached. It's our inner source of abundance that needs time, space, stillness and silence to be replenished. It's heading back to the "primordial womb" to be nourished, held and re-charged.

Self Love is a practice: a daily undoing of conditioning, a moment by moment chance to rewrite our internal script and a repeated opportunity to gently hold our vulnerable self. It's an ongoing commitment to strengthen the relationship with ourselves - our longest love affair.

My own heart once shared with me the following story:

"After spending eternity in the river of life we are born onto its bank and curiosity drives us to observe its fish of different colours, sizes and shapes. Very soon we are taught that some of these fish are "good" and some are not. We see how most humans react positively and feel happy by the fish they label "good". The opposite reaction occurs when they encounter fish that are labelled differently. With no other reference we mirror this behaviour until it becomes our own. Over time, the amount of fish increases and decreases randomly until it becomes exhausting to celebrate a particular fish, feel sad or angry about the next one, get excited by the one that follows and so on. We focus on identifying and classifying fish and respond accordingly. However, occasionally life will knock us on the head or provide us with an unexpected -possibly overwhelming- and almost always mind-blowing, body-shaking, heart-opening experience and we're given a bit of perspective. Surprised, we are able to see the fish without the labels and more often than not, enjoy their uniqueness. At one point we even feel the River itself: its flow, path and unwinding. In the appreciation of the River something shifts in us, something dissolves: our very sense of identity disintegrates. We feel eternity in our skin, in the air we breathe and in the rhythm of our heartbeat."

Self Love is remembering we ARE the River and consciously choosing to sit on life's riverbank to gain perspective and a renewed sense of beauty. •

If we deeply think about it, every action we do and every word we say is the by-product of our Self Love. If all we gave ourselves was love, we would never deliberately decide to harm ourselves, be it with words or actions. Constant Self Love creates a flawless dynamic of high vibration interactions, with ourselves and others. Self Love brings health, confidence, trust, a clear mind, happiness and a lot of other beautiful adjectives. For when Self Love is a priority, there is no space for resentment, grief, intoxication, anxiety, unworthiness or fears. These feelings will be here and cross our mind, yes, but Self Love will make them pass and fade away.



Think about it: if you truly love yourself, you will never allow feelings like anxiety or unworthiness to come to your life and make a nightmare out of it. For Self Love will naturally show you that you simply cannot let yourself down. Letting yourself live in fear or resentment will put you down, and Self Love is the tool that will tell you to stop.

Self Love is THE key to what one calls “a happy life” and a whole world of Self Love would bring a great balance to our actions, our words and our relationships.

Bring that to the concept of oneness... and you have a whole dynamic of relationships based on love. If I love myself and we are one, I am surely going to love my friends, my neighbours, my colleagues and anyone else I interact with, for I see me in them and vice versa, and Self Love once again guides me to not do any harm to myself or others.

I believe Self Love is important to humanity at this time and any other time, because it is the source of all interactions, and a world of love-based interactions is in my opinion a world that has great balance; a world that can think clearly and can peacefully gather, exchange and act, all out of love. •



When the sun illuminates the hills in front of my house every morning, that pink shade of liquid gold paints my view as I open my eyes. Before I am fully aware of “what is happening”, I just rest there, in that perfect moment, in the magnificence of Creation. Remembering myself as part of this omnipresent dance...

*If I love the World, this life, wholeheartedly, fully, boldly,  
with unequivocal commitment, with no hesitation, no holding back,  
if I remain - unconditionally - in love, awestruck, innocent and faithful,  
the Creation surely will find a way to love me back,  
and it already does, with fragrant flowers, lush waters,  
birdsong and pomegranates, the face and voice of the Beloved,  
everyday mysteries and sunrise and coffee,  
as much as I receive, as much as I can, as much as I allow,  
the Beloved loves me in a thousand ways.*

The world is spinning faster, it seems and feels. I, it's like the walls that make up the physical world are melting everywhere I turn. A multitude of realities are starting to show up from behind the veils of illusion we have been dwelling in, as the familiar walls, structures, even natural-laws of the world I've been born into seem to be crumbling at an overwhelmingly fast pace. Nothing makes sense anymore.

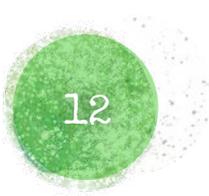
I repeat to myself,  
*I am at Home no matter what...*  
*I stay with myself no matter what...*

Self Love is so important at this time because it grounds me in the simplicity of my daily, human needs and the beauty surrounding me. It connects and weaves me with life and the invisible from a place of trust and faith, as the world I have known dies before my very eyes.

Self Love allows me to be a good host to a myriad of emotions and experiences that rise from being a witness to a major shift of times, so I can remain a sane, conscious participant at this sharp evolutionary edge of the Earth and humankind.

Self Love enables me to be with what is, to transmute challenges into the gold of learning and healing, and to keep offering my gifts in service of Life.

And finally, Self Love is how I show up in the world and how I relate to the world. This wild, courageous, bold woman that I am – whom I love – is learning to stand her ground and to take her seat, comfortable in her power and guidance, willing and courageous, inspired and moved by love. And this is the best way I know to serve. This is a labour of love. •



Self Love is essential at this time in humanity because we have spent way too long offering up our bodies, hearts and minds to countless life experiences that actually do not serve our well-being.

We are so conditioned and practiced at not loving ourselves that the only natural result is a collective human consciousness in profound pain.

Even in countries that look relatively peaceful, where there is no outright war such as in my country, the United States, there is still widespread suffering as evidenced by homelessness and crushing debt, widespread racial tension, high divorce rates and countless people who don't deeply enjoy their daily work.

## Expressions of love

We only know pills, alcohol, money, shopping, TV, sex (porn), and sports as convenient distractions to our self-imposed angst. Self Love is the only way out of this nightmare.

Even as a relationship coach who works with couples, I know the essential foundation that a successful relationship must be built on is an individual's healthy relationship with self.

Self Love is the recognition that I am already complete and whole, regardless of my relationship status or the size of my bank account.

No one can make relationship magic with another, until they first create relationship magic with themselves.

My relationship with my girlfriend is only successful so far as we are both willing to take full responsibility for our own self-care. When we love ourselves enough to consistently do what feels deeply nourishing, we empower ourselves to show up to the relationship full, with the love at our core overflowing.

Having an intimate relationship without the neediness and grasping of co-dependency is an exquisite experience.

It begins with the courage to say no to what doesn't feel deeply healthy and nourishing and consistently saying yes to what does. That doesn't mean I always feel good, but I do get to walk in alignment with my heart's deepest truth. I do my best to then let Life take care of the rest. When I stay busy simply creating amazing things for myself everyday by simply loving myself fully through every choice I make – or at least most choices I make – I find Life does an impressive job of showing up with just more amazing.

Indeed, Self Love is the only way to fly. •





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### What do I know about Self Love?

I know that for me Self Love is the thing on which everything else in my life sits; relationships, career, projects, health and well-being, my sexual and spiritual life. Finding love for myself shifted my life from being something I muddled through to a magical adventure that I am in wonder of.



With Self Love I mysteriously had the courage to embark on projects I previously wouldn't have dreamed possible, I was able to ask for what I wanted with men, breaking very old patterns and experiencing romantic and sexual intimacy on a scale I'd not known before. Suddenly I would see and feel love everywhere and find myself able to sit and get a bit giddy and high just to experience it.

*How do you get this Self Love stuff?*

Oh, it's easy!

You just stop hating yourself.

Ok, so it might not be easy, but it is most definitely doable. Julia Cameron has a powerful exercise in her wonderful book, *The Artist's Way*, where you write something very positive about yourself 10 times, then listen and write down the blurts which spew forth. For example, if I write, 'I, Lucy, am a beautiful person and a talented writer', a pretty loud voice in my head will start to scoff and scream, 'Beautiful?! You are minging!' 'Talented? You are lazy, disorganized and your ideas are bonkers!' and on and on until I have to say 'oi, bitchy, can you quieten down, please.'

It's a wonderful and terrifying exercise to realize what an utter bully you are to yourself but by bringing it into awareness you can do something about it. You can retaliate, refuse to listen, laugh so that this relentless dialogue starts to become a source of amusement rather than a sinister saboteur.

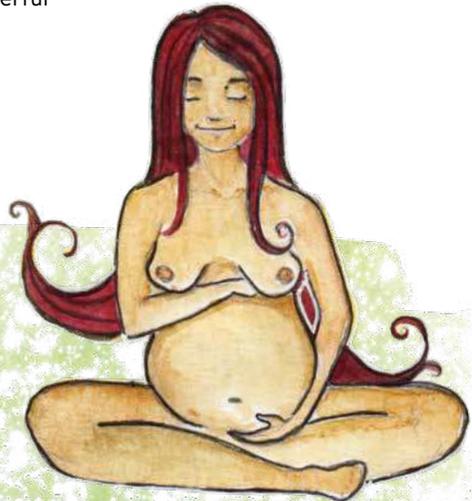
The day I looked in the mirror and smiled and said, 'hey you,' it was a biggie. I saw all those 'imperfections' I'd berated myself for over the years but there and then I felt overwhelmed by a fondness for them and the sum of their parts. There was my wonky moon face with lines from smiling, eye bags from staying up too late, a smile that was twitching and itching for adventure, lips that liked kissing, there was my pear shaped body with the soft bottom for sitting on and the arms that were always up for a cuddle.

There I was in the full-length mirror of a café toilet.  
I smiled, "hey you".  
Suddenly.  
Finally.  
I felt like home.

Why Self Love at this point in humanity?

Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." If we wish to see more love in the world we cannot hate our very selves. We've seen what fear, greed and hunger for power can do, now we must see what love can do.

We'll be amazed by the results,  
they will exceed even our most wonderful  
imaginings, but this love must start  
with ourselves. •



The more time I spend slowing down and swimming through the abundance of mother nature, the more the sense of connectedness / communion / unity / togetherness / oneness - whatever you want to call it - I feel coursing through my bones. Using my oft-too-much-used left-brained rational thinking, I come to the conclusion that if I am connected to all of this deliciously stunning beauty, then I too must be connected to all of humanity at any given time.

What is my wish not only for myself, but for all humans and sentient beings living on this earth? It is one of empathy, love, for taking time, for relishing quality, and for supporting myself and all others on earth to live a healthy, vibrant, juicy, ecologically sensitive, expansive life.

Then I consult my heart and my gut - both of which KNOW that the state that humanity finds itself in currently can ONLY be brought back into balance by each individual practising Self Love first. Only by watering our own seeds can we expect to reap the fruits of our collective experience. •

Self Love helps keep the light lit, reminding me of my creature-hood and place at the table with fellow family. A collective forgetting of our holy nature has created a crisis for pretty much every other life form on this planet, of which we are one... precious indeed, but just one amongst many.



I am a free-range honeybee lover, educator, advocate and celebrant claimed by the bees, body and soul. I spend time in the bee sanctuary every day. A fragrant, tranquil mecca where I recalibrate and recollect myself, inspired by a congregation of thousands who have long been celebrating High Bee Church together.

Across the years, my time with these beloved winged ones has evolved into a mindfulness practice. When I am positive, present, respectful, appreciative, grateful, curious, observant, listening, reverent and loving, my relationship with them flowers. A sacred mutual kinship with the bees has revealed itself on its own terms, grounded in bee time and not governed by human agenda. To be around them and move amongst them in a deeply harmonious way is a core presence practice that also benefits all my relations outside the bee yard.

Self Loving is like minding a fire that extends its warm hands to all life, inviting others to do the same. It charges up the field for blessings to come, grace to appear, and prayers to be answered. It is part of our taproot and an antidote to the current drift and disconnect, evident in so many places and spaces.

When I love myself, I discover an essence that knows no borders from all the other selves with whom I share this hallowed earth. My life is lived in that mutable terrain where I (supposedly) end and another begins. Where otherness subsides into a consciousness of our interconnected vibrational awareness (the place we all really hang our hats).

Humans have fallen out of love with themselves in epidemic proportions. This is the source of so much sorry business on this planet, which distracts us from the peace and pleasure of our own company. This then influences what quality of compadre we will be, with everyone else. There is a massive forgetting that this is a benevolent multiverse.

One of the things that I experience frequently as I travel the world on this Sacred Path of Bee is what I call Mother Confessor-ing. I meet many (unbelievably lovely) people who often ask, in the most tentative way, things like this: Might it be alright to paint a beehive a colour other than white, as a welcoming, loving gesture to the bees? Is it okay to put their hands on a hive top to connect with the bees and ask permission, before opening a hive? They confess that they don't want to kill queen bees or use chemicals as treatments. They question feeding so much sugar water to bees and don't believe they are livestock. They ask if it is harmful if they don't harvest honey and struggle with the word beekeeper. They feel more like bee minders, bee stewards and, if anything, are kept by their bees.

I have the privilege of reflecting back these generous inclinations and tender-hearted preferences, which are so aligned with the pulse of life. I bear witness to people giving themselves the permission they always had to fall more in love with themselves, which then enlivens their creative, compassionate and reverent choices which benefit the bees and all our relations.

I believe love is the ultimate activism and the most potent of medicines and that it begins in our own holy hearts. We bathe the bees (and our children, friends, family and every living thing) with our essential goodness, entering a field that is beyond statistics, old patterns, generational wounding, dominant opinions, expertness, misunderstandings, fear, and a lot of the hopeless, overwhelming and seemingly insurmountable problems in our times. Our own Self Loved presence is part of a seismic collective shift back to sacred balance and firmer ground.

This year, we lost our house to fire. And the blessings that have poured like a libation into our lives since that epic offering have kept us on our knees with gratitude.

Houses and things (however treasured) come and go. But what is left and what never leaves, is love itself. It is the accumulated rivulets and streams of our self-loving nature that merge together into this strange and remarkable ocean of love. Illuminating a present which is alive and bursting with a humming sense of purpose and wellbeing.

Blessed be.

Blessed bees.

Blessed love. ●

Self Love is a beautiful concept. It is the gateway through which we can meet the being that is reading these words. You - the One experiencing your life, with all the abundance of emotion and feeling.

Self Love is how we can tap into the limitless wealth of love, power and wisdom that exists within. In today's society we spend so much of our time seeking this externally - and this is the root cause of our suffering. The external world is always changing. To place our security within something that is changeable creates the very insecurity that seeks further external love. When we recognise that what we seek lies within, we step out of a game of separation and move inward to begin the deeper journey.

Self Love provides the acceptance and validation we are desperately seeking - as we awaken the confidence, power and self-validation, internally. This allows us to begin an epic adventure! One where we can open ourselves up to the limitless possibility that is inherent to each and every being. Here we have the opportunity to express and experience ourselves in countless ways.

The limitations become illusions.

Self Love is critical during these times for us to bring an end to the perpetual state of suffering that has become a pandemic across the world.

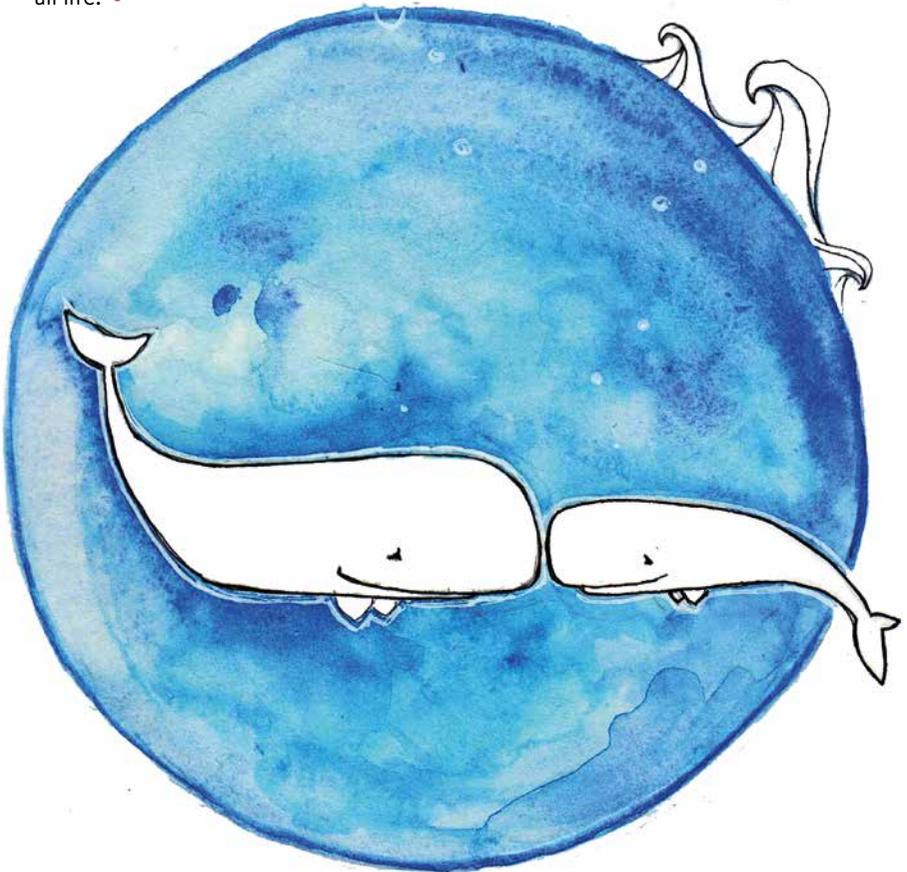
Self Love is embracing Compassion, Forgiveness, Beauty, Wisdom and truly knowing that this path liberates us on every single level - and dissolves the unhealthy attachments we have.

When we tap into our true potential we begin to

express this and naturally invite others to do the same. Similarly, any difficult experience we have moved through due to our self growth work on loving ourselves, inspires and empowers others around us to do the same. Self Love is Creation in its most beautiful form.

Additionally, Self Love is the gateway to loving All. As through the Self, we recognise our interconnection to all life. Here, we fall in love with the Whole and so begins our natural desire to be of service. Service to Self leads to Service to the Whole, for the Self and the Whole are the same. When we recognise the true beauty of who we are as a unique being we can truly begin to see the uniqueness and beauty of others we meet. This is the path to peace, and what our planet is calling for.

Fall in love with yourself  
and you serve  
all life. •



There is confusion over what Self Love is. Self Love is not narcissism. Self Love is deep down realisation of what we are - what we all are. And it is a yielding, a softening, an opening, an allowing, an inside-out compassion for the sweet, vulnerable being that we see we are.



When this love and acceptance appears, it spreads to all things. And that's why it is important. Once there is true Self Love it is not possible to separate it from the other.

In seeing the allowing we have for ourselves, we see that we have this for all beings.

When we cease judgement on ourselves, the same happens towards the other.

When we ooze care and compassion towards the body and mind that we are so familiar with then that spreads towards the other.

Here, we feel connected. Not separate. When we cease to feel isolated and separate from the movement of life, our need to protect relaxes. Our desire to connect and embrace increases. We expand. We emit love and acceptance in place of judgement and fear. Need we ask why this is important? Every being that is openly transmitting the powerful vibe of love is affecting the whole in a positive way. Love is transformative. Love is creative. Love is necessary for evolution. Fear is wrapped up in destruction.

It begins with us. Waking up to what we already are, instead of striving to be some perfect version of ourselves that may be accepted in the eyes of society, in order to make us feel special or better than others.



When Self Love has the space to arise, we relax and open to become all that we need to be in order to serve not just ourselves but humanity as a whole; we are able to hear ourselves and carry out what we came here to do.

With Self Love, we come into ourselves and connect with the movement of life.

I think, with Self Love we realize the angel that is within us; an angelic force that transcends the hard outer shell of the person that we are being in the world, the striving one, and instead allows the love we already are to flow without barriers. Depending on our personality, our characteristics, this is expressed in different ways.

Self Love always has and always will be important to humanity at any time we may find ourselves in. It is almost as if it is our duty, our job on this earthly plain, to surrender and allow it. As it descends from without, so it will arise from within. Without true Self Love, we are not free. Inside, we are in turmoil and struggle.

When Self Love is able to permeate our being then we can freely paint our true colours onto the universe. We offer our gifts without reservation, wholeheartedly and fully.

And in return, the universe bestows its lavish gifts upon us. •

The history of humanity is probably a few million years now, but does it really take a couple of million years to understand what LOVE is?



Love is probably the most undervalued word these days. We can see it everywhere. The word Love sells you junk food, a new car or a lifestyle which you didn't really need in the first place.

But take a moment to reflect on what the word Love really means, what it really involves as an experience and its implication for your consciousness. Love implies freedom, peace, joy, energy, wisdom, quiet mind, bliss, and unity. Try to feel that, imagine what it really feels like?

Love is in fact a spiritual experience.

Love is the highest teaching of all masters, but we can only spread love when we are in love ourselves, when 'we' are love. Just as the flame of a candle can light other candles, we have to start with our own love... We often look for someone else to fall in love with us, but the first person we need to be in love with is ourselves. Loving ourselves and feeling at peace gives us the self-confidence to live life from our heart - our own source of life.

When we are in tune with our source, everything is possible. We are in full control of our manifested universe. Our mind and thoughts are already a manifestation of that universe - they are not the source. It is very easy to be trapped in the loop of self-manifested thoughts and patterns. The only way to go closer to source is to dive deep in our hearts and the easiest way to stay there is to feel love in that space. To love our own heart, our own source.

Reality is a creation of our mind, and our mind is a manifestation of our heart. Think positive by loving yourself first, everything else will follow. •



Imagine a cup that is filled with only a little water. The water represents love. If we try to give water to others when our own cup isn't full, it will soon become empty. We will end up feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, drained and/or used. Oftentimes we then expect somebody else to fill it up again, or we move towards the bottom of the downward spiral that keeps us stuck in judgment, blame and victimhood.



Imagine the cup gets filled with water so much that it overflows. Now we are in a true and authentic space of abundance to give to others and it feels easy and joyful to offer gifts from our heart, because it happens naturally, without expectations.

At this time in humanity, the majority of people find themselves in the first version of this story, where the cup has only a little water inside.

Many of us were taught that fulfilling our needs is a selfish and therefore an unappreciated act, and that self-sacrifice is the way to go in order to receive the love that each of us so deeply longs for. Our society has adopted a deep-rooted belief that love does not exist in abundance, meaning that, if I love myself I am taking love away from somebody else. These beliefs have caused the world to turn into a place wherein which we feel unsafe to express our truth, meet our own needs and do what we love. This way of thinking has created two camps: those who practice self-sacrifice and those who unconsciously act upon their fears. Neither version is better than the other. Both have lost touch with their sense of self and are in a lot of pain that is difficult to express. The consequences of the suppression of our own authenticity are extremely detrimental: so many of us are at war with



ourselves, either trying to destroy ourselves or projecting fear, hate and anger onto others. The viability of our planet and the survival of our own race is at stake.

It's about time for a change.

- Let's start filling our own cup, not only to take back responsibility for our happiness and lives but also, to create a shift of an old and outdated paradigm and create a new state of balance in the midst of chaos.

Let's create a new belief: that love is abundant and that each and every one of us deserves it at all times.

To fill our own cup, we need to learn how to feel again. Our emotions are our inner navigation system and show us what situations, behaviours and beliefs feel pleasant, safe and joyful and which ones do not. Only when we know what we feel, can we identify our needs and start taking care of them by expressing them to others and asking for help.

For me, Self Love is unconditional self-appreciation. It is waking up to see that at the core of our being we are all blessed with an untouchable purity and innocence. Self Love is the understanding that all layers covering our core innocence are layers of protection created by an inner child that just wants to be loved. These are layers of shame and guilt and pain; coping mechanisms we have constructed to keep us safe in a world perceived to be unsafe.

Finding sympathy for everything that we are in this exact moment by feeling and comprehending the source of our pain, will lead us directly towards a state of inner and outer peace. •





Here's a crucial fact: If the self is not in wholeness, it is in conflict. Without the harmony that wholeness brings, different parts of ourselves strive against one another, pulling in several directions at once, wearing us down and wearing us out. We have habituated to this state to such an extent that it feels normal. It's something our culture instils in us: it has so deliberately turned away from wholeness that, as individuals, we no longer actually know for ourselves what it feels like. We struggle to feel the wholeness of our bodies, of the self, of our lives, or of the present moment.

Even when our intention is to move towards wholeness, our strategy often involves judging certain parts of ourselves or trying to fix them or get them 'right'. That strategy in itself puts wholeness out of reach, since it further divides us. The task of wholeness is the task of integration: we do not move towards wholeness by judging certain parts of ourselves, but by offering them the kind of unconditional acceptance that an outcast orphan craves. You see them clearly. You offer them love. Then you can begin to integrate them.

One of my friends and teachers, the energy healer Denis Chagnon, healed himself of cancer – but cautions that cancer never fully leaves the body. Once in a while he feels it reactivating. “And then,” he says, “I give it love, and it doesn't like that.” When we experience a 'negative' emotion, the onset of the flu, a headache or muscle ache, we tend to react with anxiety or irritation, and a determination to get rid of it or fix it. We treat the body like a machine, as though it were a meat

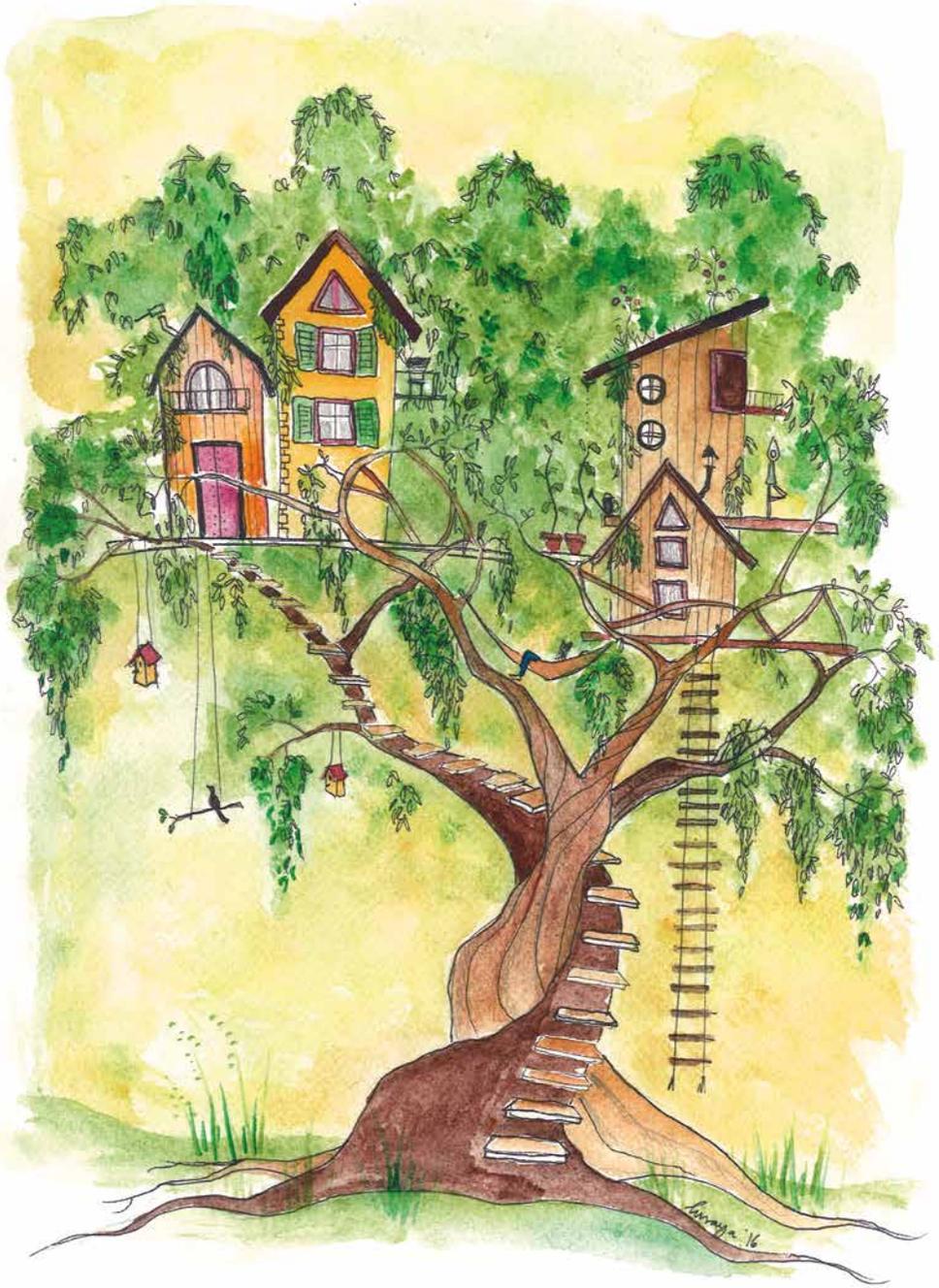
puppet with a brain on top. Crippled by such a model, we will always find the idea of wholeness more real than the experience of it. And if we cannot experience wholeness – if we remain divided in self-conflict – our relations with each other and the planet will also suffer from division and conflict. The evidence of such fraught relationships can be seen in every direction.

A full acceptance of yourself is an acceptance of all of the energies of your being, and a willingness to integrate them. The task of integration is made possible by the recognition that your body, like Gaia herself, is a field of intelligence. Fields in nature, such as those of gravity or magnetism, are borderless. Wholeness is borderless. It is also the only reality. All things depend on all things. Wholeness is inescapable. We can desensitize ourselves to it, but it is always there. Love is more than a mere emotion: it is the genius that dissolves our illusions of separation – from our own bodies, and from the world – and makes a life of harmony possible. And it all begins by offering love to the whole of one's self, however challenging that might be. •



*“Faith (LOVE) is an oasis in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking.” Gibran*

Self Love is holding your own hand in the early morning hours and sighing to the soft sounds of dawn, being perfectly happy just to be present with your breathing, with your feelings with your thoughts, with the comfort and discomfort of being alive as your heart rises and falls in your chest. Self Love is knowing that each moment of living is sacred and deserves your full presence and appreciation for the billions of interconnections that brought you into life and sustain you while you are here.



A few years ago, a friend was giving me a craniosacral session which triggered for me a deep memory of being in my mother's womb. I became fully aware how the creator and creation are inextricably connected. I was not "separate" from the experience of creating myself, as the cells in my mom's body danced with the life force that was building my body. I remembered feeling totally safe and happy and full of light, I could feel love behind the forming of every cell of my body. I was filled with a deep tenderness for my being and all of life. I remembered a time where all that was in my experience was love.

I believe that Self Love is the Foundation of all Loving... and that it is completely possible to re-establish the pathways to re-remembering biological love into our cells.

It's important that we deeply explore these pathways and support each other in the art of Self Love, at this time in Humanity, because the planet can no longer support a species that is not living in the deeper truths of Love. I feel big transformations are just ahead of us, I believe if we explore what is perpetuating the suffering we see in the world, we will find that it is a confusion and a separation from the integrated experience of knowing Love. This confusion maintains and creates imbalance. It's up to us to find and remember ways of loving self and other that can build foundations for Evolution of our Consciousness as a species. Our hearts are ripe for change, if we allow them to show us the way "of Love".

"We are on our way Home" The Beatles

I think one of the most radically Self Loving things we can do to "LIVE LOVE", is to be radically honest. To speak to our very real human needs for connection. In the acknowledging of my deepest yearnings, I have discovered pathways to a deeper Self Love.

Self Love is to stand naked in our deepest vulnerabilities even when we are afraid of rejection. Self Love is embracing the Self as we are in this moment. When we can connect emotionally, to these deeper, powerful truths, we discover all there is, is Love. •



Self Love is just a portal to universal love. It is the first – but most significant stop – on the journey. It is where the heart opens to yourself, then life itself and to everyone else.

For Self Love to blossom into universal love one must stay grounded in the rich soil of awareness, empathy and understanding. The understanding I speak of is not an understanding of the concepts, ideas, beliefs, views or stories of the mind, but of the mind itself. It is a simple understanding that the mind simply accrues and then constantly churns and chews on these things.

Perhaps the self - the 'free self' if you like - is that which resides before, beyond, between and behind all the ideas I have of myself, life itself and everything & everyone else. Beyond this is a pillow of peace, bliss and silence - or so it would seem when you become still. This is what millions discover in meditation, silence, gratitude, peaceful awareness, silent prayer or quiet walks. There are many doors to this self-realisation. This journey is a re-alignment, a reboot, a re-discovery - and a re-cognition then happens. Much 'noise' is let go of in favour of silence - water replaces much of the steam. Your anger - your steam - is just to let you know that the water is ready.

If you are at a point of pain, hurt, loss, tiredness or bewilderment then you may find it is time to go within. If you feel that in some way shape or form that you are going without something or someone then it is time to go within. By all means love the one you're with - but you must love the one within.

Don't get too caught up in the heaviness or worthiness of finding your 'self'. Many people spend a lifetime searching for something that never was - lost, simply not really seen, noticed or valued.

A word about Self worth, esteem and confidence. These things too will be re-discovered and bolstered, rather than fought with, as you embrace yourself, others and life itself.

In many ways we end where we start. This journey of Self Love and self-discovery is actually an invitation to realize you are part of the whole... one sentence in a long story... one leaf on a tree. Enjoy your individuality but also honour your oneness and interconnectedness.

It's perhaps worth adding a word or two about this material life: enjoy your form, respect the form, don't hurt the form or anyone else for that matter. But know that form, matter and material things are not the whole story. That can be a bit tricky to get your head around or to think about for exactly that reason. Not all things are that which can be grasped by the mind or consciousness.

Given this you may find - I certainly have - that the heart is a wiser, warmer place to make your centre than the mind. The mind is wonderful, but I'd rather sit in a sitting room or even up on deck rather than in a busy, bustling engine room. You'll find the mind is sharper, smarter, stress free and - in the main, at peace - as you live by heart.

Sing your song, spread your magic. Too much time is spent figuring things out and not enough perhaps on being, sharing, giving. Once you've done this self-seeking and inner healing within don't be afraid to share your gifts with the world. You, others and the world around you will not be enriched if you hang on to your gifts merely for your own sake.

A tip for each day: Adopt these 5 things: gratitude, awareness, acceptance, compassion and appreciation. They will bring joy and peace. Appreciation is the flower of gratitude and you will blossom in all ways from the blend of these things.

Sooner or later you'll hear what your heart has always been telling you: stop trying to be who you think you should be - become who you are.. •

“Loving yourself is as difficult as kissing your own lips”

~ Alan Watts



What are you taught about love? Are you taught to look outside of yourself, as in, what and who do you love and how can you do it better? Or are you asking the big questions, “What do I want to do with my life? What is my life’s purpose?” or simply, “Who do I marry?” and so forth. Questions directed outside your being, looking for answers in the world around you.

In our culture, we place great emphasis in externalising and directing our life impulse, our life energies - our Kundalini - outside of ourselves. Then there is more distraction! Porn, TV, smartphones and computers. You may have one in your hand right now. The problem is it only anchors a deeper separation and ensures the direction of energy turns ever further from the self.

Before, when the dark, cold winters came over northern Europe and the ground turned to ice, people went into the dark and into themselves. In Swedish there is a word for this: Självksam; it means to be alone with the Self.

This practice of being alone with the self helps you begin to love yourself. But how do you begin to turn the energies in a new direction, one you may have forgotten even exists?

This may be your first act of Self Love. Being willing to turn the energies and awareness into your Self, where gentle possibilities beckon discoveries of the unknown lands of Being.

Why is it important to love yourself now? It is not important, it is all that is. Until you love yourself, you have not met your Existence and without this, who is in the driving seat, running around the planet, eating this and burning that?

Unless you are willing to take the arduous journey into the Self, into the burning grounds, the charred grounds, the forgotten grounds, that which is shamed, that which sits on the edges of outside - uninvited, unwanted, and

turn your love to this land of self, bringing the presence of yes to all if it - then, only then, may you find these dark cold markers, as the almost eaten breadcrumbs, marking the way home to the source of your being, where you may remember who you are.

And only when you remember who you are, can you know why you are, and begin to live the true Dharma of your Existence.

And the way there is love, has always been love, and can only be love. And in the end, only you can do it. Love Yourself! •



We are living at a time of intense change and transformation individually and collectively. We are being asked to reflect upon how we've created a world in which millions of people go hungry every day and our environment is destroyed at a rapid rate. At the root of these issues is neglect and a lack of understanding our role in the larger picture of Mother Earth.

Environmental degradation, racial and social inequality, the rise of diseases such as diabetes and autoimmune dysfunctions are an external symptom of the internal state we are each creating within ourselves. It reflects a lack of love, honour and appreciation for the light that shines within each one of us. We are divine beings living in an earth suit made of flesh and bones so that we can have the experience of physical life and free will. Our purpose is to remember our true nature, to remember the magic, medicine and mystery that lives inside of us and radiate it like the Sun!

Self Love is so important at this time because it will heal the energy of competition, greed and the constant need for more. The constant itch to learn more, gain more, be more is a form of distracting ourselves from our very essence. The problem is twofold; at the root level whether through trauma or false beliefs picked up along the way, we simply don't feel good about ourselves and think we are lacking in some fundamental way. On the more superficial level, we are bombarded with information at every corner which distracts us from making the time to experience the True Nature of Being.

From a Chinese medicine perspective, we have lost touch with our Original Mind and allowed the Acquired Mind of society to overlay its illusion upon us. You will never feel complete, whole and happy looking out there. You will never experience love and bliss by acquiring more money, degrees or things. What's the cure? Look within first. There is no one that can validate the wonder and power that lives inside your soul. Only you can do this. Dedicating your time to practice meditation, yoga, qigong, or other mind-body systems that allow you to let go of the acquired mind and return to your original nature is the key. Another important key is forgiveness of self and others. It can be challenging to cultivate Self Love if we are holding onto guilt or shame about something from the past.

When we sit with ourselves and open the door to forgiveness of our mistakes, poor decisions, and critical self-judgments a new ability to have compassion and love for ourselves opens up. •





'Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.' Rumi.

We are living in a time where our home planet is being destroyed before our eyes. Environmental degradation, mass species-extinction, worldwide hunger and chronic human disease are on a rapid rise and so is the destruction of our planet's natural resources. It might seem crazy that we are destroying the outer environment which supports our lives, but when we look more closely we see that on so many levels we are unconsciously destroying our primary homes - the three vehicles in which we live - our very own mental, emotional & physical bodies. Perhaps once we nurture our relationship with ourselves and learn how to truly honour, love and respect our own vessels and thereby access a higher wisdom, then and only then, will we be able to extend this level of care and harmlessness towards others and the world around us.



Learning how to truly Love, honour and respect myself has no doubt been the primary theme of my life over the past decade, since going through a personal transformation process and freeing myself from the clutches of alcohol; a toxic relationship and life running on the low vibrations of fear and insecurity.

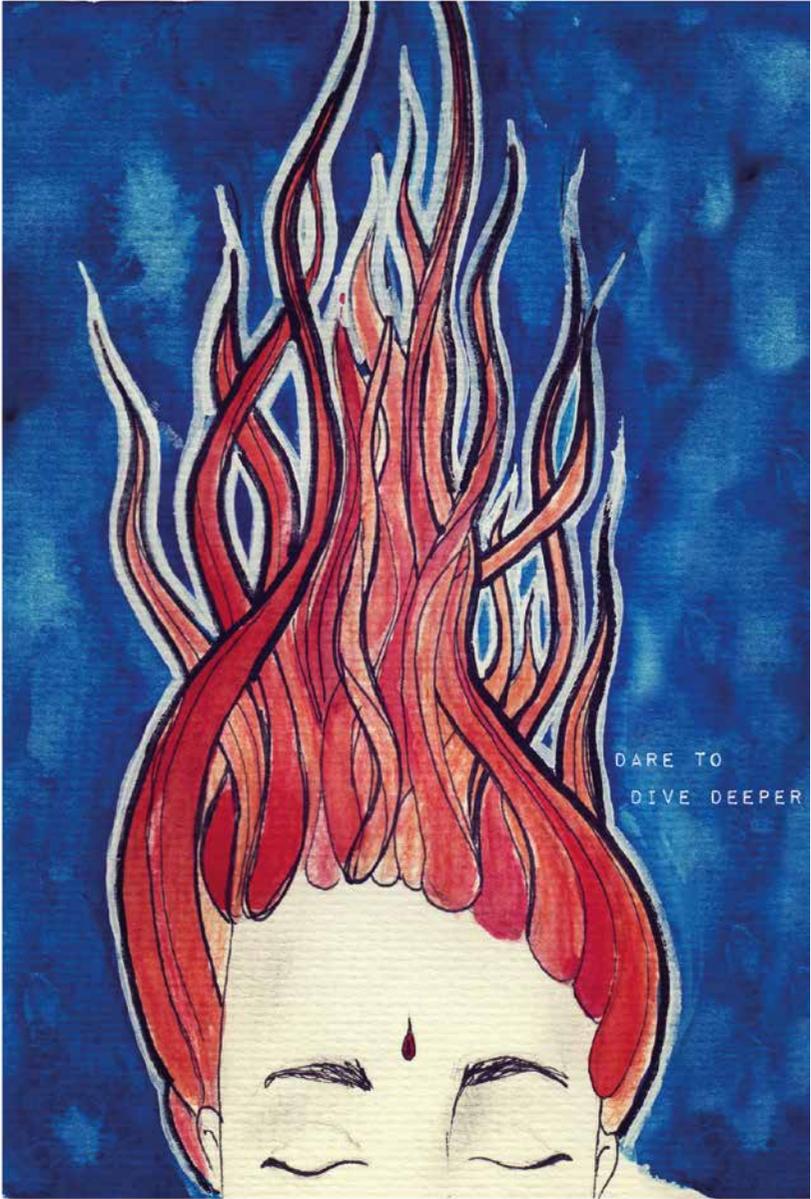
In 2006, I was nearly dead. I was a slave to my own crazy mind tricks and to an immature and very young personality, which did not have the emotional tools to cope with the great responsibility of what it means to Be fully Human. I was also a slave to a false set of beliefs and programs which were not my own at all. That crisis point where I found myself on my knees in the care of a wise shaman, ended up being my greatest gift and wake-up call. This brought me onto a spiritual path, where I had no choice but to surrender my life to a Divine and higher intelligence and do the painful yet necessary work on my personality in order to access the Pure Love which I am; which we are.

My self-destructive past was largely due to ignorance. Ignorance of what I am and of what I am doing here. Ignorance of my defects of character and my shadow nature. Ignorance of my Divine nature. Ignorance of Love.

Self Love is not always sweet and fluffy. Much of the time, self-loving actions are tough and deeply challenging, painful and messy, especially when it comes to gaining mastery over and disciplining our three vehicles. Sitting on a meditation cushion for hours and observing the mind, starting an exercise routine after years of laziness, changing our diet, giving up tobacco or facing the deeper aspects of our core wounding for example, are by no means fun or easy processes. More often than not, personal transformation is damn uncomfortable, but Self-Loving nevertheless and demanding the deepest surrender.

Changing my self-destructive behaviours and unhealthy routines took work, persistence and an unwavering commitment to Self Love - to the true light at the other end of the tunnel. I also had to humbly accept help, support and guidance from those who have successfully walked the same path before me.

Do we love ourselves enough to do the uncomfortable work, to walk through the doorways and sacrifice our perceived needs for a healthier future for ourselves and our world?



Are we brave enough to take a long and hard look at ourselves and humbly face our shadows and weaknesses?

Are we prepared to stand up in our relationships and put down boundaries instead of people pleasing?

Are we prepared to change our unhealthy lifestyles, cut down on consumerism, practice yoga or meditation daily, and overcome our addictions because we know it is good for us, even though we don't "feel" like it?

Are we prepared to dig deep enough through our unconscious layers, in order to discover the gold?

Over the years I have come to develop a deeply close and intimate relationship with this Divine intelligence. It is all-loving and compassionate, yet it seems closest to me when I am doing my best to serve life and keep my precious human vessel in the best condition I possibly can.

Self Love has become a lifestyle which I actively promote through my work as a way of being in this world. It is a set of actions that need to be practiced consciously on a daily basis in order for me to be and stay free, and I don't always get it right. And that's accepted.

Self Love is acknowledging the Truth of who I am and acting in accordance. Self Love is what is necessary in order for me to live a Life of value, a Life that recognizes itself as Life and can therefore honour all of Life. •

Imagine if we all loved ourselves so much, all the time, that we would be acting out of the best version of ourselves. What would that be like?



When we love ourselves, and don't judge ourselves, we then give ourselves the best fuel: physical fuel, psychological fuel, spiritual fuel.

Imagine having a little baby. Would you judge her for crying, for spilling something? What would you feed her? How would you treat her? Would you hold a resentment towards her?

To love ourselves, the first thing we need to do is really tune into ourselves, shed all the beliefs and indoctrinations that make us who we think we are, and really get to know what our selves want.

We do this by feeling ourselves. How do we really feel when we eat this instead of that? How do we feel when we talk this way instead of that way? When we speak or act violently, how does it feel? When we harbour a resentment towards some other, how does it feel?

When we do this, we realise that we feel much better, we have a much better quality of life, when we start to do things like forgiving ourselves and others for what we perceive as imperfections. We start wanting to give ourselves the best treatment. We start wanting to give others the best treatment because it feels good to us too.

Loving ourselves, as we come to understand when we start trying, is not a selfish act at all. As soon as we are selfish, we are actually not loving ourselves, because we are creating separation, we are putting ourselves in a different circle from the rest, and one of our most basic needs is connection to others. We cannot live on our own even if we tried. We need the Nature around us to sustain us.

All Self Loving acts include the other, as we realise that there is no difference between us and other.



Why is it important at this time in humanity? Violence is apparent all around us. People act out of fear, fear for their own Self, and this results in living in fear, a fragmented life where they keep yearning for the whole.

Some violence is apparent because we see it; people killing or being abusive with words, hurting others physically and emotionally.

Other violence is subtler, some “Spiritual” people can still be violent when they are creating separation between them and those who are not abiding by their “spiritual laws”.

Self Love is the opposite of all this. Self Love doesn’t know other, cause as soon as it does it realises that it is only hurting itself by creating separation.

Look at the selfless saint, Jesus, he didn’t choose who to Love, he just loved.

By cultivating enough awareness to start seeing our own thoughts that eventually create our actions, our way of being, we gain control over them instead of being controlled by them. Then we start coming to a more peaceful space that will benefit us, those around us, and slowly, the whole of humanity.

If everyone cared enough to start loving themselves, REALLY loving themselves, violence would cease to exist, and humanity would speed up its ascension to its original state of bliss. •





Self love is important because  
you die without love.  
Slowly but surely.

But love must be generated from within, and not something that only happens when we plug into an external source like food, drugs, behaviours and other people. We have the ability to generate unconditional love from inside. From trust and surrender. From compassion and wonder.

For me Self Love is about trust, acceptance and being in awe of what is. At a cellular level, we can contract or expand depending on how we are judging what is. Our cells have no idea who, what or where the judgement is from, but our bodies' chemistry changes regardless. When we are open, trusting, accepting and loving of whatever arises that is true Cellf love. In every cell!

The body gets to experience and see without harming its Cellf! When we feel unconditional love, free from the body, time and things; we heal. Get on the wave frequency of pure consciousness; let go and let God.

At this time, we have to put these high frequencies out into the Field. We have to raise our own vibration, which happens when we let more light in. We do this by letting go and meditating with crystal clear intention and attention. Beaming unconditional love out into the World affects others.

When we stand together we change the entire frequency of the planet. This has to be done collectively, we need to reach the critical mass. Then the ascension will happen effortlessly, we will all rise and bring each other up out the dark, painful, 3D energy into the light of 5D where suffering cannot exist. No body, no time no things. No judgement, no resistance, no competition, no lies and no agenda. Learning the intelligence and wisdom held in every single cell in our body. Learning how to release the past and all concepts, labels and programmes sets you free to love everything without the filter of our culture, family and the collective. Freedom. Plus, it feels amazing. You have your own internal pharmacy courtesy of your hormonal system. You are the pharmacist, you are the alchemist, you are incredible.

Your body is a Ferrari, but you are possibly driving it like a pedal car. You can release all attachments to the illusory world and become Supernatural. This is when you are a light being, transmitting and receiving only the high frequencies that serve you and the planet. This is love that beams like a bright star, needing no reason to be, just enjoying the magnificence of the Universe. This is self love. •



If we're not looking after our own needs then we will be too tired and distracted to show up fully, inspired and energised, for the glorious 'Nows' available in our lives. We have been taught to suppress and edit out of our lives anything that feels at all uncomfortable. We get a headache, we take a pill. When we feel our anger, anxiety or depression erupt in our bodies we've become accustomed to avoid it, reject it, numb it or even condemn it. This constant abandonment of our own feelings creates more and more pressure and stops the body's natural ability to discharge pain.

As it builds up and up throughout our lives, with all this suppression, life becomes increasingly hard to navigate. The accumulated suppression lodged in the body makes us super-reactive to the slightest fear or perceived injustice. It also exhausts us to hold in all that emotion and keep up the pretence to those around us that we're 'fine'. Most people

## Expressions of love

who don't engage with this process of turning towards their feelings begin to have emotional, mental or physical illnesses by the time they hit their 40s or 50s. We never consider that every time we avoid feeling our own uncomfortable feelings, we are, in effect, abandoning ourselves. We're saying "Jamie, your feelings are not ok to feel!"

Self Love is the opposite of this habit. Instead of suppressing or escaping these feelings we are now learning to turn towards the feelings in the body with curiosity. This willingness to feel our own feelings is Self Love and it massively helps our genius body's system flush out the huge accumulation of emotions that we all carry within us. The choice to not participate in this natural process, sentences us to live a totally disempowered life, reactively yanked left and right all day by the last challenging situation or person that crosses our path, yet turning towards these uncomfortable sensations makes us powerful. Suddenly we are using each episode as a way to shed another cup-full of constipated emotional accumulation, we are treating ourselves and our 'inner-children' with respect and welcome instead of rejection, and we are learning to be in touch with our own bodies and feelings so that we can know what we need at any given moment. It is each of our own responsibility to give ourselves what we need in our lives. But we can never even know what we need if we are not always listening to our senses and feelings.

If we cultivate daily inner listening and always have at least a small part of our consciousness turned inward, noticing, in touch with ourselves, then we will be in a position to meet our own needs, and only then be able to be the effective service to others. •





I believe it all begins within, there is no room for loving if you don't Love yourself first. That Self Love will open the doors to infinite Love towards everyone and everything that surrounds us. When there is unconditional Love there is no room for War.

When you Love yourself unconditionally then you are Awake, and you can see clearly. Everything becomes more vivid. You see more colours, you smell better, you feel without touching, all your senses are enhanced. Life turns into this amazingly beautiful paradise. You are in ECSTASY, you are High on Life. You become irresistible to others and others become irresistible to You. You fall in Love with the Universe and everyone and everything in it. You see the beauty in all the creatures and their different abilities become their Super Powers. You embrace diversity and are amazed of everyone's unique beauty. You're in Love and in a honeymoon phase for as long as You decide.

It is YOUR CHOICE.

I've fallen in Love many times or at least I thought I had until I fell madly in love with myself.

It happened the day I woke up to GRATITUDE. I couldn't help but be amazed at all the beauty that surrounded me and at the same time I felt overwhelmingly grateful for BEING. I believe this life is a GIFT, that not all have the chance to live, and when you accept and truly believe THAT, then you feel blessed for just having this amazing gift of being alive.

Your Heart is filled with Gratitude and you start nourishing with the most respect everything that IS, starting with yourself! then suddenly all that Love overflows and starts SPREADING, it becomes contagious. Everything YOU touch becomes Love because YOU are Love.

Tears of Joy come to me just writing about it, it is powerful to Be Love. The eyes of Love can only see the beauty in others, can only see Love in others. There is no judgement, there is no bad or evil, there is only Presence and It is always perfect because there are no expectations; you just want to Be and Feel what is, and what is, is magnificent. •

“Self” can be a tricky word to use, because for our mind that implies a direction, a destination, a purpose, a personality. When those ideals are removed, Self Love will know no difference between “self” and “Others.”

In Life there is no distinction, both self and other are eternally one and the same. It is the mind that created contrast and judgment towards others, which is in truth the perception we have of ourselves. It is the idea we have of ourselves, that separates and brings forth identification. Here, the word “self”, implies no persona, attached to nothing. As within, so without, fading the boundaries between outer, and inner.

We have been conditioned to believe that we lack something, believing that we won't be enough unless we have a partner to make us whole, and to be ambitious in order to achieve something so that our lives will be worthwhile.

Programmed to give - and undeserving to receive - giving out of our pure selfishness, so we can feel better with ourselves.

We have to leave all that behind, go beyond such beliefs, and come to see ourselves as we truly are.

Through conditioning we regret our past for the wrongs done. Trapped in our minds by guilt, we try to fix the past by projecting ourselves into a future fantasy.

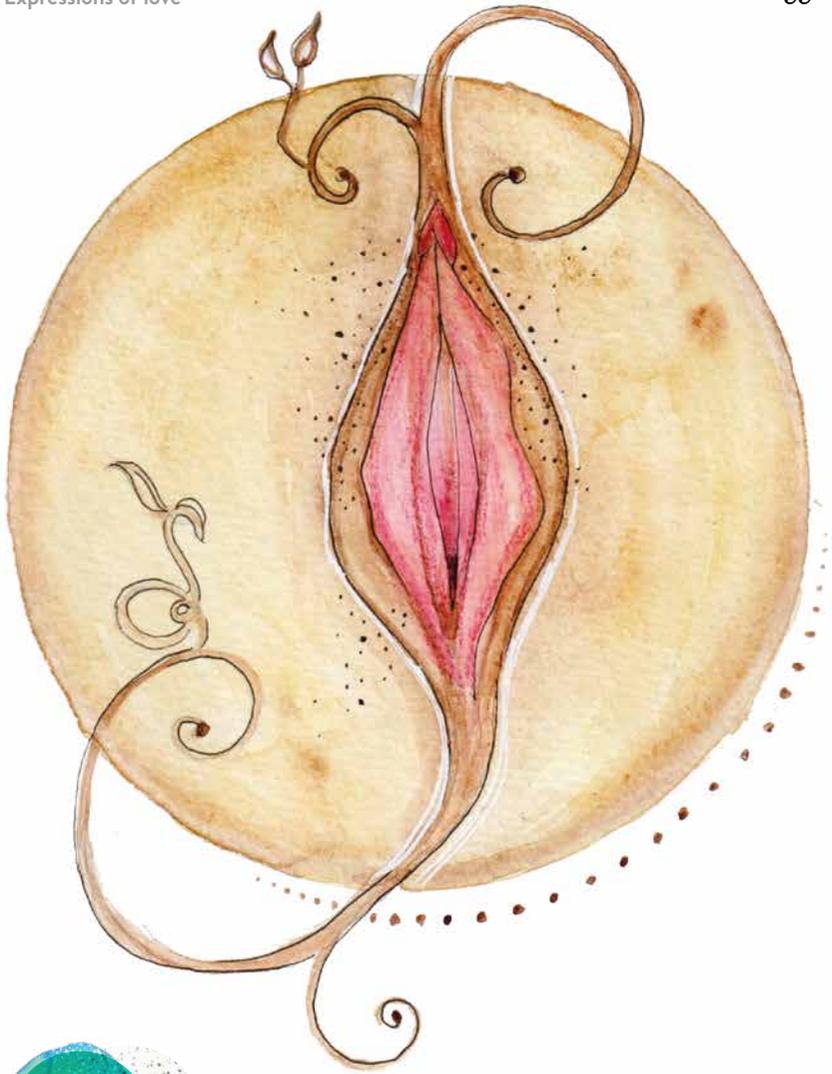
But what is there to forgive, if since childhood we are trained to react to situations and emotions in a certain way?

We can only know what we are taught. Mistakes made can become lessons learned. As awareness falls more on ourselves, we start to realize that there is nothing to forgive. A simple exercise can be to stop giving, and allow ourselves to receive. We overcome our pride through humility. The simple gesture using hands which signifies receiving, is open arms. That openness will allow Life to flow through us more lovingly, instead of resisting. Our hearts open up to the will of a higher intelligence, realizing that there is nothing to do, and no one to be. We stop acting a role that has been given to us by a society that promotes consumption, and separation through a strong identification with our lifestyle, personal drama (which includes emotion hangover), and our bodies.

Having a body doesn't mean we are the body.

A body is simply an organism, which happens out of the love that Life has for itself, and its longing for relation. To nourish oneself, both individually and collectively, means we can enjoy the fruits of the seed. The seed turns into a tree, as it takes sunlight and nutrients from the soil. The tree doesn't occupy itself with the thought of bearing fruit. Only when it is strongly rooted and has firm branches does it fruit of its own accord. That is Self Love. Embracing our own vulnerability, the fertile terrain of a loving universe. •





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One thing that comes to my mind thinking about Self Love is the physical act of making love with myself. I don't mean masturbating, no. Really making love with my body! Consciously touching and exploring myself, free from shame! Gentle strokes, or harder ones, how does my body like to be touched in this moment? Being present and really enjoying the act of Self Love.



For me the most difficult thing was (and at times still is) the shame. Nobody speaks about pleasing yourself, especially if you are a woman. I always thought I was the only one who did it and felt very weird. Guilt and shame were always companionship while “giving into my lust again”. Even at the age of 4 I felt that shame!

Re-claiming my lust and transforming it to a conscious date with myself is a big and beautiful step toward sexual freedom for me.

While my hands are moving along my body, surrounded by warm water in a tub with candlelight, I feel my breath and I am just here, now. Lust arises while I touch my yoni and I keep being aware of my bodily sensations. The goal is not to give me the best orgasm but to really be present without any expectation. If a wonderful orgasm is the result, great, if not, also great. If the orgasm stops being the goal I come to a state of presence, just experiencing the now fully, without wanting something better in future.

That really brings me in touch with myself and my sexual wishes, which I then also can communicate in the lovemaking act with my partner.

We live in a very goal-oriented society which also reflects in many people’s sex lives. The focus lies on orgasms rather than the lovemaking itself which makes it less satisfactory on a deeper level for me.

So why do I think that Self Love is so important to the world? I believe that the deep connection to ourselves brings us to a state of peace where we stop searching for fulfilment in outer circumstances. We will consume less, treat others with love, we stop competing and thus we will take care of mother earth.

If we want to transform the world we have to transform the relationship with ourselves. And since we are made out of sexual energy, I think a beautiful way to start is at the root.

Make an appointment in your calendar to hang out with yourself, have a date to love yourself physically! •

I arrived in this world with a great longing.  
At first I used it to get what I needed.  
Later I used it to get what I wanted.  
Then I used it to get what I thought I deserved.  
It hurts to be human.  
I am so grateful it hurts to be human.

Every day I try to look at myself with friendly eyes.  
Not with love, love is often too big.  
Friendly, like I would tend to a flower, a dying mother,  
a son, a... friend.  
And slowly, I arrive in this world. •



Self Love is vital for the future of our planet, our communities and our children, because Self Love creates peace.

When we truly love ourselves – all that we are, the light with the dark and everything in between – we exude love, we forgive, we feel compassion and we can connect from the heart with others.

We understand, from the place of Self Love, that there is no separation really: that each and every one of us is a spark of the Divine source. Because if we have journeyed the path of loving ourselves, we have forgiven and embraced ourselves and in so doing, we can do the same for others. We recognize that in fully loving the other, we are fully loving ourselves. This is such a liberation! And provides such a release of energy!

For it is when we deny the truth of who we are and try to suppress or repress, hide or mask certain aspects of ourselves, that we feel icky: out of alignment, unhappy, depressed or sad.

It takes so much energy to live out of truth. And when we remember who we truly are – LOVE – everything flows, and we are free to BE! This is exhilarating!

When we love ourselves, truly, we cannot judge or set apart. We don't act out of need or false motifs, because everything we ever wanted is already within. Self Love adds clarity, authenticity and integrity to our words and actions. No need to manipulate or control. Just allowing as we are.

For me, as a teacher and Priestess of sacred sexuality, Self Love applies very much to the

inner union of my masculine and feminine aspects. So much conflict – within and externally – is caused by a separation between these two. When they are brought together in divine union – inside – we can begin to live a life of peaceful, joyous co-creation that is sublimely flowing and ecstatic. And we begin to attract a life and relationships that mirror our inner harmony and love-making.

Self Love is like the snake biting its own tail in bringing us full circle to a sense of one-ness with all that is. It is the beginning and end of a life lived in truth. It is the healing balm to practically every illness, discomfort or malaise.

Just love yourself. Easily said, challenging to live. And yet the simple answer to a glorious life of flow and ease. •

“Love gives life to the lifeless.  
Love lights a flame in the heart that is cold.  
Love brings hope to the hopeless and  
gladdens the hearts of the sorrowful.  
In the world of existence there is indeed  
no greater power than the power of love”  
~ Abdu'l-Bahá



In order to understand the essence of Self Love, first let us investigate the true meaning of ‘self’. According to the dictionary, self means “a person’s essential being that distinguishes one from other.” However, from the spiritual perspective ‘self’ is not something that separates us from each other, but rather the essential element of our creation which is capable of recognizing that we are all created in the image of Divine Creator, therefore we are one particle of the whole, one reflection of the Sun, one drop of the ocean, one precious puzzle of the 7.5 billion pieces of the masterpiece of Human Collective Consciousness.

Once you recognize that Self Love cannot function in separation, as you are a spiritual being on a human journey and not a human being on a spiritual journey, Self Love becomes selfless. Even though your characteristics, your DNA, your existence is unique - as there is no other identical self like you in the whole universe - the essence of ‘self’ can be only understood through selfless love. It is the purpose of the self to identify its uniqueness and its

interdependence with the Divine Masterpiece. Therefore, we must deep dive into the vastness of the ocean, of that Divine Consciousness, which gives meaning to our existence.

Self is just like a GPS, it gives direction to the destination and love is the vehicle that takes you there. However, the GPS cannot function unless it is connected to the satellite, and the given direction cannot take you to the desired destination unless you start moving (flowing) towards it. All in all, Self Love requires divine guidance and constant flow of love to different destinations (beyond self) in order to fulfil its mission.

You might wonder: “If I am a drop of the ocean why am I dependent on the ocean?” Imagine the self as a candle. The purpose of the candle is to give light. But how can a candle light itself to fulfil its purpose? It is impossible. There must be an external driving force which can kindle the self into a burning fire consumed by love. Once our physical boundaries – body, mind, senses and emotions – are understood to be of service only for a short span of a mortal life, then the caterpillar (the limited self) within us can start its liberating transformation into a colourful butterfly (limitless self). The divine self is born out of the limited, conditioned self. Mortal becomes eternal. Self becomes selfless. Linear becomes multi-dimensional. Once the shift happens there is no way back. Flying has its new laws to abide and new responsibilities to embrace. This is the process of spiritual immersion of self into selflessness.

Our greatest challenge today is to recognize this two-fold paradigm and to shift our consciousness from our current ego-centric, profit-oriented, hedonistic, individualistic mind-set (caterpillar) into the recognition of the collective mind-set (butterfly), which leads us to the oneness of mankind.

When I talk about Self Love I refer to selfless love, which is actually the divine love towards the creator and all of creation including myself. When I realised that I am inseparable from anything and anyone else, the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly took form. The metaphor of the butterfly’s transformation for me represents liberation from the conditioned self into selfless expansion. The identity of ‘I’ or ‘mine’ became ‘us’ or ‘ours’ and the ‘purpose of my life’ serves the unity of mankind. This is the paradigm of selfless reLOVEution where we can finally live in divine truth as brothers and sisters of one universal family. This is happening. Can you feel it? I am you and you are me. This is Self Love. The love of creation. The ever flowing. The unlimited. The unconditional. The omnipotent. •



The terms self and love are somewhat contradictory because love is the only force that without fail will cause the self to cease to exist.

Love is such a transcendental force that it literally breaks through the boundaries of the self and carries us into connection with all that lies beyond the self. Physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Of course, giving that love to our own selves first is the prerequisite.

Because love cannot be held within us, without that very 'us' being first included. And so, our journey with Big Love, (and by that, I mean the love that transcends all boundaries to embrace every person, animal, molecule and atom in this universe), begins with us first learning to love the skin we are in. It's kind of like riding a bike with training wheels. You've got to start there, but also hope you'll move on to a wilder kind of ride.

As human beings I think we mostly don't really even know ourselves. Even when we 'love ourselves', it is not really ourselves we are loving. Our true self is so much more than just our body, or just our mind, or even the body and mind together.

So how can we understand how to love ourselves?

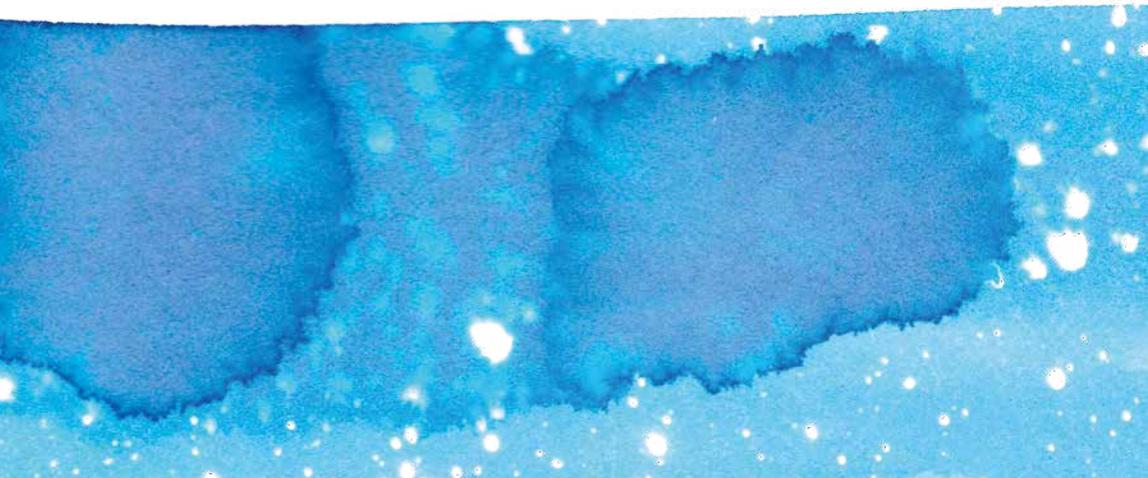
Is treating yourself to a glass of wine after a long day loving yourself? It may be for the body and mind, but probably not for the soul. To love ourselves we have ask ourselves, "Who am I? What is the purpose of this human life?" We have to know the self on every level; body, mind, spirit and soul.

Scott Peck in 'A Path Less Travelled' defines love as that which contributes to our or another's spiritual growth. I would agree with that. I try to love myself on all the different levels (body, mind, spirit, soul). For example; I love myself by resting well and eating healthily. But for me, the best kinds of Self Love always look from the top down. Starting with the soul, to the spirit, mind and body.

The acts of Self Love which are rooted in an understanding of my soul and its needs, are always the ones that leave me the fullest. Sometimes I sacrifice the physical for the mental, or the mental for the spiritual, and for me that works. I strive for balance in all, of course, but my priorities lie in the acts of love that nourish my soul.

My daily meditation practice is the number one. Trying to be of service to others, deepening my spiritual knowledge and expanding on my ability to stay centred and fully surrendered to a force greater than myself. These are the top. Then I also work on my emotional strength, my tools for integration, on making time to go surfing. Mentally and physically I rest well, spend time alone and in nature, eat well and always have time for a good chuckle with friends.

I believe all love is crucial for humanity. It is what we are here to learn. It may start with self, but it definitely doesn't end there. •





In order to understand the importance of Love we probably ought to get clear about what Love is.

Anyone who observes humans for a while will eventually realize that Love is the deepest desire of every human being on earth. As Stacey Morgenstern said, “Every act is either an act of Love or a cry for Love.”

Love, therefore, must be the entire point and purpose of the human experience. Isn't it ironic, then, that it is also one of the most misunderstood aspects of the human experience? How we misunderstand it!

We often speak of love as though it is a feeling, a sentiment, or a sensation. We confuse Love for affection, compassion, even intimacy. But these things are not Love. These are by-products of Love, certainly.

But this is not what Love is. Love is, quite simply, the recognition of your Self in what you see or experience.

It is quite literally Life, recognizing itself.

Isn't this why it is so easy to love our children? Life scarcely makes any attempt at all at pretending to be anything different. We can see that our children have our very eyes, our peculiar nose, our family's strange sense of humour. Children remind us easily of how connected we are with each other.

But it is quite another thing to love the Donald Trumps, the Hillary Clintons or even the Adolf Hitlers of the world. We may be charitable and say kind things about them. But can we recognize that



they are us? Can we see ourselves in them with equal ease as we do with our children?

When we understand what Love is, then we also understand the Love is no more or less important at this time of humanity than it has ever been at any other time. Is sunshine more important during the day than it is at night?

And what is Self Love, if not Love itself?

Because Love is an inside job. Love cannot be had anywhere if it is not had for Oneself first. It cannot be gained, only felt and experienced. Simple self observation will prove this to be true. The welling up that we feel when we see a particularly beautiful sunset, or when we think of the moments when our newborn child lay sleeping on our chest - that feeling did not come from the sunset or from the child. Even if our child were to pass away and be no more, the feeling would still arise when we think of him. Why? Because it comes from within us.

And the Love that gives rise to that feeling is the very essence of Life itself. It is the fulfilment of Life's desire to experience itself. When we realize this, we discover a profoundly simple truth: Love is the thing that powers life. This makes life ridiculously simple, because it reduces it down to one single celebratory task: Make Love the single greatest priority in your life. Learn what love is, where it comes from, how it is generated, transmitted, and channelled.

Learn to give yourself the Love that you have spent your life seeking outside of yourself. Discover yourself as The One for whom you have been waiting. Learn how you remove yourself from the experience of Love. Identify your fears, your dark and ugly pieces. Uncover your unloved pieces and breathe Love back into them by being with them and holding them dear, as a loving parent would hold a child afraid of the darkness. Because Love governs all.

Self Love, or the lack thereof, will govern not only your marriage, family and partnerships, it will also govern your income, your health, your creative expression, your quality of life and how well you sleep.

But above all, the very future of humanity and the quality of the life of your children's children is governed by your ability, today in this moment, to uncover and express yourself fully in Love and as Love. •



Two years ago, I came back to Israel, my root country. A deep calling from my mother came to return.



I was going back and forth from London to Israel doing active peace work for a few years. When I came back I realised that we were sitting in the end of the world. Bombs were falling above our heads; continuous missiles were sent over to my brothers and sisters in Gaza. I saw that the end of the world is real, or at least the end of a world.

Instead of running to the front line, creating peace walks, harvesting relations with my family on the other side, I felt a deeper calling to sit still and do all of that within. A clear voice came to me in this time which led me to sit in my room daily and listen. I saw that my automatic response was deep anger and frustration and I knew if I acted I would act from that filter. In the stillness of chaos I heard this; All the parts of ourselves which we have been shoving so neatly underneath the carpet for decades, all the shadows within ourselves which we are too scared to meet, all our deepest fears are being projected outside of us in order to be met directly. Sit quietly and meet them, greet them. Meet them within yourself and purify them, clean them and love them beyond measure. Then no matter what shape or form your act will be, it will come from this purified space.

I saw through a lived experience that if we are one big organism, everything is me and I am a part of everything. If there is pain in the wider world, there is pain in me which means I can meet that pain within and heal it. I am the filter which views the world. When I meet and face the terrorists and wars within, I am able to cleanse them with forgiveness and allow compassion for those parts of me. Then the filter with which I view the world is able to function from a new base of compassion because I now know what that feels like within myself.

The world is calling us. She is calling us to really be here. To be humble and remember who we really are. We are the world and we are a vessel which comes from Love. Our innate nature is good. To act for the sake of life, to act from of place of being in the full presence of deeply and wholeheartedly listening, is the greatest gift we can give to the world.



When I am there for myself, I can be there for my surroundings. Love is an action. It is an energy of life force which strings all together. A connection. Love melts the borders between wrong and right, love purifies and forgives. I heal the world by healing myself, therefore all my actions stem forth from that core root.

Love leads me to the unknown beyond the border and catches me in depths I did not know exist. Love for myself invites me into presence and from this presence I am shown that we all yearn for this connection that love offers. We all want to be seen, heard and witnessed just as we are. When I do this for myself, I can give this as a gift to others. This way I carve new mythologies and stories with each step I walk. I am not tied to the past. I walk in all times, past, present and future. I love so much that I can purify my past in this present moment and show up for the sake of future generations.

Love thyself. You are where all of life springs from. You are life experiencing itself. Create a new world whose religion is Love. It's time. Meet all those parts within you, call all of them home and give them a place in the body of you. As you walk with this body of love, you will witness the greatest gift of a miracle wherever you go, you will see fear transform into acceptance, a yielding, a coming back home.

I read a sentence recently which said that times are not getting worse, they are just revealing more and more. You know that when we are ripe to see something it shows up? Maybe we are ripe now? To mature, to take responsibly. To meet all the parts which want to be met and loved so deeply.

Love is art. Love is true presence. Love is learning what it means to be human.

I am aware of the feelings of guilt when we recognise the state of the world and the actions of humans. I can see how this numbs us. This realisation causes anxiety and disease. It's understandable that many prefer not to act

and stay where they are, rather than feeling the deeper sensations of grief. To witness the pain and honour it, to allow wisdom and strength to seep through is not always the easiest response.

The world needs us, we need us!

When we put this burden down, we recognise why we have come as far as we have, and begin to carve a new world. To accept what we are and to rise. To love ourselves so much despite it all.

When I love me, I love the world. When I see I am the world, I will do everything in my will of love to act for life. I think we're learning what it means to be human today on earth. Stephen Jenkinson says it beautifully, "We are here on earth to make sure life continues, and that is it!"

When I love myself completely, that part which keeps me away from life gets out of the way and I can let life come through me, and therefore keep it going. I think this is a sign of maturity. We're growing up. •



There are billions of people on Earth;  
I wonder how many people even think  
about the concept of loving themselves?

As I am writing this in 2017, it's not uncommon for Self Love to be referred to as a narcissistic thing, something often said of someone people don't like; "No one likes him at work, you can tell he loves himself." A conversational scenario that is easy to imagine within current human consciousness. Perhaps one day it will be more common for people to utter "You can tell they love themselves" and mean it as a compliment, but humanity is not there, yet. Many religions and spiritual practices teach loving some deity or master before the act of loving yourself, that "one" must be selfless and put others before themselves. It's therefore, no surprise that Self Love is commonly perceived as a guilty pleasure or a ghastly contemplation.

To openly discuss the concept of Self Love and what it means to humanity will begin to change the current perceptions and overall consciousness about the act of loving yourself. It takes courage to ponder the question "What is Self Love?" It begins a journey of inner dialogue and changes, something that is personal and intimate. This process is something that few people have time for because life seems to get in the way; there is always something else to do or someone else to take care of. When you give yourself the time and space to ponder Self Love and what it means to you, and what it may look like within your individual life, you begin to uncover the path of self-discovery.

Self-discovery is a beautiful gift that cannot be bestowed upon you by another, you must make

the conscious choice to explore it and give it to yourself, and when you do, it changes everything. Your perspective on life and how you interact with others will never be the same. It can, at times, be a lonely and challenging road, because Self Love and self-discovery are something most of humanity cannot relate to, it's thought to have no value.

I can attest that my friendship groups changed, I had to come to terms with not being liked because people didn't understand my changes. But I knew the value of the journey I was taking, because, in this space, I could see the importance of honouring, taking time, and looking after myself. One of the most wonderful things about this process is that it requires nothing from anyone else. You still have relationships, help or receive help from others, but everything is more balanced and healthier. You don't need others to show up differently to where they currently reside; you don't need to put others down or engage in gossip. You begin to communicate and treat others in a manner that you would like to be treated; you are willing to confront prejudices and judgments that you have for yourself and others.

That is why Self Love and indeed this book are important; twenty-seven men and twenty-seven women are taking the time to share their perception of what Self Love is and how it can affect humanity. It's an open dialogue, equally shared by both, which is indeed also something rare in today's world.

You will hear many opinions of what Self Love is along your journey, that to actually love yourself requires you behave in a predetermined manner that is collectively and socially accepted as "self-loving". But Self Love has no form, and there are no ten steps to guaranteed Self Love and self-discovery; that I can tell you is an illusion. Right now, in this moment, you have everything you need to love yourself. Regardless of your diet, your weight, your past acts, your current life situations. It's truly that simple, but alas, it may also be one of the hardest things to accept. •

In the space that rests between time, when all things move in slow motion, where walls begin to crumble and masks fall gently to the ground.

When all else fades away and I reach the very bottom of my being where I thought only a lonely darkness existed, Self Love came to me. She stood before me and opened up her arms to me. She invited me in and made me feel safe. Made me feel that who I am is enough. That who I am is loved. That I am never alone, even in my darkest moments, for She is there to hold me, guide me and remind me once more of who I truly am.

She is there, with the whitest of angel wings, to pick me up when I fall, to hold me when I am scared and take my hand when I feel alone. She accepts me unconditionally for all that I am. In the parts that I often think I should push away or get rid of or pretend do not exist, She always lovingly persists, telling me, "It's ok, you are enough as you are." When I've travelled to the darkest corners of my being and the world around me, She has always shed her light just enough to show me where I can put one foot in front of the next, and for that moment, it is enough.

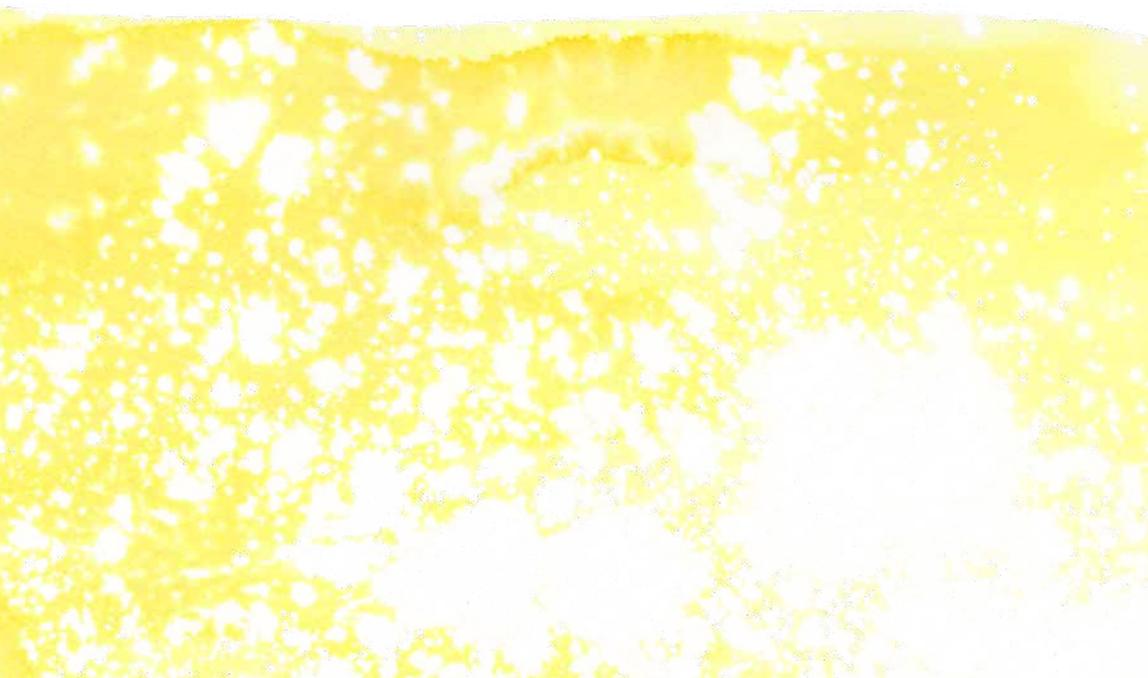
In a world that has forgotten Self Love, that has sometimes forgotten the pathway back to Her, and confused Her instead with things and achievements and ways of validating our worth through a kind of "doing" that does not feed our heart nor our soul—we meet an emptiness and a loneliness

that longs for home. And we believe that home is “out there”, full of all the things we have gained and attained and grasped towards us in hope that we will feel whole again. But the path that remains outside of ourselves, circumvents and turns a blind eye to the truth of our experience, is a path that only leads us further away from home — from wholeness.

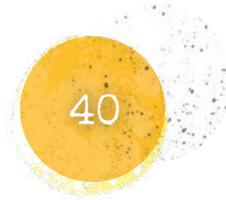
Self Love is the path that moves through us. That moves through not only our joys and our gifts, but our fears and shame, our sadness and our greatest vulnerability. Self Love moves through our very humanity and shows us, teaches us, that all of it is beautiful.

We are living in a time that has forgotten Her grace. That has forgotten that beneath it all and at the very core of our being, is Self Love Herself. And in our amnesia, we must climb through the dark, with eyes wide shut, and trust an inner vision that will guide us back to Her.

The path, I have found, is through the acceptance that who I am and what I am feeling now, is ok—is enough. When I walk the path with acceptance of the vast and varied terrain that is my being, I always meet Her, Self Love, with arms outstretched, waiting to bring me in. •



Because I Am all there is,  
and all there is, is Love.  
Because our very survival  
depends on it.



Because without Self Love I will never find the courage to set you free. And until I set you free, I will never be free – none of us will ever be free. Because only when I know how to Love me completely, do I know how to Love you completely too.

Because no one is standing in judgment of me for all the unloving things I have done – everything is ok, I really do deserve Love. Because no one ever was judging me except myself, and I based those judgments on beliefs that weren't real. Because I am perfect just the way I am – I Am awesome... and I really do deserve Love.

Because I was hurt so badly by a world that has forgotten how to Love. Because I have carried that hurt, beneath a veil of forgetfulness, for my entire life. Because that hurt is the only thing keeping me from living the life I have always imagined. Because that hurt will only be released when I allow myself to feel it. Because the courage to feel it takes true Self Love – and because it's ok, I really do deserve Love.

Because I can forgive myself for the choices I have made to engage in unloving action. Because I didn't know the Truth. Because I have the response-ability to Love Myself, as I always intended, before I got confused. Because I made the greatest act of Self Love by choosing to forget. Because I felt I would die if I didn't do something to protect myself from the pain I bore as an innocent soul – but it's ok now, I really do deserve Love.

Because the world needs some truly selfless action right about now, and true Self Love is the only truly selfless act there is. Because I was raised by other people who didn't know either, but it's ok, I know now, they were wrong - I really do deserve Love. Because the ability to Love is what makes us human, and everything is Self.

But most of all, because I am sorry. I love you. Please forgive me. Thank you. •



Self Love is calling now, to the depths of our deepest suffering where it consistently whispers, "Remember Me".

I hear the call of Self Love. It whispers from within and in my own despair it waits patiently, and while brushing my cheeks with tears it reminds me of its presence.

I drift away from Self Love and move with the world towards greater self-destruction. I wake to a dark, silent night where love is distant, and I am consumed by fear.

I look for Self Love in a story of separation, with a vague notion that I buried it in hatred and self harm. I moved away from love, taken hostage by worldly guilt and inferiority.

I am addicted to a daily dose of pain, the raining down of trauma, the storm, the ravage of relationship with false love, the drug, the sound, the sense of fracture immense.

Love felt torn away by your cutting words. That's all I heard. I repeated them to myself. Fear and blame suggested I'm not good enough and I hid from Self Love.

Within the rigid confines of anxiety, my inner world is in conflict. The brutal mark of survival, creatively numb. Seeking lost love around every known corner. I've been here before.

The past; love absent. Moulded by pain, repeating the cycle of conflict in the same way each day, each breath, each movement confined by wounds.

Humanity grows weary in constant battle. The wrangle of conflict makes Self Love unheard when competition between us is loud and within us deafening.

I fall, caught in a web of lies, my own and another's, as I crawl along the path of unmet needs and bleed in the hands of an unaccepting self-presence with the look of an unwelcome being.

Each one of us measures ourselves by the response of another - the ruin of unique potential.

Images of what love is not flash before me as symbols of an intolerant humanity lost to a love for itself. Walking in the shadows of a false reality made by greed. Self Love ignored or waggered for lust, I am corrupt when I live in a world without love.

I do not trust myself and the world reflects this back to me in deception and insecurity. I turn away from myself while looking towards the next fix in a world that has traded Self Love, where consumption for profit and gain reigns as the hypnotised slash their metaphorical veins.

Who will hear the call of the self responding to itself? In love with an individual signature so uniquely expressed.

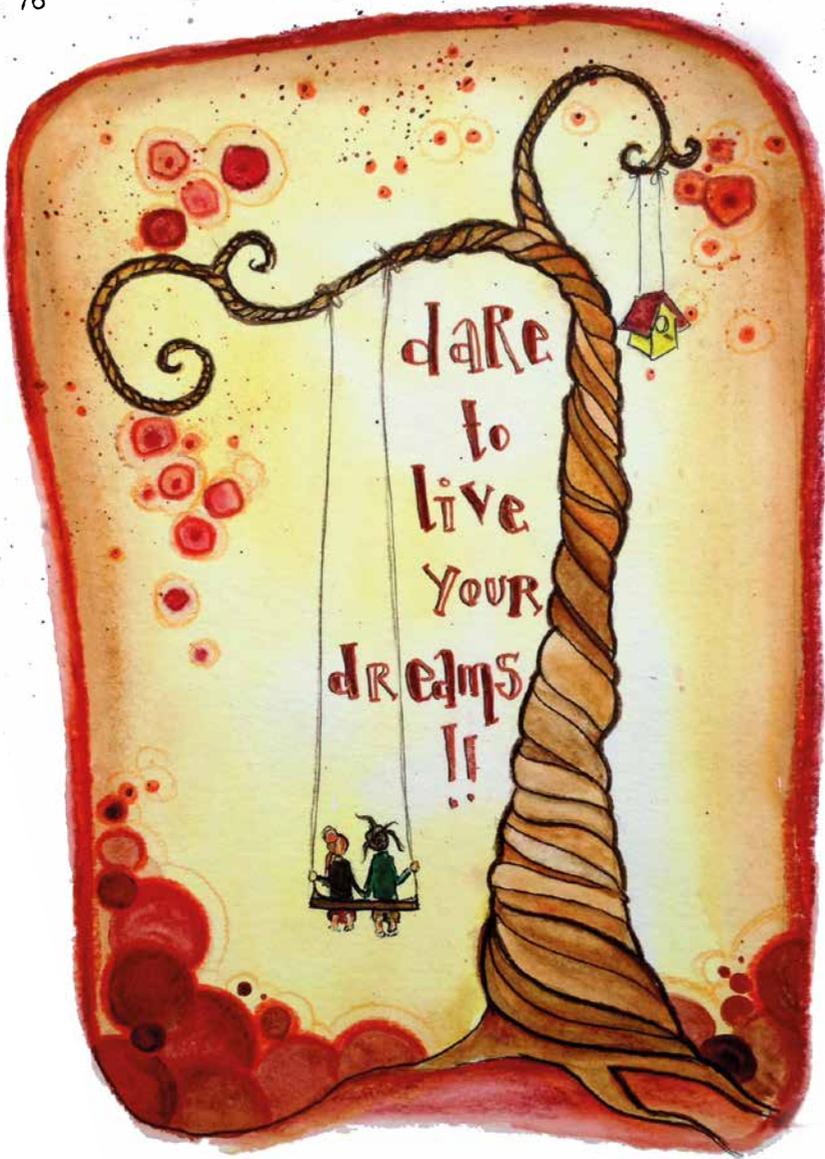
Self Love waits within. Ever kind, ever patient, ever in favour of us, it draws us to itself no matter where we've been or what we've done. It embraces, for in Self Love I see the light of love within myself and also within you. I am enhanced by my own self-acceptance and then the world is enhanced too.

As I hear the call to Self Love I rise on a coherent wave in love with life and in gratitude for my own existence.

Love wants my attention, it calls me to a self-embracing presence of allowing this ME, this light of me, this beaming radiance and this glow of you also, for in my own loving presence I unfold to you, I see you.

It is here in the discovery of my own brilliance I find you. In the light of love I discover myself and connect to you. In the unlimited potential to make new, I am uncovered by love, revealed and made lighter by the language of love.

Here I am, here you are and here is courage. •



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My awareness is unified in the sense that I see Self Love as an embodiment of divine love. Self Love is indissociable from divine love since they are intrinsically a portal to each other. Love goes in before it can truly come out unconditionally.

I am a spirit-guided kind of guy, I breathe in the prana from the trees and the rocks, from the clouds and the rivers. I communicate with bees and elementals on the land. I talk to them, as they are my allies in finding a deeper connection with life itself.

As I tune in and refine my perceptions, I become aware of our permeable consciousness and the synergetic harmony between us and everything that surrounds us. It fills me with incommensurable bliss and gratitude. The more I follow this inner guidance, the more I am home in my heart.

We are changing, shifting fast, modulated to a new form of awareness, a united one where instant knowing occurs and trust grows. These times are such a blessing even though disguised at first sight. As the shadows are brought to the light, there is much work of healing and integration.

We synchronise to this transition by making ourselves available, awake in this present moment; empowered to heal and create. There is a tremendous beauty in the fact that Love opens the doors to clairvoyance and clairsentience. The knowing of light comes as the heart opens like a multi-dimensional prism. Self Love is a key to healing, whether it is with energy, words or art.

In my perception, Self Love is not an attitude but an experience. It is the practice that leads to it but the practice isn't it. However beautiful it may be, it is only suggestive. The experience is of totality... It comes with instant knowing, and all-permeating sense of oneness. It is like being here and there at the same time, in the body and in the universe, ultra-sensing inwards and outwards all at once. Being loved and loving everything.

Truly, Self Love is the ability to let yourself be loved by existence without resistance, to embody the power of love with trust, walking awake on a blessed path, in true compassion.

Life is beautiful in the light  
Light absorbs all shadows in the heart  
Love is medicine and glory  
Gratitude grounds all the blessings  
Oneness shines through your body •

This was a fascinating question to meditate on. I guess the first thing to be said is that I think Self Love has always been important to us humans, I don't think it's just current to this time and space. I do however think that we always need to be reminded of why it's so important. To answer this, I first had to think about what LOVE means to me.

Love unifies us, it softens us, it tenderises our emotions, creates links and builds bridges. It's the essence of our Divinity, expressed. It allows us to see ourselves in every living thing around us and to see every living thing around us within ourselves. It shows us the meaning of accepting someone just as they are. To embrace them just as they are. It implores us to be generous and to give fully and freely of ourselves. It allows us to remove the veil and to see the truth of what is and to hold that truth sacred, just as it is.

The heart which is the generator of this powerful emotion we call love, is the most intelligent organ in the body. Through our blood it communicates electrical impulses, energetic impulses and subtle impulses to our nervous system. Alerted by the heart's activity our brains grapple to find an interpretation for what we feel. In our society we tend to think the brain runs the show, but it depends on the heart for its information.

Our interpretation of the heart's impulses will depend on our perceptions, our thoughts and our beliefs. The words, emotions and feelings that arise as we translate the heart's messages within us, create an energy field that radiates and pulsates from us into the world. If we interpret a heart

surge within us as a cue to experience joy, to surrender to bliss, to lean in and to open up, then what gets radiated into the world is profound and unbound connectivity. The term we give to this is LOVE.

Self Love to me, is the ability to contain love within us, to shine love within us and to generate love within us. When we communicate from a place of love our words are healing, warming and life affirming. When we see the world from a place of love we validate the divinity in both ourselves and our beloved. When we touch from a place of love we become alchemists; we transform and transmute the ordinary into the exquisite. When we feel ourselves as love, we experience how the Divine permeates everything around us and how there really are no empty spaces, just Divinity waiting to be acknowledged.

We are powerful, powerful beings, but what makes us so immense is already within us and has always been within us, as love. •



For me, Self Love is about loving who you really are, as opposed to loving who you think you are. Loving your self image is what a Narcissist does. True Self Love is loving the True Self, not the pretend one.

For me, Self Love is so important to humanity at this time, because its shadow form - love of the ego/narcissism - threatens to destroy the fabric of love, connection, community, gratitude and generosity that is the foundation of a healthy, sustainable society.

The practice of Self Inquiry - asking the question “Who am I?” until all thought based answers fall away and one’s true identity is revealed through direct experience of it - leads to the paradoxical answer “I am everything... and I am nothing.” I experienced this “unconditioned Self” as “unconditional love” and this poem emerged from that exquisite realisation.

### The Indestructible Matrix of Pure Space

See I & I just been relaxing...

“In the Indestructible Matrix of Pure Space”

It have a very nice taste, like coming face to face wid Grace

Not over ere, or over dere, but all over de place

So I man can make haste... slowly

And de sense of aloneness don't mek me feel lonely

Becos I man identity... is totally phoney

Holy Moley! There is no “me”

Dere is only... “The Indestructible Matrix of Pure Space”

It's a strangely familiar place, let's face it

The entire human race is based in it

Bombo claat if we're not wastin it

What a waste of space

fancy ignoring de very space dat contains us

It's outrageous

And in de case of human evolution, might even be dangerous

Dere's just too much focus on what might be facing us

And not enough focus on de instantaneous...

“Indestructible Matrix of Pure Space”

Analogous to timeless, infinitely spacious awareness

Flawless, peerless, fearless...

But nuttin special in all fairness

Just dis unobstructed effortlessness

Wid which we're all blessed

Just... rest.

How much effort does it take, to be aware you're awake?

Tink carefully before you answer, becos de quality of your life is at stake...

“The Indestructible Matrix of Pure Space”

Is closer to you that you are!

Yet extends beyond de fardest galaxy's fardest star

It coordinates your neurochemistry and it services your car

It is existentially impossible for anything to be on a par

De mental and physical universes support it

Like a breast supports a bra

And its only philosophical postulate is... La lala laaaaaaaa...

“The Indestructible matrix of Pure Space”

Safe! •

### My ode to Self Love:

As human beings we have a phenomenal capacity to evolve. To love other humans is to love thyself. This is the dedication to human spiritual development.

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To me, everything starts with Self Love - it is the pathway to happiness and liberation. I believe we are not here to merely survive but to thrive on this earth. We do this by surpassing our own limits, which requires effort.

We always have the choice to retreat into the easy and familiar patterns of a more limited past. When we take that extra step or walk that extra mile as an act of Self Love, we see that this requires effort. Love is not effortless but effortful.

We don't have to love ourselves, we choose to love ourselves. When we have a strong willingness to love ourselves, this is translated into acting from a place of sufficient intensity of desire to love ourselves. This results in actions that contribute to the nurturing of our wellbeing and advancement of our spiritual growth.

This is choice. This is effort. This is love. To me Self Love is being dedicated to striving for truth through rigorous self-analysis and self-awareness, with the intention to bring more consciousness into every moment of our existence. With a knowingness that to face and embrace all pains that come our way, we receive the gift of greatness and we can welcome all dreams as insights into the subconscious.

Certainly, by prioritising Self Love we are in service of an evolving world consciousness and this also allows us to surrender to a divinity from a loving Universe.

By prioritising time to listen to our bodies, we can assess through what we are feeling, through what human needs are not being met and how we can meet them ourselves. The true work lies in spending more time in the inner world rather than outer. This quest is a form of courage towards the nurturing of the self.

Most of all, Self Love is acceptance of oneself exactly as we are right now, in this moment. Aware of our current personal limits but still loving ourselves for them, aiming for growth but not attached to it. The pure understanding that we are already whole and complete, nothing external to our beingness needs to change. This is the purest form of our dedication to Self Love. •



Self Love is such a popular term in many personal development and spiritual circles. You have probably heard the theory many times and in many ways - that we cannot really love another unless we can fully accept and love ourselves. Putting it into practice can be quite another thing - after all, where do we start? Is it possible to feel more self-loving by getting a new hair-do, new partner or new wardrobe of clothes? I guess it works for some but for me, when I am really doing it to love and nurture myself, then the experience is very different from ticking a box in a Self Love to-do-list!

Self Love is a mind-set that generates a certain set of feel good factors that lead to different ways of perceiving and moving through the world. Self Love has to start somewhere so why not start right here and now! So here is a five-step program to do just that:

1. **Start being more aware...** Of the feelings in your body - when you are feeling peaceful, centred, focused, happy etc., then you are thinking/doing Self Love. When you are feeling stressed, unhappy, heavy, depressed etc., then you are not thinking/doing Self Love. When you stop feeling 'good', just stop and notice what is going on. Often, some form of self-berating or internal pushing to get somewhere is happening.
2. **Stop doing the opposite of Self Love...** Pause, breathe, drink tea slowly, go for a walk, hug a tree, read an uplifting poem, break the state of thinking and feeling that leads to the opposite of Self Love. Speaking or writing out any self-attacking thoughts and feelings can help neutralise them. Interrupt any habitual thinking/doing patterns that block your ability to stay present.
3. **Embrace what you need right now...** Tune into what you need to shift back into Self Love. What do you really need? Maybe you need to speak with a friend, maybe spend more time alone in nature. Make sure you are taking care of your physical and emotional needs. Get clear and act on it. Find different, innovative ways to get all your needs met.
4. **You are human, you will make mistakes...** Stop setting yourself up and give yourself a break. Stop demanding absolute perfection. Personal growth involves getting it wrong from time to time. Start getting honest about your limits (yes, I know we are all limitless beings of light but from a practical perspective this makes no sense). Be responsible for the reality you are creating. Learn from your mistakes and do it differently next time. Apologise where necessary. Forgive yourself.
5. **Do something different...** Stop wasting your precious time. Use feedback (instead of blame) to adjust what you are doing. Set healthy limits/ boundaries around your time. Say no more often. Allow certain people/ situations to leave your life and allow new people/situations to enter your life, ones that support your happiness and success. Voila! •

Self Love is the wonder and the tears. The hopes and fears. Love is everything, love is nothing. Love is beyond words.



The heart expands to succour the joy of living and absorbs the suffering of separation. Sometimes deeply painful, other times just plain mysterious, and all through this double sided perception is the constant, quiet, almost unheard little voice of truth. Self Love. In its purest and only form. The voice of silence. Raw, Naked, Truthfulness is my choice.

I often fall into confused stories. Sucked in by the changing tides of The System and its magnetic force. A glimpse of eternity pulls me back to self and from there to love. And then discontent. Then gratitude, judgement and onto the emotional roller coaster, once more. And in the centre of the turmoil, at the tipping point of madness is Presence. Unity, Oneness. Self Love.

I am but a grain of salt in the majestic Himalaya. A drop of copper in the fossilized basalt of Larimar. A seed gently squeezing through the crumbly Earth of Mother. When I gaze into the stars on a tropical evening, I disappear into infinity.

From where does this illusion of You and Me arise? For when soul is immersed in truth, there is only space.

I return to my beautiful, cherished and sacred mat. With me through teenage rebellion and boundary pushing into commitment and motherhood. I drop into peace for a moment. It is here that I have faced the greatest battles, asked the biggest questions and begun to understand that 'Peace' means just 'Letting Go'. Then life and love continue to flow.

Dropping into my space whatever is required.

I only know that I know nothing.

What joy, what relief. •

As a kid I came up with a decision making tool that when faced with important decisions seemed to make the answer obvious. 'What would the world be like if everyone did this?' Simple things like just 'being kind to people I meet' suddenly were extrapolated in my mind to a wonderful utopia. Making decisions like putting solar panels on my roof or eating less meat were easy to understand the potential impact of.



I was not in the business of trying to make other people change their minds about how to live, however being an upstanding example is perhaps the best way to sow the seeds. One of the most powerful uses of this mental tool came when I applied it to how I serve myself. If I exercise, eat a variety of quality foods, think positively, connect to my inner peace and focus on my gifts and passions then I will be the best version of me that I can be. What would happen if everyone did that? The answer was clear that looking after myself first would enable me to be stronger, more energetic and driven to share my deeper true self. This concept gave me a great start and led me to my career in health and healing.

There is almost a concentric aspect to our experience of self whereby our ability to connect more completely to our physical / mental / spiritual selves, permits a perception of self beyond the purely personal. We connect deeply with our partner, our social and work spheres and thus the larger community. The SONG; Self, Others, Nature, God theme is at play here, and without that deeper connection to self, the other layers will be merely superficial.

Living a fuller life is most certainly a result of our ability to find that completeness within and thus relinquish the need for others to satisfy us. From outside, people will see you in a different light. A shining beacon of positivity that adds to the experience of interaction rather than seeking to get something specific from it.

Self Love is not selfish. It is self affirming and empowering. It is the first step to allowing the greater sense of you to emerge, to radiate and to share your unique vision, talents and passions. •

I believe Self Love  
is an intricate  
journey.



It often begins with having to make some “selfish” choices to prioritise one’s own wellbeing over that of others and to find a connection with our deepest Selves. However, after we’ve managed to deepen that relationship with ourselves we become so deeply connected that we begin to see ourselves in all other people too. Our sense of Self expands to include all beings, everywhere and in a sense, we become Self-less.

Where is the boundary that separates me from you? The “selfish” Self Love phase, is an important and necessary step on the path to wholeness. We must keep walking that path so that once we are whole we become more willing to choose service to “other” over service to self, because in truth when we recognise our True Self we come to know that the Self is not limited to our own personality, but it is found in all things everywhere, and so by serving others we inevitably serve ourselves. This is why a core truth in so many religions is; we are One.

Meditation gives us glimpses of this Oneness and in time and practice we will be able to maintain that awareness. For now, I am constantly forgetting; to me this is the path of Self Love; where the little Self fades in importance and the big Self, the one that is not limited to me alone, takes centre stage. •





We've been brought up to think of everyone else first before ourselves. We've been brought up to believe that Self Love is Narcissistic, yet without a wise and healthy Self Love, how can we expect another to love us? Why should they love us if we can't love ourselves? It is said that "We can only love another to the depth we can love ourselves".



Taking care of ourselves - first. Loving ourselves first is actually the biggest act of kindness we can bring to this world, to others and to ourselves. A wheel has to have a "hub" around which the rest of the wheel turns. That hub is a centred Self Love.

Self Love has always been important in every time, but right now, the survival of our planet depends on this simple-and-no-longer-deniable truth. Now is the time; this is the moment.

As more wake up from the dream that a saviour is coming to save our asses and actually get on with the work on ourselves that our bloodlines have been waiting for, more are becoming aware that the “search” must turn 180 degrees back to our own hearts. It’s the heart’s intelligence that is finally calling us to the home we dared not really believe was possible for us. The journey came back to where it all started. Right here, right in the very centre of me.

I’ve looked my whole life outward. To someone or something that would reliably tell me who or what I was supposed to be. Then I could start the process of becoming that. Why? So that if I learned to be that, then people would accept me for who I was, so that I could accept me for what I was. Maybe if I became that, then maybe, just maybe, someone might even love me. Then, maybe, just maybe, I could then love myself!

No-thing out there, no-one out there could ever give me that answer. I stopped looking out there and started looking in here. Sometime later daring to stop looking at all; as though there were something missing in here. As though I was, and this moment was incomplete in some way - wrong.

Then I came here. To this place. This place where I swing still, between The Mystery and my own Misery. Where sometimes I’ve got it all worked out - before a fall. Falling hard and fast onto my knees. On my knees and tears falling. Tears falling and wordless prayers forming.

“Beloved Father, Mother, help me to be myself past my own self-limiting story of who I am.”

When I mean it. When I truly don’t know where to turn but to my knees there is a connection.

A reconnection only when the words, even the prayers, slide out of the way. Right there. That is where the edge of The Mystery is. Stepping up to the edge of the “known” and recognizing that I am the whole and yet a part of this. This! Not a “This” that is a point on the map or in time, but an expanding knowing of the unknowable. This, that is. This, that is the very essence of each one of us. But it takes for us, for me to remember and keep on remembering that

“This” doesn’t just exist somewhere outside of me, somewhere over there and I’m just here.

I have to know myself as an intrinsic part of This. I have to know myself as loveable. Deeply worthy of love to know that I am a gift of love to myself. Then I become love. For a fleeting moment at first. Feeling the vibration of Love itself. Not as an external; but as myself. I stop trying to “give” love or trying to “find” it, somewhere “out there” and rest AS love.

For me, personally, I came a long way on my own, but at the point where I said out loud that,

“If I am alone for the rest of my life then I will be in the very best of company!”

...my Beloved showed up. Through her, with her, despite her sometimes but most often walking alongside, I open more each day past what I thought was possible. Past my own story of Unworthiness. Self Love is an ongoing journey back home to here.

To This. •





We have been taught to not love ourselves. Our current system relies on it. If we do not love ourselves then we can be sold things to fill the holes of lack and unworthiness. We can be told that we do not look good enough, we don't have enough stuff, we aren't clever enough, we need more gadgets, more status, more entertainment, more security, more money, more sex: more, more, more. And now the system is on the verge of collapse as we continue to exploit the resources of our planet to the point where it will eventually be unable to support life itself.

Self Love is vital at this time in order that we change this story, wake up to our true nature and care for our planet and all life on it.

Very often when we think about the idea of Self Love and loving ourselves, we see it as an individual pursuit. Our effort to love ourselves can sometimes be an isolated practice where we work on ourselves alone, away from other people and the living world which we are part of. This seems to be symptomatic of our current individualistic, competitive system.

What if our search for Self Love took a more interdependent approach, one in which our wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of all other life on earth and of the earth itself?

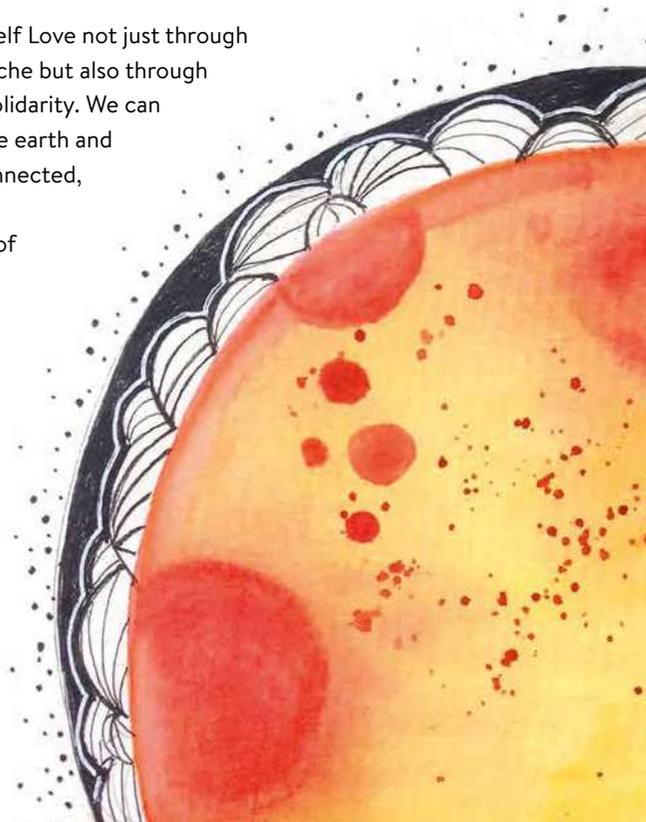
I recently heard the environmental activist Helena Norberg-Hodge speak about her experience in Ladakh, an area of North India which, until relatively recently, was closed to the rest of the

world. She was able to witness first hand the effects of Western consumer culture on a previously sustainable ancient Tibetan Buddhist culture. When she first arrived, she described the people as having a sense of vitality, joy, peace of mind and self esteem so deep that the idea of self wasn't even an issue. She said that it came out of a sense of feeling deeply connected to others, including the plants, animals and the land itself. A sense of belonging. The people did not lack Self Love because they understood their individual importance within this wider community and yet they were humble because they knew they were just a small part of it.

The current crises we face are directly linked to our disconnection from each other and from nature.

By reconnecting with community and the land we have an opportunity to remember our true place in the world and the value of our existence. Our value does not rest in our job, our wealth, our status. We do not need to 'earn' a living. We are part of this earth and belong to it as much as any other living thing. Imagine if our culture celebrated this? We are all deserving of our life here on earth not through what we do, or make or earn, but just by our very being. We belong.

Maybe we can find a path to Self Love not just through looking deep into our own psyche but also through connection, community and solidarity. We can love ourselves by caring for the earth and all beings, and as we are all connected, we receive this love in return. By doing this we create a way of being much more suited to a sustainable way of life, and one which will hopefully prevent the destruction of the planet which supports us. •



We are part of a living organism called Earth, we are part of a larger being, which includes those that are yet to come, and with every step towards healing and loving ourselves, we are creating more loving foundations for the next generations to walk in as co-inhabitants and co-creators of a new world.

Whether it's because of psychological programs, limiting thoughts and patterns of social conditioning; I have found it hard to love myself. It's even pointed to as "selfish" among some spiritual practices. But, looking at it from a higher perspective, it comes to be essential, even in the spiritual growth process. As the social beings we are, we have the gift of the amazing mirrors that our interactions with others can offer. As above, so below; as within, so without. Relationships are a marvelous tool which aid us in this Self Love journey.

After diving into this path of self-discovery, almost like a Buddhist monk. I realised I did a lot of personal work, but still I was not loving myself fully. The openness to different perspectives that others shared along the way, lit a light inside of me. What arose were these questions:

Do I love myself unconditionally?  
How much do I take care of myself?  
How much do I value myself?  
How much love do I give myself?  
How much do I accept what I am in this very moment?  
What do I want?  
What do I need?

Are my current choices giving me opportunities that can support me to meet my needs? If not, what can I do to change?

When I stand in the strength of Self Love, I perceive life with more awareness. I know my limitations, my beliefs, where I come from and how I can work through life one step at a time. It doesn't mean I don't have challenging moments, but it allows me to go through the emotional processes with awareness of my core truth, that part of me which is in balance and at peace with what is.

Loving myself is about embracing the instruments I've been given to play (my areas of greatness, my skills, talents and gifts), as my special and unique contribution to this melody of life. We are all growing and learning together, creating this reality in which we can help and support each other to bring forth the best version of ourselves. Life creates conditions for more life, love brings forth more love. Simple.

I like to hug myself, kiss myself, give myself gifts, wake up in the morning and set a clear intention for growth to happen; if I feel like crying, I cry, if I need a hug, I ask for it, if I want something, I say so, if I need a rest then I take that well deserved rest.

I feel we all have the Response-Ability to make the most out of this experience called life. As a Permaculturist and yogi, I dare to mix these principles and practices, bringing a very simple mantra to this Self Love process. Start small and slow, and begin right on your doorstep, with yourself. Self Love begins within. We all know deep down how to love. Let's make it a habit to remember this simple truth; We cannot give what we don't have. •



### Open! Says my heart

I scratch the surface of my stone walled heart  
slowly crumbling words, falling apart

Open! says my heart  
don't try to understand  
just Open! says my heart  
time is running like silver sand

closing is easy  
collapsing is quick  
fearing is sleazy  
suppressing is sick

Open! says my heart  
it's not possible when you think  
but simple when you feel  
my message is not in a bottle  
and the same it will always be

Open! says my heart  
stretch that muscle of trust  
extend your sorrow to love  
lengthen your anger to passion  
elongate the softness inside your aggression

Open! says my heart  
not tomorrow  
not when the clouds are gone  
not when the ice is melting  
but before the damage is done

Open! says my heart  
all we have is NOW •

The Truth often sounds paradoxical  
~ Lao Tzu



Self Love is a revolutionary act because the conscious decision to love myself is rebellion in a culture that preys on my core unworthiness, competitive nature and fear. I call love, life force. The same life force that permeates all things. The same life force that Yoda so eloquently shares to Luke Skywalker when he says; may the force be with you.

I lay in bed observing my feelings of resistance, I can feel that I want to run away, leave and be on my own. Questioning everything, asking why am I doing what I am doing? Am I really making any difference? Is any of this worth it? Worrying about the how. Observing the days ticking by into oblivion. I sit looking at the ceiling, observing the stillness of the room but feeling the restlessness of my repetitive thought patterns. Feeling the agitation in my body, the itch that wants to be scratched by doing, by moving and not just being with what is. Can I just feel it all? What is it that I am feeling anyway? I can't seem to name it and whenever I name anything I can see how I limit the very thing I am naming. I put it into a small box of confinement. I continue to sit, feel and let go of trying to work out what is happening. I just observe the frustration and self-judgment. I blame myself for being here again even though where I am in this moment, I haven't been before. Anger arises and still I sit and just be with what is. I am using words to describe to you what I am feeling but even these words are defining that which cannot be defined. I notice I am heading into what I call the 'feedback loop from hell'. That loop of diminishing thoughts and feelings where I focus on all the things that seem to not be going how I think they should be! Where I beat myself up by blaming myself for acting out of accord. In this place I am wrong. I am not good enough. My shell hardens, and I don't give a shit about anyone or anything. I am OK, Jack. I don't need anyone. Fuck the world. It's OK being here. I don't need to justify myself.

I can feel a welling in my eyes. I cannot make eye contact with the people I love. I cannot look at myself in this space. Why? Because I want to soften. I want a hug. I want to cry. I want to ask for help but my little ego is too proud for that. I want to open but the resistance is too strong. Stubbornness and self-righteousness are in the driver's seat. I act out of integrity. I begin making

up bullshit stories to uphold why I am closed and why it's OK to be like this. Hours of talk prevail. Tiredness and boredom seep in. This is not how I want to behave. But this is it. This is what's here now. I know this is not the true me. This is not my empowered self. This is my wounded self. This is my little five-year-old wanting his parents to hold him. As I am active in this triggered state I am simultaneously aware that I could just drop this false identity and persona I am giving life. I can just say enough no more. You shall not pass. Instead I witness myself activated in my pain but cannot seem to move through it as fast as I would like. In this moment of awareness, I ask, what would love do now? I am asked to stretch. I am asked to hold the pose of love. I am asked to remember the truth. I am asked to let go and surrender into the love that surrounds me. I am asked to drop it all and come back to this moment where none of the stories have any real relevance. These insignificant past occurrences have already happened. Why am I still carrying them? I am reminded of the story of the Buddhist monk and the old women crossing the river.

I can let go. I am aware it is only fear holding on. It is only fear keeping me captive to the past or the perceived future, to which neither exist. Thinking is not the problem, believing my thoughts makes me suffer. I breathe deeply several times. I open my eyes and feel the truth rising and moving through me. My mood is shifting. My state of being changing. The pain is residing. The false stories dissolving. I sit a little longer and then a smile appears, reluctantly at first. I know that smile, I feel it in my whole being. I am back. I have clarity again. All is well. It always was but I got lost for a little while. I've been lost many times. Sometimes for a lot longer. The times I'm lost now are shorter than ever before. I have learned that I can celebrate the catch. I don't have to beat myself up for getting lost. It's OK. I am loved. Love never leaves me. It just waits patiently until I return.

When I am in resistance to what is, I am pulled into what I term the pain body. And the pain I feel at any moment is always calling to be acknowledged with loving awareness. Pain is a messenger, a loving friend quietly saying; pay attention inside now. My pain just wants to be embraced, held and heard. When I sit long enough to look within and just witness, to observe what is, without needing to know, without needing to fix. Just simply and lovingly acknowledging what is. I hear Self Love now whisper to me; keep it simple, because simplicity is divinity.

And so it is...

gratitude •



Co-creators  
*OF MAGIC*



## Bridget Finklaire

[bridgetfinklaire.com](http://bridgetfinklaire.com)

**I LOVE** myself • meditation • yoga • husband Paul • children Lottie & Henry • dancing • Cape Town • forests • Keys of Enoch • music •



## Charles Eisenstein

[charleseisenstein.net](http://charleseisenstein.net)

**I LOVE** family • being/walking in nature • really old trees • qigong • spring water • Chinese culture • deep and sincere friendships • being understood • playfulness • open-heartedness •



## Genevra Jolie

[crystal-singing-bowls.co.uk](http://crystal-singing-bowls.co.uk)

**I LOVE** Jayden, my son • playing crystal singing bowls • making love • laughter • friendship • motherhood • snow • playing with clay • the sound of trees in autumn • laying in hammocks •



## Chris Agnos

[chrisagnos.com](http://chrisagnos.com)

**I LOVE** my wife Dawn • my cats • true family • peace • authenticity • transparency • kindness • compassion • a cool breeze • companionship •



## Anaiya Sophia

[anaiyasophia.com](http://anaiyasophia.com)

**I LOVE** breath • Pete • black bears • climbing • laughter • womb wisdom • lingams • nakedness • Mary Magdalene • orca Whales •



## Michael Dale

[michaeldale.me](http://michaeldale.me)

**I LOVE** authenticity • diversity • courageous conversations • circle work • mountains • surfing • street art • poetry • emotional intelligence • neuroplasticity •



## Polly Higgins

**I LOVE** the Earth • people who are daring to be great • generosity • fierce love • random acts of kindness • swimming in sea • magic • really funny films • massage • moments of utter peace •



## Marc Itzler

[marcitzler.com](http://marcitzler.com)

**I LOVE** humour • my guitars • my children • creating music • meditating • being in service to others • thunderstorms • writing • avocado and tomato on toast • slow sexy time •



Calu Lema

[comtacto.weebly.com](http://comtacto.weebly.com)

**I LOVE** free movement • sensorial exploration • creative expression • consensual touch • intuition dreams • menstrual blood art • nature • bodywork • long hugs •



Oliver Lennard

**I LOVE** music • exploring • tahini • deep conversations • my feet • peaches • rain • permaculture • singing • bees •



Filiz Telek

[filiztelek.com](http://filiztelek.com)

**I LOVE** sisterhood • vulnerability • mother earth • writing • meditation • swimming naked • growing seeds • ceremony • community • dolphins •



Bryan Reeves

[bryanreeves.com](http://bryanreeves.com)

**I LOVE** ravishing my girlfriend • dark chocolate • dogs • taking pictures of stunning sunsets • mountain biking • speaking truth • blogging • appreciating art • mushrooms • vitamix smoothies •



## Lucy-Anne Holmes

**I LOVE** my son • my partner • gratitude • writing • family • marmite on toast • meditation • dancing • theatre • truth •



## Adrian Kowal

[wayofnature.co.uk](http://wayofnature.co.uk)

**I LOVE** nature • pancakes • hikes with my daughter • growing my own vegetables • wild swimming • expansive experiences • ski touring • comedy • men's work • wilderness •



## Debra Roberts

[holybeepress.com](http://holybeepress.com)

**I LOVE** bees • murmuration of starlings • my beloved Joe • kindness • sacred-ordinary moments • reading Hafiz to my bees • wildness • authenticity • humour •



## Vaz Sriharan

[vazsriharan.com](http://vazsriharan.com)

**I LOVE** Gaia • intimacy • smiles • the paradox of life • People Power • thinking outside the box • learning • exploring • sharing • adventure •



## Lesley Hughes

[thislifenow.co.uk](http://thislifenow.co.uk)

**I LOVE** myself • my adorable son • gratitude • wonder • nature • kindness • food • dancing • mindfulness • body • mind • soul •



## Charlie Taillard

[youarenotlimited.co.uk](http://youarenotlimited.co.uk)

**I LOVE** my soulmate wife • helping people to be happier • people who make me happy • making beautiful things • travelling and exploring new boundaries • archery • music • animals • the sunshine • pushkar and the magical smell of roses •



## Alice Smeets

[alicesmeets.com](http://alicesmeets.com)

**I LOVE** shadow work • yoga • dance • adventure • tarot • public speaking • hula hooping • Haiti • magic • Chai tea •



## Philip Shepherd

[philipshepherd.com](http://philipshepherd.com)

**I LOVE** pebbles • conversations that dive and delve • tea with cream and honey • cycling • being with family • cashmere • interlacing fingers with my wife • apple pie • tennis • sitting by a fire •



## Shelley Sage Heart

[sunlightcircledesigns.com](http://sunlightcircledesigns.com)

**I LOVE** roses • great topsoil • seedlings • crying • lions • spring water • hiking up mountains • whales • dolphins • the way a lover feels between my thighs • singing •



## Rasheed Ogunlaru

[rasaru.com](http://rasaru.com)

**I LOVE** people • inner fulfilment • playing tennis & squash • watching all manner of sports • coaching • singing • song writing • silence • intuition • creativity •



## Shima

[lallathebuddha.com](http://lallathebuddha.com)

**I LOVE** orgasms as a gateway to magic • inspiring others to be themselves • 100% organic • forests • sacred sexual healing • tantra • freedom • poetry • bodywork • divine beauty in all things •



## David Beaudry

[iamdavidbeaudry.com](http://iamdavidbeaudry.com)

**I LOVE** crisp mountain air • laughing • moving with the wind • poetry • primal roars • intergalactic contact • practicing qigong • open hearts • awakening the body • challenging physical limits •



## Philippa Glazer

[philippaglazer.com](http://philippaglazer.com)

**I LOVE** kissing • dancing • sweating • dolphins • waterfalls • scuba diving • ancient forests • mangos • hugging my parents • deep breathing •



## Karl Pace

[journeywithheart.com](http://journeywithheart.com)

**I LOVE** making love • raw chocolate • sound of silence • the sea • my body • community • family • being in nature • good food • running •



## Lillia Sinclair

[liliasinclair.com](http://liliasinclair.com)

**I LOVE** people • nature • challenges • motivational speaking • helping people to heal • meditation • snowboarding • travelling • camping • laughing •



## Jamie Catto

[jamiecatto.com](http://jamiecatto.com)

**I LOVE** mucking about with kids • audio books • snuggling in bed • cooking and eating • being astonished • compliments • mysterious passionate sex • singing songs • having my back scratched • road trips •



## Xiomara Matos

[hogardelnino.com](http://hogardelnino.com)

**I LOVE** eyes • gift of Life • me and all that I am • people and their diversity • all living creatures • uniqueness of all plants and animals • sunrise • love my children who teach me and love me • meditation •



## Matthew Brincat

[matthewbrincat.com](http://matthewbrincat.com)

**I LOVE** hazelnut chocolate • dark coffee • slow kisses and naked touch • clouds • the sound of waves with shore • rough seas • dawn • eyes • silence • mountains •



## Luraya

[lurayas.blogspot.com](http://lurayas.blogspot.com)

**I LOVE** hanging out with trees • silence • breathing deeply • rumi • creating art • lovemaking • laughter • dancing barefoot in the sand • yoga • chocolate balls •



## Asmund Siep

[asmundseip.com](http://asmundseip.com)

**I LOVE** God • being alive • all of it • morning light of a Nordic winter • my children's strong will • a black coffee • I love a long, warm hug • resistance • connection • to kiss •



## Beverley Drumm

[nectaroflife.co.uk](http://nectaroflife.co.uk)

**I LOVE** flowers • trees • raw chocolate • dancing • melting into love • making love • nature • my friends • my children • papaya •



## Balazs Heller

[balazsheller.com](http://balazsheller.com)

**I LOVE** my family • devotion • yoga • meditation • breathing • sound healing • vegan food • hugging • smiling • swimming in sea •



## Yasmin De Giorgio

[sanyamalta.com](http://sanyamalta.com)

**I LOVE** surfing • conscious business • serving • something greater than myself • yoga • reflecting on life's mysteries • raw cacao • bali • salty sun kissed skin • getting lost • deep conversations •



## Levi Darger

**I LOVE** people • the human experience • poetry and prose • language, and how it shapes our experience • seeing people awaken • nature • sitting in front of fire • birds singing • watching the trees sway in the wind • breathing •



## Lotan Sapir

[lotansapir.wixsite.com](http://lotansapir.wixsite.com)

**I LOVE** truth • connection • touch • hugging • unexpected moments • breathing • shaking • drumming • coconuts • colours •



## Lloyd Roger Spencer

[lloydrogerspencer.com](http://lloydrogerspencer.com)

**I LOVE** being human • consciousness • art in its varied forms • entertainment • films • computer games • books • music • the internet • owls •



## Corinne Blum Kowal

[corinneblum.com](http://corinneblum.com)

**I LOVE** my daughter & husband • authenticity • empathy • creativity and love • vulnerability • laughter • dancing • apple pancakes • the sun • conversations with friends •



## Greg Paul

**I LOVE** me • love itself • truth • the gift of life • making Love • being naked in the rain • my children • baked beans & HP sauce • uncontrollable fits of laughter • my bed •



## Bonita Spencer

**I LOVE** the dawn chorus • owls • the crash of waves • seagulls • raindrops • the air I breathe • my three Sons • kindness • walking • courage •



## Miguel Gravito

[gravito.co.uk](http://gravito.co.uk)

**I LOVE** cedar incense • talking sticks • sacred fires • sheep skins • frame drums and guitars • making love • irreverent humour • kirtans •



## Tash Mitch

[tashmitch.com](http://tashmitch.com)

**I LOVE** the ocean • singing jazz • Caribbean breezes • sweet smells of nature • my partner in life • my family: both blood and soul related • creating love • soulful conversations • joyful children • I love that you've read this •



## Chris Paradox

**I LOVE** laughing • my clients • great art • music • film • books • vanilla cheesecake • Noam Chomsky • Charles Eisenstein • Brené Brown •



## Alexandra Cachia

[thrivemalta.com](http://thrivemalta.com)

**I LOVE** yoga • compost • community • orgasms • organic vegetables • event organising • transparent communication • listen to audiobooks • organise communal dinners • running •



## Steve Nobel

[thesoulmatrix.com](http://thesoulmatrix.com)

**I LOVE** spirituality • learning • growing • experiencing • making friends with my inner hippy • gratitude • being a grandfather • meditation • laughter • friendship •



## Kyra Montagu

[ki-ra.com](http://ki-ra.com)

**I LOVE** yoga • divine • my glorious children • herbalism • making love • the smell of sea air that I wake to • devotion to service • all sentient beings • bike riding • Himalayan mountains •



## Russ Hornstein

**I LOVE** my family • dancing • generosity • exercising my body • meditation • high quality foods • I don't judge difficulties • asking 'what would love do?' • beauty • being of service •



### Amber De Giorgio

[amberiya.com](http://amberiya.com)

**I LOVE** music • the sea • the sun • the stars • community • my sisters • my health • my heart • the earth • devotion •



### Pete Wilson

[occitaniabedandbreakfast.com](http://occitaniabedandbreakfast.com)

**I LOVE** gratitude • the divine • my body • the beloved • prayer • men's circles • feeling the breeze on my face • laughter • feeling truth • telling someone of a quality in them they didn't want to know was there •



### Trina Dillon

**I LOVE** tea • trees • sleeping in the sun • family • books • dancing • the beauty of nature • singing with other people • learning new things • star gazing •



### Juan Manuel Burgos

[livetothefullest.org](http://livetothefullest.org)

**I LOVE** noise of waterfalls • money • my beautiful body • meaningful connections • sight of the horizon • vulnerability • global community of change makers • ambassadors of love • present touch • temple nights •



## Dara Stara

[daraandsimon.com](http://daraandsimon.com)

**I LOVE** warm feet • the wisdom of winnie the pooh • writing music • poetry • my daughter • laughing • releasing anger • warm summer rain • nakedness • dancing •



## Simon Paul Sutton

[simontransparently.com](http://simontransparently.com)

**I LOVE** serving that which is greater than I • full body orgasms • my body's unique magnificence • my family • eye gazing into the mystery • meditation • making people laugh • dancing • supporting others to see their magnificence • intentional breathing •





CURATED BY

Simon Paul Sutton

Like you, a unique expression of life force. Enjoying the term 'Ambassador of LOVE'. Here and now, exploring, learning, creating, playing, informing and surrendering to the unknown. Sharing gifts in contribution to 'The more beautiful world our hearts know is possible'. Dying gracefully, bowing in awe and wonder of this miraculous existence.

[daraandsimon.com](http://daraandsimon.com)



ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Luraya

I am Lu, an artist, Yoga and dance instructor and sometimes even a cow herder. I love dancing through the wonder of life on the waves of ups and downs and learning how to swim. I love climbing trees, breathing in nature and dig my hands into mother earth... My idols are Pippi Longstocking and Gandhi.

[lurayas.blogspot.com](http://lurayas.blogspot.com)

If you have enjoyed reading this book,

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This book is an experience, a snapshot in time, floating words pointing to the ever unexplainable. Let us open it randomly, when we need a breath of inspiration, when the loud voices in our heads are threatening to take over, screaming the good old 'you are not enough' litany.

## SELF LOVE NOW

CURATED BY

Simon Paul Sutton

During a sharing circle Simon asked a question; Why is Self-Love important at this time in humanity? What was shared from each person in the circle touched him so much. A year later he decided to ask 54 people the same question. This book is the result of those answers. There is no doubt in the world that these expressions of love will reach and nurture the souls who would benefit from a gentle loving reminder to let down their armour of fear and soften into the warm embrace of this encompassing life force energy.

[WWW.SELFLOVENOW.ORG](http://WWW.SELFLOVENOW.ORG)

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