

Fall Madly in Love with Yourself



By Mary Knebel

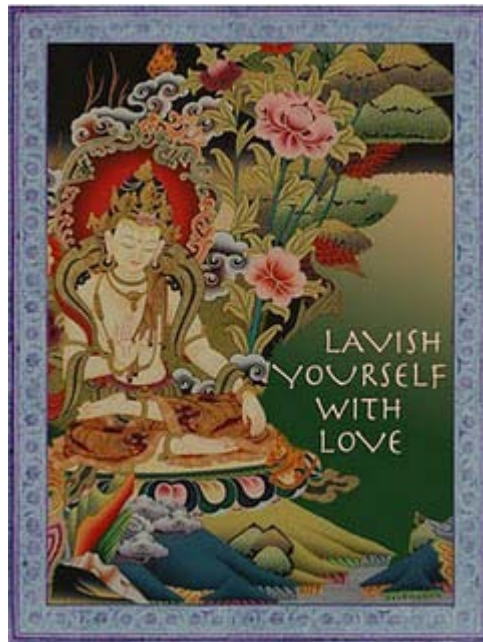
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Lavish Yourself with Love

I don't know about you, but to me 2012 already feels much different than 2011. The excitement in the air is palpable, everyone is excited about new opportunities, and the energy as a whole feels happier, lighter, and filled with promise. **This is definitely your year to be successful!**

One of my intentions for 2012 is to make my relationship with myself a true priority and to make this a year of self-love. I've got several exciting things in store related to self-love, which I will share with you later, but in the meantime I wanted to pass along the following quote from an old "Create a Life You Love" newsletter from Debbie Ford. I couldn't have said it better myself, so I thought I would just copy it here. The picture below is also from Debbie's newsletter. Enjoy!



"Welcome to 2012, the healthiest, sexiest, richest, most exciting, magical and adventurous year of your life. Are you in? This is a year when you fall in love with yourself, your body, your career, your life, and all of those around you. This is a holy year when your highest self comes first. And instead of listening to the voice of your past, you tune in and listen to the voice of your own soul. You don't focus on getting, you focus on giving your greatest self to the world. You are going to the holy land of your highest expression."

To remind yourself of this throughout the year, I recommend displaying the picture and quote in a place where you can see it often. I'm actually going to put it up in a few different locations to remain focused!

Loving Yourself: What Does It Mean?

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." ~ Marianne Williamson

You've probably heard it before, but it bears repeating here: **self-love is the key to everything you could ever possibly want in life.** Sounds great, right? But what the heck is self-love and how do you love yourself, especially when we've been taught our whole lives that love is something we give to others?

Loving yourself means that you value and appreciate yourself, exactly as you are. It means recognizing that you are worthy of all the good things that life has to offer, just for being you! You are aware of all your strengths and positive aspects, and use them to your advantage. And you are also mindful of your weaknesses and flaws, but you treat yourself kindly in spite of them. In fact, you realize that these are just qualities that you're still working on and developing.

Above all, to me, loving yourself means expressing yourself, your *entire* self, authentically and without reserve, **whether or not the world around you agrees with you.** It means sticking to your path, even if you're the only one currently on it. It means being the person you know deep down you are meant to be, even if the people around you would rather you be someone else entirely! Sure, there are times when fully expressing yourself is not appropriate to the situation at hand. On the whole, however, I believe it is extremely important to authentically be yourself as much as humanly possible.

Deep down, all of us have these amazing gifts, talents, and passions that we were born with and are meant to bring to the world. We have actually been given these specific passions and special gifts because we are ***supposed*** to be expressing them in our lives! So many of us stifle our self-expression and just stick to the daily grind, doing the same thing day in and day out, and then wonder why things aren't working out for us.

Here are some ways you can start loving yourself more today:

- Indulge in your passions, even if your family and friends don't understand them or agree with them;
- Find a way to make money doing what you love, so you can ultimately pursue a career that truly gives you a sense of purpose and fulfillment;

- Say no to activities that you really don't feel like doing, and instead spend the time at home relaxing or doing something you **do** feel like doing;
- Stop spending time with people you have nothing in common with, and start cultivating friendships with people you **do** share common interests with;
- Surround yourself with friends who not only love and appreciate you as a person, but encourage you to go for your biggest dreams;
- Only entertain romantic relationships in which you are allowed to be the best possible version of yourself and shine your light freely, rather than having to hide who you truly are or play small to accommodate the other person.

These are a just a handful of suggestions to start loving yourself, but even implementing a *fraction* of any them will bring huge changes to your life! Not to mention, as explained in the quote at the top of this article from Marianne Williamson, loving yourself and expressing yourself fully actually gives people around you permission to do the same. Rather than a world where everyone tries to play small to fit in and be liked by others, **wouldn't the world be a much better place if we were all allowed to shine our light brightly, authentically be who we truly are, and freely use our unique gifts and talents to create lives we are truly passionate about?**

A Year of Self-Love!

Now that 2012 is well underway, you have probably long since abandoned your New Year's resolutions. However, rather than getting discouraged that you've already fallen so far off the wagon, I'd like to suggest a different course of action. Instead of planning to finally lose that dreaded last ten lbs., or find your soulmate, or make more money, or quit smoking, etc. **why not make 2012 the year you finally learn to love yourself, faults and all, and make it the year of self-love?**

We've all heard that loving yourself is essential if you want to live a truly rewarding life, but how many of us can actually say we love ourselves deep down, *exactly as we are*. You may have even reached a place where you are able to love and accept yourself most of the time, but there are still a few areas where you are struggling to appreciate yourself day in and day out. **Let's make this year where we finally make peace with every single place in ourselves, good, bad, and ugly!** Not only will you feel a lot better as a whole, but all those other things you're hoping to achieve will fall into place so much easier if you just love and accept yourself as you are.

Here's an exercise I tried recently, and it is extremely powerful in getting you to a place of releasing shame and making peace with yourself as a whole. I found it in Byron Katie's book, "*I Need Your Love - Is That True?*", and instantly recognized its potential and possibilities for increasing self-love. I encourage you to try this, and the more uncomfortable you are with it, the better!

First, take out a sheet of paper and think of someone in your life that you hide things from. It could be a spouse, parent, child, friend, etc., or even the planet as a whole! Now, imagine that you are writing a letter to this person (or people) and start out the letter by saying, "What I don't want you to know about me is..." Then, list everything you would be ashamed of or embarrassed about if that person discovered these aspects about yourself. Things like, "I have cellulite on my thighs, I rarely pay my bills on-time, I can be really evil when someone crosses me, I act like I am holier than thou but usually I'm not, I often say no to plans with friends because I don't really like them and would prefer to be by myself, etc." You get the point. Include anything you would not want this other person to find out about!

Once you've come up with a complete list, you're going to turn it around and write a letter that starts out with, "What I **do** want you to know about me is..." and then list everything you listed in the first letter. So using the example above, it would look like this: "What I do want you to know about me is that I have cellulite on my thighs, I rarely pay my bills on-time, I can be really evil when someone crosses me, I act like I am holier than thou but usually I'm not, I often say no to plans with friends because I don't really like them and would prefer to be by myself, etc." List everything you listed in the first example, but this time approach it from a stance of *wanting* to share this information with the other person. (Don't worry, you never have to share this letter with anyone if you don't want to! This is just an exercise to help *you* in loving yourself.)

This can be an easy or difficult exercise, depending on how much you currently accept yourself and how in touch with your “darker” places you are. Some of you may have several things to list, whereas others of you may just have a few places inside that you haven’t fully come to terms with yet. If uncomfortable feelings come up while you do this exercise (which is completely normal!), then just take some time to simply be with yourself and be with the uncomfortable thoughts and feelings that arise. You may find yourself thinking things like, “I would be horrified if he ever knew that about me! He would leave me in a heartbeat” or “There’s no way I could ever tell her I did that. She would never look at me the same again.” Simply notice the thoughts passing through your mind and the sensations you feel in your body. You don’t have to do anything with them except notice them. If you meditate, then you know the power of watching your thoughts and feelings float by and not getting caught up in them.

After you’ve taken some time to simply be with yourself, and with the thoughts and feelings that arise from doing this exercise, I think you’ll feel much more at peace with the aspects of yourself that you previously thought were so unlovable. You may even actually find yourself loving them and appreciating them! **Let's all learn how to love ourselves once and for all, and make 2012 a year of self-love.**

The Mirror Exercise

This exercise is an extremely powerful self-love exercise, and you'll see why! In fact, many of the self-help "gurus" out there swear by this exercise and still do it daily in their lives.

Every night before you go to bed, preferably just before you get into bed, find a mirror in your home that you can stand in front of undisturbed for a few minutes. If you're married or have a roommate, ask them to give you a few minutes to yourself because you'll want to do this exercise alone to get maximum results. This should only take about five minutes.

For the first few seconds, stand there in front of the mirror and really look at yourself, deeply in your eyes. Chances are you've never done this before so it will probably feel very uncomfortable or awkward, and you may even find yourself turning away from the mirror. Rest assured that this is completely normal, and simply direct your gaze back to your eyes. **As you're doing this, you want to send yourself as much love and acceptance as you possibly can.** Really look at yourself and see what you look like to the outside world. Look at your eyes, your skin, your forehead, your nose, etc. If you're standing in front of a full-length mirror, look at the rest of your body, too. (If you're brave enough to try this exercise naked, go for it! It's not required, though, to get powerful results.)

After you've really looked at yourself for a few seconds, say "I love you" out loud to yourself and then your full name. For example, "I love you, Mary Knebel." Be sure to say this out loud, and do your best to just be with any feelings that come up, whether positive or negative. *They are just feelings and you can accept them as they are and allow them to be there.*

Next, reflect over the day you just had and think of all the things you are proud of yourself for accomplishing. These can be big or small things, but aim to find 5-10 things you did during the day that you can appreciate yourself for out loud. For example, "I'm so proud of you for eating a healthy dinner" or "I'm so proud of you for finishing the memo you said you would finish" or "I'm so proud of you for reading the kids a bedtime story before bed." You get the idea.

While continuing to look at yourself in the mirror, flow love and compassion towards yourself as best you can. If it helps you to get in a loving space, you can imagine flowing pink or golden light to yourself. Next, find things that you love about yourself and acknowledge those qualities to yourself out loud. For example, "I love that you have such pretty eyes" or "I love that you are such a loyal friend" or "I love how creative you are." These qualities can either be physical characteristics or qualities that have more to do with who you are as a person. The key is to find things about yourself that you can truly love, appreciate, and acknowledge yourself for. Dig deep if you have to, but find things about yourself you can love!

Finally, to finish this exercise, look yourself deeply in your eyes for a few more seconds and then say "I love you" and your full name one last time. Stare into your eyes and continue to flow love and compassion towards yourself as much as possible. Really be with any

feelings that come up, whether positive or negative, and just allow them to be. Loving yourself means loving ALL of you, feelings and all.

That's it! As I mentioned above, this will probably feel uncomfortable or even awkward the first few times you do this. However, this is completely normal and will get much easier if you continue practicing.

Do this exercise for forty days straight, without skipping a day. If you skip a day, start over from Day One and do the forty days all over again. After forty days in a row this will become deeply embedded in your subconscious mind, and you will notice how much better you feel about yourself and how comfortable you are in your own skin.

As a result, the world will seem to become a more loving and accepting place towards you. Your spouse will be more supportive of you, friends will want to be around you more often, your website or business will attract new visitors, and you may even start to notice that you are more beautiful or attractive than you ever noticed before! *It's your thinking that has changed the world around you.* Remember, your thoughts become your reality. Therefore, the more loving thoughts you have within, the more loving the outside world will be towards you. Give this exercise a shot, and you'll probably find that you'll want to keep doing it after the forty days are up because it just feels so good!

**This exercise is an excerpt from my powerful ebook, *Secrets to Creating Your Ideal Life*. For more information and to purchase your copy, go to <http://www.selfhelpgoddess.com/selfhelpbook.html>.

Love Letter to Myself

Several people have recently emailed me or contacted me on Twitter asking me for my recommendations on the best self-help products for finding a romantic partner or manifesting more abundance. It seems that people everywhere are determined to make this the year they find true love or finally get their finances in order! You can find my recommendations for love and abundance on my website, but I'd like to use this article to reiterate the importance of self-love in creating your ideal life or manifesting specific results.

The truth is, until you can truly come to a place of loving and accepting yourself exactly as you are, results will ultimately always elude you because deep down you don't feel deserving of the success you're trying to achieve. I came up with exercise below (it's fun!) to help you get into a place of really loving yourself, which will speed up the process of attracting whatever you want to manifest in your life this year.

I call this exercise, "*Writing a Love Letter to Myself.*" Basically, you're going to do just what it sounds like. Take out a sheet of paper, or do this in your journal or on the computer. Next, get busy writing a love letter to yourself and describing all the wonderful things you love and adore about yourself! You could write about physical features, personality characteristics, things you have accomplished in life, basically anything you appreciate about yourself. And don't think you have to only focus on big things. You can even appreciate yourself just for doing this exercise!

For some of you this may seem extremely difficult, if not downright impossible or uncomfortable. We spend so much time beating ourselves up and trying to change things about ourselves, so at first it might be challenging to find things you truly love about yourself. Do the best you can, though, and if you keep looking I guarantee you will find lots of great things you love and adore about yourself!

Here's an example taken from my own life:

Dear Mary,

I love the fact that you are so committed to personal and spiritual growth, and that you are determined to create your ideal life. I love that you have created a website to help others do that as well, and that your passion is helping others to achieve their wildest dreams. I love that you stay positive even on those days when you don't feel so great, and that you always stay optimistic and focused on your ideal outcome. I love that you are constantly getting to know yourself on deeper levels, and are always improving your relationship with yourself.

*I love you so much,
-Mary*

Feel free to do this exercise several times or as many times as you need to really amp up your self-love. I guarantee you will feel better after doing this, and you may even realize you love things about yourself that you hadn't even thought about!

If you're single and want to manifest your ideal partner this year, write a love letter to yourself from your dream partner. In most cases you probably haven't met them yet or don't know who they are, but use your imagination to think about your ideal partner and think of things that he/she would find particularly attractive or appealing in you. Then write a love letter to yourself from that perspective and sign it from your future partner. You can even keep it and give it to them when they show up in your life!

This can be a useful exercise because sometimes we spend so much time focusing on the type of person we want to attract that we forget to focus on how they're going to treat us. Sure, we want a person with specific qualities, but if they show up and don't love us as we are then we've missed the point entirely. If you've ever met someone who has all the qualities you're looking for but they're just not that into you, then you know exactly what I'm talking about!

Write away! 😊

Self-Love Saturdays

If you follow me on Twitter, then you know that I recently initiated a new tradition called **Self-Love Saturdays**. I've been on my own self-love kick the past couple months, and the addition of Self-Love Saturdays to my life has been a perfect complement to everything else I've been doing. I'm even considering making it a weekly occurrence!

For me, this basically means setting aside an entire day, just for me. I have the whole day to do whatever I like, no questions asked. On these days I've intentionally not made any plans, so I have the entire day for me, tending to and nurturing myself however I see fit. I've been doing things like napping, taking long baths, meditating, attending yoga classes, doing the Mirror Exercise, reading, watching movies by candlelight, listening to peaceful music and soothing visualizations, etc. You get the idea! Obviously, depending on what you like to do, these things may or may not appeal to you so feel free to substitute other activities.

The point of having a self-love day is to create some time and space for YOU, and indulge in whatever your heart desires. For me, it's rest and relaxation. For others, it's going for a long run or playing a game of tennis that they can't normally fit into their schedule. Some people (not me!) might feel better running tons of errands and checking things off their to-do list. *Whatever calls to you, that's what you do on your self-love day.*

By setting aside an entire day for yourself (or even an hour if that's all you have), you are signaling to both yourself and the Universe that you are important and that you are making yourself a priority. **Remember, the way we treat ourselves is the way the world around us will treat us, so the higher we value ourselves the higher everyone else will value us!** If you have a family or children it may be unrealistic to dedicate an entire day to yourself, but I still encourage you to slip away for an hour or two if you can and devote that time to yourself. An on-the-go yoga class or a quick walk in the park will do wonders for you.

Above all, it's important on your self-love day to periodically check in with yourself to make sure that what you're doing is what your body needs at that time. You may have set aside time to take a nap or read a book, but then realize that what your body actually needs is a walk outside in the fresh air. Be flexible and open to changing your plans! Again, this is all about you and giving yourself whatever you need. **No questions asked and no guilt allowed!**

Keeping a Love Journal

One of my favorite techniques for creating my ideal life and making things happen is keeping a Positive Evidence Journal. This is a journal in which you record evidence that whatever it is you desire is on its way to you. Not only does this help you keep your thoughts and feelings positive and in a good vibration, but it also speeds up your manifestation because it keeps you focused on what you are trying to create!

I have so much fun keeping evidence journals that awhile back I decided to create an evidence journal with a twist... I started keeping a **Love Journal**. Instead of listing all the evidence that a particular goal or thing is on its way to me, I list all the ways *I'm loved*. And let me tell you, I have more love in my life than I ever realized!

To keep a Love Journal, all you need is a journal, a pen, and the willingness to open yourself up to more love than you ever imagined was possible! Every day at the end of the day, preferably right before going to bed, take out your journal and list 5-10 things that demonstrate how loved you really are. Not only will this show you how much love is already present in your life, but thanks to the law of attraction it will also allow you to start attracting even more love into your life! (Remember, whatever you focus on expands...)

Although you can certainly list ways that you feel loved by your significant other, you also want to focus on other ways you feel loved in general. Have fun with this and really let your imagination run wild with all the various ways you are loved. You can list ways you feel loved by individual people, your pets, random strangers, the Universe, God or your Higher Power, life as a whole, etc.

Some examples might be:

- That person at the bank let me go in front of them today.
- My significant other brought flowers home unexpectedly.
- My dog gave me sloppy kisses at the end of the day.
- I got a raise and promotion at work!

To really amp up your self-love, be sure to list ways you love yourself as well, like:

- I allowed myself to indulge in a warm bubble bath after work.
- I didn't beat myself up for missing my workout this morning.
- I did the Mirror Exercise every day this week.

Again, really allow yourself to get creative with all the different ways you are loved. Also, feel free to decorate the cover of your journal if it helps you get in the spirit!

Keep doing this exercise regularly and I think you will be astonished by how loved you really are, no matter what is currently going on in your life!

About the Author



My name is Mary Knebel and I'm known on-line as the Self Help Goddess, because I love finding, reading, and reviewing the best self help books and products out there to help others create their ideal lives. It has been a passion of mine since I was a little girl to create the life of my dreams, and now I hope to inspire others to do the same!

For additional self-love resources and reviews of the best self help resources I've found over the years, visit my website at www.selfhelpgoddess.com and my blog at <http://blog.selfhelpgoddess.com>. You will find lots of information in both places that will help you achieve more success in all areas of your life.

My ebook, "*Secrets to Creating Your Ideal Life*," is also a great source of information that will help you make 2012 your best year yet! You can learn more and purchase your copy at <http://www.selfhelpgoddess.com/selfhelpebook.html>.

Finally, stay tuned as I will be unveiling a new website very soon, to help conscious entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs-to-be who are yearning to uncover their deepest passions, attract their ideal clients, increase their income, and create their ideal lifestyle!