



# Self-Love Journey

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## Step 11: Cultivating the Relationship

Partners are meant to cultivate one another. That is their role within the relationship, and if cultivation does not take place more or less consistently, it reflects a problem in the relationship, a problem that may erode its very foundations until the bond collapses, unless a change occurs.

So it is with a person and themselves. One must cultivate oneself; otherwise, the relationship one has with oneself will fade, regress, and deteriorate into less healthy, less pleasant versions of self relationship.

Before we deepen this worldview, it is worth clarifying the concept of cultivation, so that we can be sure we are all referring to the same idea when we speak about it.

Cultivation is a kind of intentional engagement that encourages development, positive change, growth, and improvement. A person who experiences cultivation expands their abilities and possibilities, reaching places they could not reach without it. Cultivation is characterized by continuity and consistency. It cannot occur only occasionally. It reflects an ongoing attitude, a desire to help a person bring out the best in themselves, without pressure or unrealistic expectations for rapid progress, and without pushing beyond what that person can handle at a given time.

Cultivation can also be seen as a protective and nourishing environment, a kind of womb that improves environmental conditions and ensures they are suited to a person's developmental needs. Cultivation requires intention, attention, willingness, and of course... love.

One can cultivate only someone who is willing to receive cultivation. One can cultivate someone who agrees to undergo change and to face their weaker points. One can cultivate someone who is open to some help yet will not become dependent on it nor negate themselves in order to receive the cultivation. Cultivation benefits not only the one who is cultivated; in optimal conditions, the one who cultivates also gains from the process and delights in its results.

Now we must ask a fundamental and essential question, one that profoundly echoes the foundations of self love within every person:

Am I ready to be cultivated? Am I truly willing to undergo cultivation? Do I have enough love for myself to receive additions, help, inspiration, and encouragement for positive changes, growth, and transformation?

Are you ready to be cultivated?

Do not answer this question too quickly.

It is better to pause, to linger, and to examine. As long as we lack sufficient self love, our capacity to receive cultivation remains limited. A person who is ready to be cultivated is a person who believes they deserve it. Such a person is ready to be at the center of attention, to declare their innate and permanent right to receive whatever is necessary to feel better, to be happy, to fulfill themselves, and to free themselves from what holds them back.

Self love is measured exactly here. It is tested in this point of readiness.

Too many people are convinced that they do not deserve to receive much more in life than they have now. Too many struggle to allow cultivation that could come easily and without excessive effort, simply because their love for themselves is underdeveloped and not at the top of their priorities.

Do you have enough love for yourself to be cultivated? And if yes, is it clear to you that the one who is meant to give you that cultivation and the atmosphere for it is you yourself?

Moreover, do you have the readiness to take upon yourself the commitment to self cultivation? Is it clear to you that this is a long term commitment that must be taken seriously, studied in depth, and practiced with devotion? Are we truly ready for self cultivation?

There is no need to answer all these questions right away. They are meant mainly to awaken the muscles of self love within us. Readiness and the ability to cultivate ourselves develop over time, becoming clearer as the journey unfolds, until they turn into practical and available tools. For now, all we need to do is to ask the questions and explore the matter of self cultivation more deeply.

As we allow ourselves to explore these questions, over time we can observe everything that self cultivation entails, the work of self love that must be done to turn this idea and worldview into a living, tangible reality.

How will you cultivate yourself more? What are the ways you need for self cultivation?

Before answering this question, it is wise to pause, because the answers lie within you and only within you. What works for others may not work for you. What promotes others may not promote you. What others need in order to develop may not be what you need. Your path of self cultivation is known to you alone, even if at this moment it is not entirely clear.

And what can help you know your path of cultivation better?

You may have guessed... self love. Only self love. Self love that contains self loyalty, self listening, self understanding, and self preference will guide you toward your right path, your ways of cultivation, your authentic passions, and the directions of change that suit you and only you. The more we love ourselves in a healthy and conscious way, paying attention again and again to our need for self support, to the daily smile in the mirror, to consideration for ourselves, and to kind words from ourselves to ourselves, the easier it becomes to sense what is right for us, what we deserve, what is worthy for us, and what nourishes our soul.

Your self cultivation might also involve ending certain patterns and habits. How can you discover that? How can you know what is right to stop, and whether it is time to do so?

You learn this from self love. From self love we learn to trust our inner voices and to criticize them less. From self love we discover our basic need and right to broad and generous cultivation, cultivation that does not have to come at anyone else's expense, yet whose absence signals that our soul remains hungry and in distress. From self love we understand that without cultivation we are weaker, more vulnerable, and less joyful.

Therefore, this is your task. Your task is to cultivate the relationship with yourself and to regard it as a project of great importance. You are to appreciate yourself a bit more each day, to make efforts for your own sake, to stop unnecessary overexertion, and to be more considerate toward yourself. Soften your criticism, expand your tolerance toward yourself, and speak to yourself more gently and kindly. From here everything will begin to evolve. From here the path of self cultivation opens wide and becomes ever more practical and tangible.

### **Practice Questions (Answer in handwriting or share in a practice group):**

1. How do you feel about the expression “**self cultivation**”?
2. Which things would you like to **no longer be part of your life**, for example **one year from today**?
3. What do you think might happen if you **place more trust in your inner voice** and **stop criticizing it**?
4. What do you most need right now in terms of **strengthening or improving your self cultivation**, in any area that may be relevant?
5. What **gift** would you like to **buy for yourself or provide for yourself** today or in the coming days?
6. Any other thoughts or feelings about this step that you would like to share?