



Self-Love Journey

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Step 26 :The Most Effective Armor

Whether we acknowledge it or ignore it, whether we agree or do not agree, reality will not completely change regarding the environmental harms that befall us and will befall us in the future. We live in a space in which, both emotionally and physically, there is potential for injury and for negative changes, and there is no way to change this. What we can do is prepare ourselves better for these unpleasant surprises, and arrive equipped with the best tools that will help us be harmed less, and face these stimuli in a way that will improve our ability to cope.

Self-love is one of the most important means available to us for preparing for the unpleasant things we will meet over the course of our lives and for the immediate response we can provide when such things occur.

However, it is important to emphasize and to place matters in the right proportions, self-love does not mean closing our eyes and it does not mean trying to evade what is unpleasant, incorrect, dangerous, or not nice. Self-love does not create for us a quiet space that is free of problems and free of disturbances. Self-love does not erase hatred within us or within others. Self-love does not perform a kind of hocus pocus that turns the world into a place empty of crimes, of wars, of injustice, and of destruction. We are still very far from that.

What self-love can do, and quickly, is change the way we feel and respond when we encounter the not so beautiful sides of the world.

The dangers will remain the same dangers. The distortions will continue to be the same distortions. The criminals will continue to commit crimes and the corrupt will continue to corrupt. Yet self-love can help us greatly reduce the injury, the pain, and the suffering that these may cause us, and lead us to a position in which we can give a helpful response to the difficulties and the troubles that accompany the place in which we live.

It is important to emphasize this point, because not a few people err in the way they evaluate a tool like self-love and in the way they try to use it as a means of escaping the difficult truths of our lives. With all the wonderful feelings that self-love can provide a person, and it does so abundantly and generously, it never causes a quick and sharp erasure of the great problems that have arisen in human society, among other reasons due to its chronic and great distancing from values of love in its various forms. The road to deep social change is very long and will certainly take many years. We are here to make the small possible changes within a comprehensive journey of healing and of changing what exists.

A failure to understand this subject greatly undermines the way in which self-love can positively influence our lives. It does not seek an easy life for itself, it does not ask to bypass the dark, the ugly, the harmful, the painful, the injurious, and the destructive, it does not ignore them and it does not try to create quick magic solutions, rather it confronts the most difficult factors in life. Self-love grants us a better way to look at the bleak reality we sometimes encounter, not in order to leap over it or to tell ourselves that we can distance ourselves very far from environmental problems because we have self-love, but because we cannot.

Through self-love we can look at reality with open eyes, and at the same time equip ourselves with an endless supply of self-love, and it will stabilize us, shake us free of unnecessary fears and self-judgment, and grant us the right inner space to face what exists with courage and with creativity. This is what self-love does for us, while the bad continues to be bad, and while the vulnerabilities of life continue to burden us as they always have.

Why is this so important?

How can self-love so significantly change the way we face environmental harms?

To answer this question we must understand a strange yet important mechanism that operates within us. At times when we experience distress or difficulty we tend not to love ourselves, not to appreciate ourselves, and not to support ourselves. We can rather easily be swept into drama, feel heartache and sorrow, feel that once again we were wronged, become stressed and confused. Dramas have a power of their own. We are influenced by what happens, and certainly by events connected to us. Yet what is most important in this negative influence is our moving away from the beneficial connection with ourselves and the tendency to respond, to think, and to act from a mood that contains only a little love, a little self-confidence, a little faith that the situation can be improved, and a little self-support.

Self-love is usually the main factor that we lack when we are facing a problem, even if we did not generate the difficulty and even if we did nothing that created this problem. A lack of self-love is the central factor that causes us emotional distress and greatly narrows our repertoire of responses. Due to this lack we become victims of the situation, and accordingly the injury will intensify. When we fill ourselves with self-love, the pain will not be spared us, but the speed of healing and the effectiveness of our coping will increase greatly.

Hidden within this message is an essential code for healthy and satisfying life. The code presents an equation connected to the role of self-love in our lives.

The presence or absence of self-love largely determines the root of the problem and the level of harm done to us. A problem tests, as it were, our resilience and our level of self-love. When self-love increases within us, a large portion of problems pass by us and we do not notice them at all. The problems that do pass through us and affect us cause little damage. Self-love helps us not only to overcome problems more quickly, but also to remain with a positive residue and with optimism for a deeper change in the future.

When we face problems and environmental harms, we understand that self-love is lacking, and the very lack intensifies the problem. When we pause for a moment the flow of thoughts and restore self-love to ourselves even when we are at the height of negative drama, we change reality and turn what is bad, dangerous, and distorted into a state that we can contain, look at, recruit toward it courage, compassion, and empathy, and protect our values and our interests effectively.

There is fear, there is difficulty, there is violence, there are unnecessary wars, there are arbitrary injuries, there are dangers and accidents. All these are part of life. Yet when self-love becomes stronger, these factors disturb us less and undermine less the stability and the meaning of our lives. Self-love saves our lives.

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

1. Have you already made important self love choices or decisions that helped you get out of a complicated or difficult situation?
2. How can self love currently protect you from unwanted situations or experiences?
3. Pay attention to a certain area in your life that is not functioning well. What is the state of your self love there? Are you willing to try making a deliberate increase in that area?
4. What social advantages do you think a person has when their self love is well developed?

5. Does your self love sometimes invite you to challenge yourself with a future change that feels a bit far reaching for you?
6. Anything else you would like to share? Feelings, thoughts or questions about this step?