



Self-Love Journey

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Step 34: Optimism, A Super-Task

I want to offer you a friendly and generous suggestion that is worthwhile to remember, a suggestion that will accompany you everywhere and with time becomes more and more rewarding, mainly for people who understand how important self-love is and how worthy is the effort we invest in order to cultivate it and to amplify it. This suggestion is one of the foundations of the positive and healthy human spirit and of the power of a person to create important changes that make life, one's own life and the life of others, better and more worthy.

I suggest that you place your optimism on a regular basis in a very high place in your priorities, your goals, your aims, and your values. Optimism is one of the most important tools available to a person, and without it one's life is more difficult, more complicated, more frustrating, and more painful than the life of one who has identified the possibility and the ability to promote optimism to a central and stable place in one's life.

Optimism is a super-task for people of self-love, and it is one of the central reasons for excitement in matters of self-love. We are here, in this journey, not only to learn to live better with ourselves, but to receive the right and effective tools for cultivating optimism. Optimism, or its absence, will determine what we do, what we choose, what we decide, where we can grow, and what we can face in a more correct and faster manner.

It is important to clarify that optimism is not a defective or unrealistic perception of reality. Optimism is not an escape from reality and not an attempt to forcibly paint hard life in pink colors that do not match what exists. Absolutely not. Optimism is a kind of ability, a kind of choice that comes from a healthy and positive charge within a person, to see the positive and hope-inspiring parts within reality.

The mature and developed optimistic person does not ignore problems, pains, dangers, or fears. The optimistic person does not try forcibly to escape from a pessimistic mood. The optimistic person learns to see sparks of light in the darkness without ignoring the existence of the darkness. That person sees what exists, but interprets it differently. That

person understands exactly what is happening, but does not hasten to despair and to flee into a gloomy mood that reflects helplessness, lack of ability, and lack of creative ways to cope with what exists. The optimistic person is the braver and the more inspiring one, in that this person does not rush to eulogize oneself or the situation and continues to seek, despite the difficulty, reasons to believe that there is a chance that things will improve.

Optimism is the force that moves human creativity, ingenuity, originality, and the aspiration for development and positive changes. When there is no optimism it will be very difficult for us to move, to try, to cope, and to give of our good and healthier parts when we come to address the challenges of our life. Without optimism we will not see the horizon toward which we can advance, a horizon in which things will be more worthy and more worthwhile. Without optimism our possibilities narrow and with them the tools available to us for self-realization and for other things we would like to receive in life.

Optimism, contrary to what many think, is a skill and an ability that can and must be cultivated. Optimism does not arise by itself in a few lucky people. Optimism can be attained through self-work that always includes the mission of increasing self-love, now and in the future. Optimism is a kind of muscle whose functioning capacity can be strengthened, and when this is not done, a person is flooded by cynical pessimism that we have all met within us and encountered in others.

Those people who claim passionately that self-love is silly and too spiritual, that it is cultivated only by strange people, tree huggers, or people who are not grounded, also claim with the same degree of inner conviction that optimism is the lot of only the naive, people who do not understand what really happens, who ignore real problems, who supposedly run away from coping and avoid the hard and gray work of life. These people do not notice that their arguments are weak and that the truth is entirely the opposite. It will be very difficult, if at all possible, to convince them of their mistake, but at least we, the people of self-love, should understand what is right and who is correct.

As stated, the truth is entirely the opposite. Pessimism is the lot of the weaker. Pessimism is a place of fear to which people flee who are too lazy to cultivate their positive qualities, first and foremost of course self-love. Self-love, love in general, hope, and optimism are risks that some people avoid taking for fear that something will not work out for them. They fear the pains of love, so they flee from it. They fear failure or loss, so they do not take risks. They fear cultivating hope lest they be disappointed. They fear optimism because it requires courage, determination, and the ability to confront the environment that tries to persuade them that things cannot work out for them beyond what society plans for them.

The pain that these people experienced when sometimes optimism did not justify itself presents to them a kind of proof, so they think, that there is no point in hoping and aspiring for good, because bad will come. These people are the weaker ones and they are the ones who lose broad parts of what realistic reality offers. They are the ones who narrow their life to a narrow range, without risks and without chances, in which their pessimism proves itself, and the optimism of others is perceived as foreign, frightening, and dangerous. They do not have enough self-love to question the state into which they have fallen. They do not have enough self-love to understand that they themselves created this false reality in which pessimism has much more space than optimism.

The adherents of positive psychology claim that this is indeed the case and that it is advisable to adopt more optimistic thinking patterns and to eliminate from our awareness the pessimistic, cynical, and hopeless components, because optimism is healthier and benefits a person. Thus the recognition spreads among many people that it is worthwhile to accustom themselves to think positively because then it will be positive.

But many times this does not succeed because it is not enough. As long as we do not create within us the emotional infrastructure for positive thinking and for optimism, we will not succeed in rooting such habits in our awareness. These habits will crumble and disappear in the first crisis that befalls us or when we experience a gloomy, critical, and unfriendly mood.

In other words, as long as the soul does not undergo a change whose meaning is softening and a deep connection to the natural love that exists within it, long-term habits of optimism cannot be adopted. Self-love nourishes optimism and causes it to grow and to remain stable in the face of the many negative stimuli. Self-love is an inseparable part of optimism, and optimism is an inseparable part of self-love. These two factors are elevated expressions of the human soul and constitute the healthiest, most successful, and most rewarding way to live. They will not be understood and accepted by those who have not yet internalized them. If these two factors exist within us, they constitute the main markers that we are properly developing the soul and nourishing ourselves with the finest materials.

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

1. What is your level of optimism these days, in general?
2. Were you equally optimistic five or ten years ago? If not, what has changed?
3. How does self love help you connect to the optimism within you?
4. Can you forgive and be compassionate toward the areas within you that are still too pessimistic?
5. Have you ever tried to “practice” optimism? How do you think self love can support this kind of practice going forward?

6. Anything else you would like to share? Feelings, thoughts or questions about this step?