



Self-Love Journey

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Chapter 4: Narcissism and All the Other Nonsense

Before I address in detail the false, distorted, and confusing notions about self-love, along with the many stereotypes and prejudices about the most wonderful thing a person can do for themselves, I will first state what is far from self-evident, not well known, not sufficiently familiar, and not sufficiently discussed.

There exists a personal and public fear of self-love. Parts of this fear can be partially explained, yet other parts will remain unclear and may only be clarified through a spiritual and comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon. Before we try to understand this fear, we will want to look at it, to get to know it, to acknowledge it, and not to flee from its existence or from its far-reaching implications. Human beings are afraid to love themselves. People learn to recoil from loving themselves. People fear doing the most important and decisive thing in their life, which is to strengthen their positive feelings, first and foremost toward themselves, toward the most important person in their life.

This fear, which can indeed be investigated and explored, determines a large part of the shape and quality of a person's life when it is not sufficiently exposed and is not a subject for engagement and inner work. A lack of self-love leads a person into a kind of addiction in which they do not notice the lack at all. They live in narrow circles of limitation and frustration, while assuming that it is impossible to live in a more benevolent way. The fear of self-love shapes people who are not aware at all of the possibility of such an experience, and certainly not of the path by which it can be strengthened, cultivated, and used as a wondrous tool for better coping with life's challenges.

This is the time to explain and emphasize that precisely in our difficult, frustrating, and lowest moments, we have the ability to use self-love to improve the situation, not only for that moment but also as a way to improve how we will cope later, thanks to the precedent we create when we dedicate a little positive attention to ourselves in the heart of a crisis. The soul remembers for good the small gestures of love, like a stolen smile in the mirror, precisely when we are angry, sad, or even despairing. That small effort to restore self-love is recorded in the system, strengthens the person in the long term, and shortens the duration of the present crisis.

As long as we fear self-love, and from that fear remain ignorant and lacking insight about it, self-love will not be within our reach, and we will suffer more from every

conflict, every misunderstanding, and every friction that will occur in any case between us and what life places before us. We must address this fear through explanations and through the very practice of self-love, since where love is present, there is no possibility for fear to exist.

So what is narcissism?

Narcissism is an emotional phenomenon that was described long ago and is linked to a literary myth about someone who fell deeply in love with himself and, when he saw his reflection in the stream, wanted to come so close to it that he drowned. It can be understood that this myth is also a projection of human fears about self-love, a projection that creates distortions, exaggerations, and many inaccuracies.

The narcissist is a person who is empty inside. He is a person who is in pain and lacking, in whom there is almost no love or trust in love. The narcissist is in such great distress and so lacking in love or self-esteem that he invents a story about himself that he is wonderful, charming, and significant. The narcissist asks for and even demands excessive attention from others and behaves with an exaggerated sense of self-importance, not because he possesses great self-love, but precisely the opposite, because of its deep and unfillable absence. Narcissists are the worst example of self-love, and they are also one of the reasons that we are so afraid to love ourselves, lest we become like them.

Exactly the opposite will happen. The more we love ourselves, the more we will feel full, calm, relaxed, confident, and less dependent on social approval in order to exist or to feel more significant or more liked. Anyone who wants to distance themselves from their own narcissistic tendencies, which exist to some degree in everyone, can do one thing: practice and strengthen self-love. Learn how to fill oneself with positive, light-filled feelings from within, from the abundant source that has always existed within us.

Therefore, self-love is not narcissism. It represents the very opposite. The narcissist is a person who suffers from emotional emptiness. In contrast, a person who loves themselves enjoys emotional fullness and the power to cope in a more effective and creative way with life's challenges.

And what is the relationship between self-love and selfishness?

How many times have we heard ourselves or others rebuke or be rebuked because of actions or choices that seemed to have a tone or quality of selfishness, meaning excessive attention to our own interests, sometimes even before the interests of others?

This is one of the greatest falsehoods that we have invented for ourselves, especially at the social level. It is a falsehood that blurs the authentic emotional reality of every person. It serves a distorted social need to keep all the members of the tribe or group obedient to social codes while neglecting their personal needs. According to many views, society can continue to exist thanks to the consistent contribution of people who supposedly prefer the good of the collective over their personal good. This is the message in public, family, and group arenas about what is supposed to be, what is

right to be, and what ought to be. It is not so. It is nonsense, distorted and even dangerous nonsense.

Every person, everywhere and in every situation, is first and foremost self-interested. Every person is built to think of themselves before all else, and that is right and proper. A mother who sacrifices herself for her children does so because otherwise she would not be able to look herself in the eye in the mirror. She acts according to her values. Every person, even the greatest altruist and volunteer, does everything they do for themselves under the cover of contributing to the environment. They do it because that is what is right and proper for them, because that is what will make them feel that they are good people, and because that is what their soul wants to do. It is their choice, and it is always driven by self-interested needs and values, and there is nothing wrong with that.

We can examine the same issue from a perspective that is even more important and practical.

If the society in which we live, or any group to which we relate, truly wants our good, it should help us strengthen and develop our self-love. If the society that cultivated in us a fear of selfishness really wants us to serve it in the best way, wants us not to distance ourselves from it and not to leave it, and wants us to give it the best within us, it would be better if it stopped demanding repeated proofs of loyalty and consideration for others. Instead, it should encourage us toward greater self-esteem, greater self-consideration, greater self-compassion, and greater self-understanding.

Only then will the result be far better. A person who loves themselves feels fullness, satisfaction, and a desire to give, to help, and to have a positive influence. Such a person will gladly contribute their energy to others without sacrificing their needs. Such a person, who is self-interested in the positive sense of the term, is the best person for themselves, for their family, and for the society in which they live. This is a person who understands the depth of self-love, and this is the person we would all wish to become, someone who directs positive feelings inward in the right way, and from there can flourish beautifully outward.

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

1. Can you now see the importance of placing **yourself at the top of your own priorities**?
2. Can you now notice that the more you **nurture and nourish yourself**, the more you can also be available to others from a **better and more balanced place**?
3. What is the **next gift** you are going to give yourself soon? Write several possibilities.
4. Are you willing to encounter **environmental reactions that may not accept the choices of self love** you may make going forward? Will you be able to explain this path of yours **with patience and compassion**, even if at first you encounter impatience toward it?
5. What do you think might happen if **more people around you improve their ability to love themselves**?
6. Any other thoughts or feelings about this step that you would like to share?