



# Self-Love Journey

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## Step 8: The Best Investment Ever

This is one of the most important and confusing messages to recognize and to face on this journey. One may marvel at the fact that this message is, on the one hand, so true and important, and on the other hand, it is very rare to find people who live by it or who make use of the essential possibilities for improving quality of life that accompany its implementation.

This message presents one of the important paradoxes in human life and explains the way we preserve our problems, become stuck in states of unnecessary suffering, and distance ourselves from possibilities for healing change, development, and growth. As long as this message is not internalized and put into practice, a person will remain far from their natural powers to heal themselves and to bring forth the best that their body and soul can produce.

It is not simple to devote oneself in a committed and consistent way to the work of self-love. It is a challenging undertaking that requires a person to recruit from within, at every possible moment, the strength to smile at the mirror, even when the situation is not pleasant or does not seem suited to smiling. It is a new habit of creating an inner language that will constantly feed the person with content of love, encouragement, support, appreciation, trust, and hope. It is work. It is initiative and effort.

Inner speech of self-love is something one does and chooses to do again and again. We can forgo it and allow critical and hostile voices to take over our awareness. It is important to know that we can operate differently. We can stream within ourselves new voices of gentleness, inclusion, tolerance, and empathy. These voices will gradually fill more and more parts of our inner space and reshape it into a kind of nourishing and safe environment where we can rest, recover, reorganize, refresh, and improve in any domain we desire.

The work required to sustain and increase self-love, work that never truly ends and that will continue to be challenging and not always very comfortable, is the very thing each of us should do while placing this task at the top of our priorities. The reason is simple and clear. Despite persuasive explanations, we often prefer to forget this work and the solid reasons to do it, reasons that everyone would accept.

Why is it recommended to do the required work, which can be somewhat uncomfortable at the beginning, the work that will preserve, cultivate, and increase

self-love? Simply because every other way of conducting life will be harder, more painful, more complicated, more boring, and more disappointing.

Simple, is it not?

When we love ourselves, almost everything in our life becomes more possible, more flowing, more interesting, more creative, and more stimulating. This happens when we stream love from within us into us. The energy of love increases its flow in us, and with it arrive warmth, optimism, passion, hope, enthusiasm, and other good things.

When we love ourselves, problems turn into challenges, and stuck situations turn into subjects for immediate treatment and change. When we do not love ourselves, our self-confidence is low, our self-image is harmed, and we become enslaved to cynicism, to lack of trust, to excessive conservatism, to fears, to norms, and to the expectations of the environment. In the end, life is much more difficult when we love ourselves less. This sounds self-evident.

Why then, although the facts are beyond dispute, do most people avoid doing the not complicated work of cultivating self-love and increasing it consistently?

This also has a rather simple answer, a professional answer that is sharp and clear, which many people do not recognize and are unaware of in terms of its important implications.

When we distance ourselves from our natural ability to love ourselves, we are swept, without choosing it, into inner spaces that are not very different from any addiction one can imagine. It follows that we not only avoid practicing and cultivating love within us, we also become addicted to this state, to the state of non self-love, to the state of not recognizing the ability to maintain within us a nourishing and supportive relationship, to the state of alienation from some of the cornerstones of all forms of love. These cornerstones include recognizing love within us, with ourselves, as a personal, private, high quality, and highly potent experience.

This is the message. It is worthwhile to do the work of self-love regularly and with commitment and to face the moments in which it is more challenging to implement, because every other way of conducting life is more painful, more difficult, and more complicated, even if at the beginning it seems easier and more comfortable.

When we love ourselves less, we are forced to run away from ourselves.

If there is no inner place where it is pleasant for us to be, is it not reasonable that we will want to run away from ourselves for most of the day?

Some will run away to overwork.

Some will run away to overeating.

Some will run away to problems in relationships.

Some will run away to excessive use of substances that dull most experiences of life.

Some will run away to other forms of self-harm and addictions.

Some will run away into frustration, into lack of self-fulfillment, into anger, into burnout, into resentment, into cynicism, into pessimism, and into fatigue.

This is how it works, and the choice is entirely in our hands.

Either we do the work required to maintain and cultivate self-love, or life becomes harder and less rewarding. Either we do the right work, or life becomes harder work that pays less.

Here is the message, and it is very important.

Self-love is the most economical, effective, and reliable way to sustain a healthy and delightful life. Avoiding the work of self-love, and as noted in the previous chapter, self-love is something one feels after doing it, turns life into all those things we would prefer not to experience. If we do not do the work of self-love, we become servants of a low quality of life, servants who must exert much more effort than in places where the work of self-love is done consistently.

The choice in the end is yours, but the facts must be clear. Choose self-love and devote yourself to its work, or everything will be harder and more painful. The choice is yours. The smile is yours. The words are yours. The time has come to choose well. The time has come for ever-increasing self-love thanks to the right work we do for its sake.

**Practice Questions (Please answer in handwriting or share in a practice group):**

1. How do you feel today when you **smile at yourself in the mirror**?
2. Can you recognize that **smiling at the mirror** is a kind of **long term investment in your growth and development**?
3. In what other ways can you now **invest in yourself** by expanding **joy, freedom, lightness, and pleasure** in your life?
4. Which commitments that you currently have are **not truly connected to love for yourself**?
5. Are you willing to take on the commitment to **do everything you can to improve the love you have for yourself every day**? How do you feel about such a commitment?
6. Any other thoughts or feelings about this step that you would like to share?