



Self-Love Journey

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Step 9: The Beautiful Duty

Self-love is a personal duty. A person must love themselves, unless they prefer to live a life of suffering and difficulty that could be avoided if they harnessed themselves with a high level of commitment to the most important thing one can think of that does not create dependence on another person: self-love, inner-love, self-liking, self-empathy, and all that follows from them.

A person who does not accept self-love as a commitment sentences themselves to a life of self-neglect. There is and will be no better way to describe the situation. It does not matter what we have in life from any perspective, whether work, family, partnership, residence, assets, or friends. All of these will remain forever "not enough" and "not satisfying." Something essential will always be missing, like an emotional pit. In the absence of self-love, life is barren of the special spark that can give a person deep meaning and a true reason for existence.

Why must we use the word "duty" when we speak about a subject that is spiritual, tender, moving, and important, like love? How can a word that seems constricting and perhaps threatening connect to one of the most delicate and elevated actions in which a person can take part?

The answer is simple. That is how it works. If we do not commit to self-love in a deep and full way, we are likely to find ourselves captive to everything that is not self-love: self-doubt, self-cancellation, cynicism toward the self, lack of compassion toward the self, inner rigidity, and even self-harm.

A person has no friend as close as themselves. The last thing that can disappear, abandon, die, fade, or disappoint a person is the person themselves. There is nowhere to run from oneself, even if one travels to the end of the world. The self will still come along. Everything else in life is an addition, an important addition, yet it is always connected to the relationship that a person has with themselves.

Moreover, human life mirrors the relationship a person has with themselves. As long as there is no inner peace, self-understanding, inner caress, and self-listening, a person will not be able to receive peace, understanding, kindness, or listening from any external source. What is not present within cannot recognize something similar that arrives from without. All of a person's life depends on their relationship with themselves. Everything that a person has is a product of what is happening within.

Everything that a person lacks is a product of inner lacks. The outer world is a reflection of the inner world.

We human beings are experts at pointing an accusing finger at the circumstances of our life, at our enemies, at our country, at high prices, at bad luck, at those who stole from us, cut us off, did not consider us, did not think of us, and did not give us a worthy place. We can produce an impressive list of reasons that our life does not work out because of various factors that supposedly do not depend on us.

Yet self-love will always be the main reason for the form of life of the mature person. What exists outside is always a reflection of what exists inside. Always. We will not start to accuse ourselves. We usually know how to do that quite well, but it will be of no use. Complaints are not what can create change or heal an unharmonious state.

Only love can heal, and it is best that it fills, and grows within the core from which all things emerge and grow. From the seed of the self, from the beginning of beginnings of every person. Within, with oneself, in one's inner-space, in one's quiet, and in one's truth. Only when love that grows and develops dwells there, in the inner spaces, can the other things, which are nothing but products of a person's behavior and thoughts, also change for the better.

Therefore, it is your duty. It is not a matter of choice, unless you truly have no interest in a life of growth, of genuine joy, of healing what hurts, and of self-fulfillment. If these are truly important to you, it is worth beginning today the journey home, the right work that creates the healthy reality in which love is first understood within, first felt within, first developed within, and then it ripens to go out into the world in any form with which a person wishes to touch and take part.

There are moments in a person's life in which one must stop asking, stop hesitating, stop circling around, and stop wondering. There are moments in which we must relate to certain matters in a sharp, clear, and uncompromising way. There is and will be nothing more important for a person than the possibility of experiencing love within, in one's inner-world, and from there bringing it outward to wherever one desires. There is no argument about this, nor should there be. There are no doubts and no questions. This is one of those matters that a person must decide about in a way that cannot be interpreted in two ways, because there is no other possibility.

When we are in an intimate relationship, it is clear to both sides that each has feelings of love toward the other. There is no other option. If a question arises regarding the place of love between partners, it expresses an inner contradiction and an undermining of the foundations of close human connection. If there is no love, there is no meaningful intimate relationship, and it has no existence and no future. More than that, such a relationship constitutes ongoing harm and erosion of a person's ability to enjoy the depths of intimacy and all the good that it brings.

All of us will always be in an intimate relationship with ourselves. The level of this intimacy is unprecedented and cannot be truly described or explained. We live inside ourselves, with ourselves, next to ourselves, and around ourselves. We are always with ourselves, and there is no other way. We are in an inner partnership from the moment we are born until the moment we complete the current cycle. Is it possible

that this intimacy will not be based on meaningful and growing love? Is there any other way at all?

Therefore, it is your duty, because in every period of your life, your presence will remain attached to you. Your reflection will insist on appearing again whenever your gaze meets the mirror. You will have no other way to pass the barriers and hurdles that have been built around you on the way to a better life, to self-fulfillment, and to healing what hurts. There will be no other way but to generate within yourself a foundation of love that is not dependent on any external factor, a love that invents itself from within itself, and that belongs to you with full and exclusive ownership.

Self-love is not a nice addition or a luxury, only when there is free time after all the supposedly more important things. Self-love is the oxygen of the developing soul, and it is the chance of the recovering soul to face what truly hurts. Approaching life without a supply of self-love means working too hard, getting results that are too poor, and being caught in cycles of addiction and clinging to completely unnecessary suffering.

Therefore, it is your duty not to give up, and to activate mechanisms of self-love even when it is hard and uncomfortable. Cultivating self-love must be seen as a great commitment, the greatest commitment that exists, because no other commitment will bear fruit unless self-love stands at the top of the priorities. First of all we must love from within, and then it will be much easier to love, and at times even to tolerate, the people close to us. When something so beautiful lives within us, no external event, even a difficult one, will defeat us, collapse us, or shake us. Inside, whole love awaits us, our love for ourselves.

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

1. Can you now connect the expressions “**obligation**” and “**self love**”?
2. What happens to you when you **forget to love yourself**?
3. Is there really any reason for you to **be unkind to yourself** or **not smile at yourself in the mirror**, and in general?
4. Can you identify **problematic areas in your life** as places where **love toward yourself is also missing**? Can you imagine that there may be a connection between **a lack of self love and the persistence of problems**?
5. Do you believe that **love can create miracles**? And if so, would you like to be **the magician who changes your life through the magic wand of self love**?
6. Any other thoughts or feelings about this step that you would like to share?