

LESSON 1- LOVE YOURSELF

Loving yourself (Healing your childhood)

This where it all starts!

“There is only one of us here: What we give to others, we give to ourselves. What we withhold from others, we withhold from ourselves. In any moment, when we choose fear instead of love, we deny ourselves the experience of Paradise.”

- Marianne Williamson

What does “love yourself” mean exactly? For some people, self-love means shopping at brand stores, driving a nice car, or getting a massage. There is nothing wrong with those things, except they only bring short-term satisfaction. This type of self-love wears off as soon as the experience is over. It is impossible for us to maintain lasting inner peace and contentment through it. True self-love, on the other hand, requires cultivating a certain way of being with ourselves, a way of self - approval and self - acceptance. It requires us to find our inner peace, and rest comfortably within the depths of our being. Getting there is not an easy process. We need to look within, find our truth, and align with our life’s purpose.

Most of us hold a certain dose of self- criticism, guilt, or judgment. Those feelings cause most of our problems and prevents us from manifesting our dream life. To become our IDEAL self, we need to release all of our negative self - beliefs. This is the first step on the path of manifestation.

The first time I started practicing “loving myself”, was during a very dark period

in my life. I was working long hours in finance, and hated my job, but needed to pay the bills. I could not see a way out of the situation. Some days, I would just come home and sit on the couch and cry. I was too exhausted to go outside or see anyone. I am sure you have been in a similar situation. Whether it's a horrible job, or a bad relationship, we have all been stuck at some point in our lives.

So, what are you supposed to do? How do you find a way out? I started by repeating the mantra, suggested by Louise Hay "*I love and approve of myself.*" Initially, I didn't think much of it. After all, I considered myself an expert in the self – help industry. I had read every spiritual book out there, and intellectualized the concepts, although never fully embodying them. I was desperate at the time, so I decided to try. What if this mantra could actually work? I started repeating it day and night, giving it my all. The mantra became part of my conscious awareness throughout the day. I found myself waking up in the middle of the night repeating, "I love and approve of myself", getting a Starbucks coffee repeating "I love and approve of myself," going for a run repeating, "I love and approve of myself". Once I laughed myself silly at the repetition of it.

Go ahead, take a look at your life. What are your patterns? Are you constantly attracting the wrong men or women, taking care of everyone else and putting yourself last? Sit down and write down your life story. Go into detail, what happened to you when you were between the ages of 1 to 5, 5 to 10, 20, 30 and 40? Think about your childhood. How did it feel? What beliefs did you create? What type of relationships did your parents have? How did they treat you? Were you spoiled, or were you the caretaker? Research shows that we form our beliefs up until the age of 7.

If you grew up in a tough environment or in a dysfunctional family, you are likely to attract the same type of situations later in life. You will make sure your job and relationships are hard. Your patterns will be repeating over, and over again, until you notice and decide to make a change. Do you see the same situation, feeling, or type of person repeating? Once you identify your patterns, it is easier to shift them. The universe is self – correcting. It will bring us the same experiences until we take notice and decide to change our belief systems so that we can manifest our ultimate purpose. The things we came here to do. Abundance does not have to be restricted to money only. It also includes health, relationships, career, and ultimately, inner peace. What are you supposed to do in order to achieve it?

Think about the things you're able to do for a loved one. Mothers lift cars to save their kids. The same is true for you. If you work on cultivating self - love, you will be able to access the inner strength, necessary to make a change. "LOVING YOURSELF" is the first and most essential step of making the shift. It can be a hard and painful process. Do not delay, until you have the perfect life, career, or partner. You deserve happiness now, just because you exist. No need to be or achieve anything else. The time is NOW. Make a commitment, plant a seed, and promise to love yourself!

Follow the exercises below, until you notice a shift within. This is the first step that will set you on the path of self – transformation. From here on, the rest will unfold naturally.

Practical Exercises: 1) Start repeating this simple mantra throughout the day,

"I love and approve of myself".

A “mantra” is a sentence that you repeat, until it becomes part of your conscious awareness.

When you wake up, go stand in front of the mirror and say, “I love and approve of myself”. Repeat the mantra throughout the day, in the morning and at night, before you go to sleep. Practice, until you feel this statement true in your heart. Notice what does come up for you? It may feel weird at first and might not make much sense – or not feel like it’s “true” for you. Repeat the mantra anyway. Your subconscious mind knows the meaning. After a while, the words will reach your heart. Don’t worry about how this works. Just trust the process and open your mind.

If you repeat the mantra “I love and approve of myself,” and listen quietly, you will notice the change. First your thoughts will start shifting, then your values, and finally your belief system. You will be responding differently to situations, and before you know it, your reality will change. For this mantra to have an effect, you need to actually say it in your mind, or out loud constantly throughout the day. Simply reading about it, or understanding the concept, will not produce results!

I will explore further the way our subconscious mind learns in the next chapters to provide clarification as to why we need to repeat these words for our beliefs to shift. For now, please trust the process and keep an open mind.

Here are the steps for this chapter:

1) Exercise one: Reprogram your brain to self- love and acceptance. Find a quiet place, or simply repeat the sentence in your mind, “I love and approve of myself”. Wake up and go in front of the mirror, repeat the mantra. Start brushing your teeth, while repeating the mantra. All the way through breakfast, through your day and until the evening before you go to bed, keep repeating it; anytime thoughts drift, keep coming back to this mantra. Do not move to the second meditation before you have completed this one.

2) Inner Child meditation: Ho'oponopono

(I love you, I am sorry, Please forgive me, Thank you!) is an ancient Hawaiian healing method popularized by Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len. The psychiatrist used this technique to cure a whole ward of mentally ill patients in Hawaii. Ho'oponopono states that we are responsible for creating our own reality, and so we have the ability to change it. It is a technique based on the teachings of the Kahunas, who are the spiritual teachers or

shamans in Hawaii. Most of their practices are kept secret and not shared with outsiders. Dr. Hew Len was trained in their tradition, in addition to receiving a western style education in psychology.

The way to perform his inner child meditation is by cultivating a relationship with our inner child, or our subconscious mind. Our subconscious is one with the collective, and it is where we store all the pain, and the memories replaying. Our conscious mind is the mother of all creation. Through Ho'oponopono meditation, we work on cultivating the relationship between the two. The way to clear is to access our inner child and ask for permission to let go. It is not necessary for us to understand what is causing the pain.

Simply cultivating our relationship with the inner child lets us access this knowledge, so we can let go and clear the pain.

Sit in a comfortable position, in a quiet place. You can place your hand on your heart. Play some relaxing music or light a candle. Close your eyes and breathe for couple of minutes. Imagine yourself as a little kid. How did you look, what did you wear, what kind of hair did you have? Then say to your inner child, "I acknowledge your presence in me". Sit quietly and continue breathing. Notice what feelings come up? Then talk to your inner child, "I love you". Keep repeating this sentence couple of times. Continue breathing and expanding your heart. Acknowledge the pain that is coming up and say, "I am sorry, please forgive me". After a couple of minutes, ask your inner child for permission to gently stroke its hair. See yourself doing it. As you stroke the top of its head, talk to it, "I love you. Please forgive me. I am sorry". Take an inventory of all the stuff that is coming up and ask your inner child to let go. Then ask for permission to hug it very gently. Talk to your inner child, "Thank you for being part of me. I am sorry for all the pain and suffering you've experienced. Please, please forgive me."

Ask your inner child to hold its hand. Gently take it, and say again "I love you, thank you for being part of me. Please forgive me." Take another inventory of what is coming up. It could be financial or relationships patterns for you. Ask your inner child gently to let it go. Release the memories replaying in your mind.

Think of what is going on in your life right now. Maybe you have overdrawn your bank account, or you are going through a foreclosure. Ask your inner child to let go. Then ask permission to take its other hand. Gently grasp it and stroke it. Ask yourself what is going on with you, that you are experiencing relationship problems? You do not need to

know what the reason is for what you are experiencing. Just ask your inner child, to please let go.

The relationship between your conscious mind and your subconscious is the most important relationship you need to cultivate. Acknowledging the presence of your subconscious starts off the healing process. Gently ask your inner child for permission to hold its shoulders and talk to it again, "I love you. Please forgive me, I am sorry for all the pain, you've experienced. Thank you for being part of me." Notice again, what is coming up for you? What kind of thoughts, or feelings? Financial problems? Relationships trauma? Any other difficult situations? Gently ask your inner child to let go. Acknowledge its presence in you. Say again, "I love you, thank you for being part of me. I am sorry for all the pain from the beginning of time that you have been carrying. Please forgive me for ignoring you. I am sorry. I love you, thank you for being part of me. Thank you for being willing to let go. So that together, we can be free."

You can read this meditation first couple of times, so you can memorize it before practicing. It is recommended to practice for at least couple of weeks, 10 minutes in the morning and/or in the evening, until you notice a shift within.

3) Open heart meditation:

I first read about this meditation in the book *Calling in the One* by Katherine Woodward Thomas. It is based on a yogic exercise for opening the heart. Sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and breathe for couple of minutes, focusing on your third eye, or the space between your eyebrows. Stretch your arms out in front of you, palms together, elbows straight, with your arms parallel to the floor. As you inhale, through your nose, open your arms widely to the sides, imagining

you are opening your wings. Repeat 20 times. Place your awareness on your heart. Fill your lungs with air. With each inhalation, repeat silently to yourself:

"I open myself fully to give and receive love."

Practice in the morning, or any time it is comfortable for you. You may experience a slight pain in the chest area, as you expand. This is normal, as part of the process of opening your heart. Keep a journal for any feelings that may arise, or things that happen to you through the days of your practice. It is important to feel safe as you are doing this exercise. It is ok for you to open your heart, as you are protected. Promise your inner

child, you will take care of it, and not let anyone hurt it. This will help you relax and feel safe, while opening your heart.