

10 Ways to Love Yourself

by Louise Hay

- 1) "Probably the most important key is to **stop criticizing yourself**. If we tell ourselves that we are okay, no matter what is going on, we can make changes in our lives easily. It is when we make ourselves bad that we have great difficulty. We all change -- everyone. Every day is a new day, and we do things a little differently than we did the day before. Our ability to adapt and flow with the process of life is our power.



Those who have come from dysfunctional homes often have become super-responsible and have gotten in the habit of judging themselves unmercifully. They have grown up amidst tension and anxiety. The message they get as children of dysfunctional homes is: "There must be something wrong with me." Think for a moment about the words you use when scolding yourself. Some of the phrases people tell me are: stupid, bad boy, bad girl, useless, careless, dumb, ugly, worthless, sloppy, dirty, etc. Are these the same words you use now when describing yourself?

There is a tremendous need to build self-worth and value in ourselves, because when we feel not good enough, we find ways to keep ourselves miserable. We create illness or pain in our bodies; we procrastinate about things that would benefit us; we mistreat our bodies with food, alcohol, and drugs.

We are all insecure in some ways because we are human. Let us learn NOT to pretend that we are perfect. Having to be perfect only puts immense pressure on ourselves, & it prevents us from looking at areas of our lives that need healing. Instead, we could discover our creative distinctions, our individualities, & appreciate ourselves for the qualities that set us apart from others. Each one of us has a unique role to play on this earth, and when we are critical of ourselves, we obscure it."

- 2) "We must also **stop scaring ourselves**. Many of us terrorize ourselves with frightful thoughts & make situations worse than they are. We take a small problem and make it into a big monster. It's a terrible way to live, always expecting the worst out of life. Examples: Someone makes a remark at work, and you begin to think you're going to be fired. You build these paralyzing thoughts in your mind. Remember, these frightening thoughts are negative affirmations. OR, people who are ill often visualize the worst or they are immediately planning their funerals. OR, someone doesn't call you immediately, and you decide that you are totally unlovable and you'll never have another relationship again, feeling abandoned and rejected.



If you find yourself habitually reviewing a negative thought or situation in your mind, find an image of something you really would like to replace it with. It could be a beautiful view, or a sunset, or flowers, a sport, or anything you love. Use that image as your switch-to image every time you find that you are scaring yourself. Say to yourself, "No, I'm not going to think about that anymore. I'm going to think about sunsets, roses, Paris, yachts or waterfalls, or whatever your image is." If you keep doing this, eventually you will break the habit."

- 3) "Another way is to **be gentle and kind and patient with yourself**. Impatience is a resistance to learning. We want the answers without learning the lesson or doing the steps that are necessary. Think of your mind as if it were a garden. If you take loving care and attention to this garden, it gradually keeps improving and will blossom. The same with your mind --- you select the thoughts that will nurtured, & with patience they grow and contribute to creating the garden of experiences you want."

4) "We must learn to **be kind to our minds**. Let's not hate ourselves for having negative thoughts. We can think of our thoughts as building us up rather than beating us up. We don't have to blame ourselves for negative experiences, but can learn from these experiences. Being kind to ourselves means we stop all blame, all guilt, all punishment, and all pain. Relaxation is absolutely necessary for tapping into the Power within, because if you are tense & frightened, you shut off your energy. As you become tense, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and release whatever tension you are carrying. As you exhale, become centered & say to yourself silently: "I love you. All is well." You will then notice how much calmer you feel."

5) "The next step is to **praise yourself**. Criticism breaks down the inner spirit, and praise builds it up. When you berate yourself, you belittle the Power that created you. Begin with little things."

6) "Loving yourself means **supporting yourself**. Reach out to friends and allow them to help you. You really are being strong when you ask for help when you need it. Support groups can help, like 12 step-groups."

7) "**Love your negatives**. No matter what negative situation you are in, it's there for a reason; otherwise you wouldn't have it in your life."

8) "**Take care of your body**." Drug and alcohol abuse, overeating, and smoking are just some of the substances we take into our bodies to numb out the pain, and deal with life better. But, the sad fact is that it doesn't help make it better. Take care of yourself, exercise regularly so your body can help support you in whatever comes your way.

9) "I often **emphasize the importance of mirror work** in order to find out the cause of an issue that keeps us from loving ourselves. Try looking in the mirror the first thing in the morning and say, "I love you. What can I do for you today? How can I make you happy?" Listen to your inner voice, and start following through with what you hear. Then, if something unpleasant happens to you during the day, go to the mirror and say: "I love you anyway."



Affirmations performed in front of a mirror are advantageous because you learn the truth of your existence. When you do an affirmation and you immediately hear a negative response such as, "Who are you kidding? It can't be true. You don't deserve that", that is a gift you can use. You cannot make the changes you want until you are willing to see what is holding you back. The negative response you have just discovered is like a gift in that it becomes the key to freedom. Turn that negative response into a positive affirmation such as: "I now deserve all good. I allow good experiences to fill my life." Repeat the new affirmation until it does become a new part of your life."

10) "Finally, **love yourself now** -- don't wait until you get it right. Dissatisfaction with yourself is a habit pattern. If you can be satisfied with yourself now, if you can love and approve of yourself now, then when good comes into your life, you will be able to enjoy it. Once you learn to love yourself, you can begin to love and accept other people. We can't change other people, so leave them alone."

This lesson was written by Louise L. Hay, in her book called "*The Power is Within You*" published by Hay House, Inc.