
The Buddha said that “You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You yourself, as much as anyone in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection”.

Some of the reasons that self-love is so important are listed below.

- It influences the image you project in all areas of your life – do you share yourself with others or do you hide who you truly are?
- It is how you cope with the challenges in your life – are you more likely to move forward into a challenge or avoid it?
- It decides what choices you make – are you more likely to choose the safe course rather than the one that will take you out of your comfort zone?
- It influences whether you accept all parts of yourself equally – your strengths and your weaknesses – loving yourself for who you truly are right now.
- It's how you communicate with others – do you share your opinions with others with confidence and without being worried whether they agree, or do you agree with the status quo?
- It's whether you feel the need to make excuses for your short-comings or failures, or whether you are comfortable with who you are, and don't feel the need to apologise or make excuses.
- It influences how much compassion you have for yourself – what are your thoughts like, do they support you or put you down?
- It influences your ability to stand in your own power - to stand up for what you truly believe in, regardless of what others think.
- It stops you judging yourself - it allows you to love yourself, warts and all.
- It stops you self-sabotaging – self-love allows you to move forward on your pathway without deviating, making excuses, and deliberately avoiding things that you know could be helpful to you.
- It allows you to accept compliments - and in doing so to acknowledge your gratitude to the person who is giving them to you.
- It lets you celebrate your accomplishments instead of moving quickly past them, with or without acknowledgement.

Self-Love

- It lets you value your time and say no to people, instead of automatically saying yes, as that is their need.

As you contemplate the areas listed above, allow yourself to be very honest as to where you fit in each one. We have given you the extremes of each and you may well be somewhere in the middle. The important aspect is recognising where you are, and then looking at what you can do to bring more self-love into these areas.

Perhaps instead of focusing on your mistakes and failures, you can concentrate on the benefits of your experiences and what you've learned from them. Rather than living your lives to please others, you may choose instead to grow, to understand and learn what makes you complete.

Take some time to sit quietly and reach deep within your soul, and love yourself, warts and all. Take note of any areas within you that resist your love, and know that these are areas that you may wish to focus on and change. By learning to love yourself, you are allowing yourself to feel unconditional love. Only then can you share that love with everyone and everything around you. Only then can you accept that love for yourself.

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