

Self Love Mantra

love yourself like never before



A COMPLETE GUIDE TO YOUR PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL
GROWTH THROUGH SELF LOVE

ARUN GUPTA



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BlueRose
Publishers

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***“If you are searching for that one person
who can change your life, take a look in
the mirror.”***

Ernest Holmes

EVERY BEAT OF MY HEART SINGS

*The day I was born into this world,
I was like a little doll.
I thought everyone will be filled with joy,
Like a child plays with a toy.
But everyone was always lost in their pries,
There was no one to hear my cries.
As I grew, I saw everyone around with smile,
While I got myself away, from all by a mile.
When I joined school, no one became my friend,
I asked Almighty, if that is the trend.
Why am I being treated, like as if I am no one,
Maybe I am not as beautiful as everyone.
My colour is not bright and my body not in shape,
But that is how God has moulded me in a frame.
And then dawned a day of enlightenment,
I said who is the world to judge my alignment.
I am who I am, I am enough and complete,
Who can stop me, I will do what I dream.
I will make my own destiny, creating my own path,
Because I am confident of achieving, what I want.
I will get my prince, who will care for me,
Not that man, who would not even hear me.
I will live my life on my terms and sequel,
As God has created everyone same and equal.
I will love myself the way I am, every night and day,
So why should I even bother what others say.*

*When I am full of confidence, I will fly with my wings,
I love you, I love you, as every beat of my heart sings.*

Truly from my heart

FOREWORD

As an author and an avid reader, books often happen to be my source of self-care. Over the years, working with people from different walks of life has helped me understand the importance of self-care. Especially, realizing that the transaction of loving others and being loved by them should also exist within.

There seems to be a fine line between being selfish and investing in self-care. Often, self-love is misconstrued and thus, unappreciated. In the absence of self-love there could be loss of self-identity as well as self-respect.

The notion of being perfect can rob away self-love. We all have certain imperfections which only make us more human. In the race of being perfect and unique we should also pause and consider being accepting of oneself.

Once acceptance is in place, self-respect follows. A self-respecting individual can often set health boundaries in relation to others. Thus, making self-love an important topic of discussion.

Arun has a wide range of experience and that reflects in is hard work and research behind this book.

This book shares some profound insight pertaining to loving ourself, others, and, world in general. Self-Love

Mantra, is a must read for all of us as it throws light on embracing changes, accepting self and investing in personal growth.

Dr Anjali Chhabria
MBBS, MD

Dr Anjali Chhabria, a renowned and leading psychiatrist and psychotherapist of India, is recognized for her outstanding contribution to the field of mental health. She is the founder of Mind temple and is the first author to write a book on suicide, named "Death Is Not the Answer". As a regular columnist, she continues to be a household name through her contributions to some prestigious newspapers and magazines, in India as well as abroad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book wouldn't have been possible without the help of my family. There has been immense contribution from my wife, Bhavana, daughters, Arushikha (extended great help in editing the book) and Arunima (Courtesy pictures), my sons-in law, Shardool and Manav (some great ideas from time to time) and not to forget my grandchildren Ayaan and Myra, who always came out with some raw ideas.

The inspiration to start writing a book came from a friend, Pradip Mistry, practicing life coaching in London, who really motivated me to start putting my thoughts together. And of course, regular motivation from Perna Dua, a true example of what self-love looks like.

My special thanks to Jithesh Poojari for coming out with wonderful design of the front and back cover of the book.

I would also like to thank all those whose names I have mentioned in the book, for what they already have and are contributing towards Self-love.

Above all blessings of Almighty and my Parents, my Brother, from Heavenly Abode.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

“You should always be a true and unique version of yourself. Always an original and authentic. Never try to imitate to degrade your true worth.”

-Author's muse

Self-love is a core component of our inner happiness and our personality. You are truly in love with yourself when you possess qualities like self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-worth, self-esteem, kindness, respect and compassion for yourself. Many of us find that we are the hardest persons to love in our lives. We know everything about ourselves explicitly better than anyone else could know, whether it's about our unique qualities or imperfections. So, this makes us judge ourselves more intimately than anyone else ever could. As a result, no one is going to love you, if you don't love yourself. Learning to love ourselves is so important for a smooth, happy and fulfilling journey of our life.

You may ask me, why this fascination for a subject like self-love? Well frankly, I have no idea, but a thought suddenly popped up one fine day, and I started building on this wonderful aspect. I am not a psychologist, doctor or a specialist creating awareness about self-love. I simply want to share my own wisdom

gained from years of experience across the world and of course lots of study done on people and reading/researching about love and in particular self-love. My aim of writing this book is to generate an awakening in you all, about how we can love this life and a beautiful world around us, getting rid of any undesirable feeling that we have for ourselves and others.

Most of us never try to ask ourselves the question about the purpose of our existence in this world and spend our whole life without getting the real answer. However, once we realise our purpose of life, we can have a clear understanding of how we want to treat ourselves, treat others and move on in our lives in order to create some difference to us and others. Once we start thinking on these lines, we can create a wonderful world, with common calling for everyone, and that will be to love yourself, whatever you are and love others including all creations of this universe, living or non-living.

How do we really judge what kind of life we want to live and towards what purpose do we want to move on in our lives. Are we going to be just another person who has come into this world, carrying out daily routine of work, eating and sleeping, till his last breath, without really knowing the purpose of, why is he doing all this with his/her existence in this world? Or would we like to create a better version of

ourselves, not as an individual, but taking everyone around us together in achieving greater goals about self-realisation.

We do need to set boundaries in every relationship but must move away from setting very tight and rigid boundaries around us, which one time or the other becomes a noose around our neck and force us to remain within those parameters of self-created miseries.

How do we start balancing our time, work, family, health and such like factors? We always get caught in balancing our work and family life. The more we stretch this elastic, the more we move away from a balanced life. This often creates a situation of stress in our life and ultimately deprives us of living a happy and enjoyable life. Balancing is such an important factor in our life that most of us get caught in between trying to move from one side to the other, without finding stability throughout our life.

What you really need is a balanced mind to create balance in life. And how you can have a balanced mind is through loving yourself. Put yourself and your selfcare ahead of all the decisions you take to move on in life. Best way to keep a perfect balance and clear mind is through practicing meditation regularly. This helps you to be in the present moment with clear understanding of the purpose of life and

with perfect sync of your mind, body and soul. I have explained few types of meditations in the book which you should practice for maintaining a balance between your mindset and actions as also to generate the feelings of loving kindness for yourself and others.

When you start loving yourself, you will understand the meaning of loving others and also receiving love from others. You would not impose restrictions or start judging or comparing with the love given to or received from others. You accept others as they are and not judge them by what they do and how they look. You don't start rejecting them because of their bad habits but help them how they can improve themselves and get out of such habits.

This book will give you an insight as to how we can find true love within ourselves, so that we can love this beautiful world and people living in it. Remember the golden rule that we can only seek love from others, provided we love ourselves.

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CHAPTER 1

AN INSIGHT INTO SELF-LOVE

“You always should be your own true version. Don’t ever try to imitate and change, what people around you want you to be.”

- Author’s muse

This world has billions of people and God has created everyone different and unique. They are spread across different continents, speaking different languages, different traditions and way of living. There is no one on this earth who is exactly like you. The fact that you are unique, assures you of a special and unusual status and worth in your own home, society, country and on this earth.

You deserve to be loved the way you are, not only by people who are close to you, but by the person who matters the most and that person is you, yourself. Yes, you have read it one hundred percent right. You need to love yourself the way you are and not as people around you perceive. It may be difficult and challenging for many of us, who take our weakness and imperfections very seriously. But it is as much as possible if you change your thinking and make an effort to start loving yourself. You will find your life smooth and full of happiness, that will truly shine forever.

Selflove was preached by Buddha and many others across the world over for many years. Even Taoism promoted the importance of 'Ziran', which means 'so of self'. But lately it was promoted by Beat Generation in early years of Hippie era. And now, it is prevalent across the world with more and more people started to realise its importance and real value.

The very feeling of love sends ripples through our whole body. The body gets filled up with feelings and emotions, those are difficult to explain in words. When we are born, we are constantly advised to love our parents, siblings, relatives and when we grow up a bit, to love friends and teachers. There is no such advice ever from the parents or our teachers to love yourself or any kind of education system which teaches us to love ourselves. We spend our whole life looking for love from others, whereas we remain deprived of our own inner feeling of love for us. How can we ever love others, when we don't understand the meaning of love for us?

Love is one of the most wonderful and powerful force in this universe. It is divine, real and practical force that guides our daily decisions and steers our life. Unconditional love for others would force us to care for and support them come what may. Love would guide us to create and bring our thoughts into physical form. Many a times for the sake of others, we put ourselves in a difficult situation, so that their life is smooth and comfortable. Love compels us to work

hard and to achieve our goals. Love compels us to stand up again when we fall and rise to the challenges in the face of adversity. Love even heals our emotional wounds, those were given by others.

Love is a shared sense of identity and is not limited to romantic tales that we see in the movies or read in romantic stories. Although, love is not biased, but that's the way our society has allowed it to be understood by everyone. It's imperative to love someone or may be a thing. But due to prevailing negativity, many would brand you to be a self-centred or selfish, the moment you talk about loving yourself. And that exact feeling gets into our mind.

Our world has gone through social, cultural, religious and many other changes, through all these years, may be due to the way we have changed our thinking or modernisation. However, one morality that still remains in original self, is the feeling and meaning of Love. Whenever we talk about love, we always connect it with some person or may be with something to be loved. We also look at it in a manner as passion for something that we are attached to. For example, love for our nears and dears, love for our hobbies, love for eating favourite food, love for flowers, or may be love for pets and other animals.

However, one thing that very few people realise, is the fact that love for others will always originate from love for ourselves and that is the true essence of self-love. Many of us would not have ever thought of

this word as also what is self-love and how it is connected to love for others? The answer to this question is very simple and straight forward. If one indulges in self-love, it really becomes easier to respect or connect to others.

But before we go any further, we must understand what exactly self-love is. In a simple and layman's language, self-love is loving yourself, whatever you do and regardless of how you look, behave and treat others. But a perfect person who is aware of the actual meaning of self-love, will use it to improve relations, will show more compassion and will develop and improve the inter-personal relations with others in a big way.

So, one aspect of giving your love to others is very clear and that is to understand the true meaning of self-love. Many of us are really not aware of its meaning and how to start practicing it. When you understand its meaning and what it does, it is very simple to start loving yourself. In one of the gatherings, I asked few youngsters, if they know what self-love is. You will laugh at their answers. They said, "how can we love ourself, we can't hug or even kiss ourself". "So, what is all this about self-love". But it didn't take much time for them to change their mind, the moment I explained to them real meaning of what self-love is all about. This happens when you are totally ignorant about the real meaning of self-love. So how can you practice it?

After you have known the real meaning and essence of self-love, the first step would be to change your outlook, the way you look towards yourself. Start liking yourself the way you are. Understand your emotions, feelings and start grasping what they mean to you. The moment you understand these aspects, you are almost halfway through. There will be lots of ups and downs in our life, those will keep us in different state of emotions, but if our outlook as an individual remains firm, we will enjoy our life, no matter what situation we face. If that is achieved, we have taken a giant step to know ourselves and what self-love is.

Now that we have known what self-love is, the next most important aspect in this direction is, how to connect it with love for others. If we are passionate about ourselves, loving and enjoying our personal and professional life, we will definitely look at others with the same passion. If we have feelings of compassion for ourselves, we will see others compassionately and will be more considerate towards them. This will make a massive difference in our lives and will provide us a direction on how we deal with others. It is imperative to deal with everyone through the same perspective and with clear understanding.

Getting to know all this will certainly enable us to make healthier choices across all areas of our life, both personal and professional. It will also allow us to feel happy about what others do, take pride in their

achievements and success and not indulge in jealousy and hate. By doing this we will remain in perfect physical and mental state and will always be cheerful and happy.

Right from our childhood to becoming an adult our system of thinking and guiding by our parents, friends, teachers and others around us, is such that we keep looking for love and praises from others and never get a chance to look deep into our own self and find love for ourselves.

“You, yourselves, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.”

Buddha

What defines you as a person or what makes you one? The answer is very simple and straight forward. Most of the time you define yourself as how you look like, job that you do, bank balance you have, position in society or many such factors. When your own outlook about yourself goes up, then you need not try to get so much validation and attention from others. You will no longer be needy, and you shall discover inner stability and strength even when people around you might be negative or uncertain at times. Your self-esteem and self-love would also see growth and that would make you feel more deserving of good things in life. You will never ever think of hurting yourself and go after what you indeed want deep inside creating more motivation and focus than ever before.

It doesn't matter who you were in the past, what matters is who you have decided to be today. Since you are not your past, you can decide differently at every moment what your inner calling says. You are offered a new opportunity with every sun rise and every moment that you live through the day. You can choose to decide, who you are and act differently, in a way that supports you and your capabilities. You are no less than anyone and there is nothing in this world that you can't do. You are complete and you are enough.

Have a Daily Dose of Self-love

Deficiency of self-love is indeed unfortunate, because loving yourself costs nothing and you don't have to exert to get it. There are no vitamins to be taken for the deficiency, you just need to take a daily dose of the feelings of self-love. Loving yourself feels good and is good for you. Many of us would have that ill-conceived notion, as if self-love means self-indulgent. What is undesirable is actually selfishness. But however, this is very different from loving yourself and it can feel very strange in the beginning. Self-love should always exist despite shortcomings, imperfections, or misfortune. This forms a solid foundation from where your love for others grow. You just have to see and understand, that clear fine line, between self-love and selfishness.

“There is a real beauty and charm in every object of nature. Love them as much as you can.”

People can be said to love things other than human beings. It could be an object, the goal they want to achieve, the faith they have in a religion, or any principle to which they are committed. Love for country, love for nature, love for social work or any other noble cause, may sometimes be born out of compassion and strong spiritual beliefs. People can also be animal lovers, or love activities, if they invest themselves in bonding or otherwise identifying with those objects. Infact many would say that they love their life itself. Isn't that a beautiful thought?

Then there is interpersonal love that relates to love between human beings. It is much more potent sentiment than a simple liking for a person. Interpersonal love is associated with interpersonal relationships. Such love mostly exists within family members, friends, colleagues and couples. Over the years philosophy and religion have done the most speculations on the phenomenon of love. In past few years various fields of science like psychology, neuroscience, behavioural science and biology have added to the understanding of the concept of love and its effect on our mind and body. Research has shown a link between strong feelings of love and increased levels of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is an enzyme which helps in motivation, memory, attention and even regulating body movements.

So, the real essence of love comes only when you love yourself. One fact about self-love that cannot be

denied is that it comes in many forms like devotion, gratitude, admiration, compassion, support, forgiveness and being thoughtfully generous. These are all kinds of facets of love, and self-love is simply having all these feelings or that identity within yourself, so as if these things are a part of your psyche and that you have those things embedded inside your heart and mind.

There are many people all over the world who are running around without knowing the purpose of their life. Why, because they do not understand about themselves, their emotions, feeling for others as also they don't know who they are and why are they here in this world. Self-love has got nothing to do with money, your status, even if you are a celebrity, or with the materialistic things that you may possess. It has got just nothing to do with these superficial things that you may possess. Self-love is all about knowing yourself, knowing your values and accepting them, as they are, with all the grace and humility.

TO BE PERFECT AND FLAWLESS

“You don't have to be flawless and perfect to be loved.”

Almost all of us have heard and dealt with the aspect of being a perfectionist on many occasions. We get disturbed and at times emotional, when someone finds flaws, the way we look, talk or the kind of work we do. That's when our race to achieve perfectionism starts. And then starts all the misery in our life, for our endeavour to be flawless and perfect.

This pursuit of being perfect is against the very essence of what self-love is about and is a foregone complete futile effort, you will ever make. One can always say that what's the harm in being perfect in life and without any flaws. But you need to have a clear differentiation between being perfect and trying to be your personal best. You must always improve in your life, both in personal and professional domain, by acquiring knowledge and new skills. However, always striving to be perfect in these areas may disappoint you and cause turmoil in your life.

Perfectionism is when you compare yourself with others, whereas improving yourself is focused on just you. In other words, when striving to be perfect, you are trying to compare yourself or please the world around you, by proving your perfection. However, in this process of achieving perfectionism, you are losing your original self and forgetting who you actually are.

It is harmful to do so, but how can we let go of the pursuit of perfection, if in this society, imperfection equals being inadequate? How can we like ourselves in today's world despite knowing that we are flawed?

Here are the answers

Perfection Doesn't Exist

This statement is as simple and as true as that. There is no perfection in this world, even if few preachers, social media or society at large make us believe there is. Therefore, striving to be perfect is

unattainable and unrealistic goal to have. Sooner you realise this, better it would be. You need to dispel the prevailing belief that perfection exists in some of the most successful companies. Let me tell you, there is no organisation in this world that can claim to be perfectly perfect.

If you look around, you will see flaws in almost everything and that's the beauty of this world. There are many cracks in everything that we see around us and that's how the light gets in. These cracks are the openings which provide us with a chance for new awareness and new learnings in life. Would you like yourself to be in darkness or see the real meaning of this light through these cracks?

Consider the Cost

When you are striving for perfectionism, you need to pay a heavy price in terms of its adverse effect on your physical and mental health. Not only it affects your body and mind, but it always keeps you in a state of stress, anxiety and at times depression, depriving you from experiencing and living wonderful moments in your life. It may ruin your relationships, as when you get after the race for perfectionism, you forget every other thing in your life. You are basically locking yourself up in a self-imposed shackle of misery, without any compassion and creativity. Remember perfectionism is unachievable. Do you really want to pay such a heavy price for something that you already know, you can't achieve?

Focus on Being You

Focusing on yourself, may look like being self-centred, which is not right at all. You are just incredible because you are what you are. You have unique talents that nobody else has, you are full of energy and power that nobody else can possess. You are just uniquely you. Look inward and focus on what is there already, instead of always going after what is not there yet or will ever be. You need to realise the worth of what you have in your possession and not to waste your life for what you don't have. This will create balance in your life. Here is what I believe in:

“Don't chase things that you don't have, because you will lose on the way, what you already had.”

Untangle your self-worth from the pursuit for perfection. Stop finding faults in how you look and stop comparing yourself with how others look. Beauty does not lie in colour of your skin and shape of your body parts, but it lies how beautifully you understand yourself from within and how well you treat others.

Remind yourself often that the unfounded and baseless fear of being unlovable and unworthy, because you think that you are imperfect, is just your own creation. And you are wrong there, if you think so. You are worthy because you are alive, you are lucky because you have seen another daylight, which many people may not have seen. It doesn't matter whether you fail, make mistakes, learn, grow, stumble and fall,

you are always worthy of love. If you want to be happy and fulfilled, your self-worth needs to come from within. If you solely focus on others to approve, you are in for a lot of pain because no matter how much you want to, you will never be able to control how others see and perceive you.

So, even if it looks terrible, or you disappoint others, or receive criticism and sometimes even blame, you need not bother at all. All this is very much part of everyone's life. You always should be compassionate, loving and kind. Don't curse yourself on one pretext or the other. Appreciate and slowly fall in love with your flaws and imperfections. They are the most precious and valuable features you have. After all, it's your flaws that make you, who actually you are, and you will remain unique and beautiful always and ever.

True Meaning of Self-Love

Self-love is all about honesty with self. Real self-love means loving and accepting yourself completely and unconditionally, for all that you are. Including your flaws and imperfections. It means you need to embrace your shadow side as it teaches what really life means for you. It would give you the feeling of the real you without putting your ego up front. Your ego is a false pattern of thoughts that you have created over the years and is not who you really are. Since you are the creator of this ego, you can always

manage this easily by stepping away from this false front, so as to show your real self to you and the people around you.

Self-Love is So Very Important

“You can design your destiny by falling in love with you.”

Loving yourself is foundation of everything in life and is closely associated with self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect. If this foundation of self-love is weak, the love you give to and receive from others, will remain weak throughout your life, affecting your personality and self-confidence. This will have adverse effect on your personal and professional life.

Have you ever tried forgiving yourself for something, that you may have done against your wishes and it has proven to be a disaster or ever tried writing a letter to yourself showing compassion as if some dear friend of yours is writing to you. We have forgotten writing in this new world, but once in a while we need to write to ourselves showing all the love and compassion. Writing let our feelings out which otherwise we can't identify and express.

Why talking and listening to yourself is so very important at the time of emotional distress, decision dilemma and when you are confronted with some precarious situations is that you can ask yourself some challenging questions, deliberate on them and get the

answers from within. You just need to listen mindfully to your inner voice, and it can prove to be unbiased and most reasonable answer.

The Need of Putting Yourself First

I truly believe that you can never make the people around you happy, when you are not happy yourself. How can you take care of others when you don't take care of yourself?

When you start spending more than what you earn, you will be left with nothing very soon. By earning money for yourself, you can rebuild your reserve funds and be able to continuously spend the way you want. You won't have any balance left in your bank account, if you only withdraw money out of it. Similarly, if you are only giving to others, you will run empty very quickly. We need to refill and replenish ourselves to be able to keep on giving over a longer period of time. May be at times we do expect others to do us a favour, when we help them out. Remember nobody can ever make you happy, except you yourself. No matter what others do for you, when you don't believe that you deserve this aspect of love, it will never ever really fulfil you. So, you need to put yourself ahead of everything else in your life.

Habit of Sacrificing Yourself

“All great achievements require sacrifice.”

Every relationship, be it with spouse, boss, family or friends, requires a certain level of sacrifice to make it

smoother and workable. When you really care for somebody, you're always willing to make sacrifice for them because you have their best interest at heart. But this does not give anyone a licence to take you for granted always. What you need to understand and make others understand is that one-sided sacrifice is not the essence of good relationship. Both sides involved in relationship need to adjust and ensure that mutual respect is always at the forefront.

You need to build, respect, trust and understanding between different relationships, be it with your family, friends, business colleagues, spouse or your parents. This adjustment you may call it as sacrifice to have better bonding in your relationship.

How Giving Enriches You

Life is about choices that you have to make, and you get to decide what you're willing to give up in order to gain the things that you cherish most. At times you do need to sacrifice up to a point to get what you deserve. Some people have this belief that the whole world revolves around them. Only their say, their comfort, their preferences and their happiness matter most. Although they want healthy relationships, but without any understanding or the required sacrifice. Instead, they try to exploit every opportunity to get what they want, but at what cost?

If you want to build trust and draw the respect of others, you have to earn it. No one wants to be in

the company of, or work alongside people, who are egotistical or selfish. Good people make sacrifices for others. It's that simple. You should always be willing to make some sweet gestures and you will find the magic happening, whether it's for your friends, family or country. People with strong character make sacrifices for the greater good. They don't have any expectations from others of any kind.

Know the Limits of Self-Sacrifice

There is a limit of sacrifice, however. One can't be always at the receiving end and also you should not be making it an issue. Most of the people would show as if their self-sacrifice is the reason for others to move forward in life. "If not for me, you wouldn't have been here today" and things like that. They behave as if they are the victims of sacrifice. They are confined to a narrow thinking about their life, that they always burry their own lives and interests for the sake of others.

Though such habits of self-sacrifice are formed early during childhood, but their impact remains throughout our lives. Unless of course we realise and move away from this practice. It is also imperative to identify such, so called sacrificing people around you, in your family or may be friends and try changing them. Earlier it is done better it will be, because at a later stage it becomes extremely difficult to change as these habits get more and more anchored.

Sacrifice to some extent is definitely a part of life, but we need to work out exactly how to deal with it. Many of us are making decisions about what to sacrifice and what not to sacrifice, without being aware of our true conscious. Sacrificing for your loved ones may help you make them aware of how much you care for them and even make you feel good about yourselves. But you should not always be a scapegoat, who would sacrifice for others. We simply form our opinion without considering its implications in our life. Just be honest to yourself and take a call accordingly

The areas where you need to be extremely careful, if at all you decide to sacrifice, are health, family, relationships, integrity and of course whatever you love the most. Avoid compromising in these areas as much as possible.

“Make sure you don’t see yourself through the eyes of those, who are full of negativity”.

A random thought

CHAPTER 2

LIFE FROM THE DAY WE ARE BORN

Overcoming Childhood Trauma

“The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day.”

-John Milton

Childhood trauma are those experiences during early years of life, which can be emotionally painful or distressful, and they often result in lasting mental and physical effects. These can be in the form of abuse, neglect, violence, accidents, natural disasters, medical procedures or the sudden loss of a parent or someone you are very close with. Those who go through such events, can often suffer from serious psychological and emotional disorders through many years of their life. Childhood trauma holds us back when we try to do something good for our progressive life. Healing the pain of such sufferings is one of the most difficult things we can do. If you really want to get over the past trauma, you have to start by facing it bravely.

We all develop beliefs about ourselves, when we are young and the process of maturing in life is about growing up with further reinforcing these beliefs. While some beliefs are progressive and empowering, which help us grow in life, however, most of the time when we grow up with non-empowering beliefs, we

get trapped in our comfort zone which prevents us from taking risks or trying new things for fear of getting hurt. Sadly, many people spend anything up to a lifetime going around the same old circles and never grow up and get out of these beliefs.

Most of us will battle at some point of time in our lives with thoughts and feelings which threaten to derail our success and happiness. These are beliefs which are thoughts and assumptions we hold about ourselves, others and the world around us. They are deep rooted beliefs which most of the time go unrecognised and yet they consistently affect our lives. We feel that we are not enough and keep finding faults like, I am not smart, the world is full of selfish people, I am not wanted or liked by everyone or I can't speak in public and many similar ones.

We all have our beliefs about our traditions, culture and our past events. These beliefs are embedded in our subconscious mind based on our childhood and later experiences. These beliefs lead us to decide whether people are smart, good, bad, right or wrong. We use these beliefs to explain the past and predicting our future. We create new theories about our beliefs and even console ourselves when life doesn't go quite as we planned. Every one of us is extraordinary and creative in constructing these so-called theories about our beliefs. We should be able to identify our limiting beliefs, how they serve us, from where they came from and how we can modify

them. The process of getting rid of non-empowering beliefs is explained in later chapter.

How we feel about ourselves in our life often pertains to our experiences over the years as children. You form beliefs while you are still young. These beliefs are based on what you are told and how you are treated by your parents, siblings, teachers, friends and people around you. If your childhood was deprived of love and emotional support, then most likely you have struggled to offer those things to yourselves and others around you. If people around you, such as your family members, who were supposed to take good care for you, neglected you and your essential needs, you will get a belief that such needs weren't important in your life and are deserved to be ignored. For those who didn't experience abuse growing up, are likely to form beliefs about their parents, based on relationship they had with them, and with kind of beliefs they were raised.

When we grow up in life and reflect on the past, we are more likely to clearly understand that we shouldn't have felt bad and we must not torture ourselves for things other people have done to us. But many a times, knowing about these events, we don't fully believe them. We don't realise that we have always been beautiful, in spite of not been perfect, and that we never deserved to feel bad or ashamed, not when we were kids, and not even now in the present.

It's always good to know how our childhood experiences shaped us, but it's not about placing blame or playing the victim. It's about understanding that we all should question ourselves, at some point in time while growing up, even when we had caring and attentive parents. This is because various factors contribute to our beliefs about ourselves. Since now we understand ourselves better, we have learnt to love, support, and nurture ourselves, regardless of how we have struggled. We can all confront our thoughts and beliefs to cultivate positive feelings within us.

Can we really part with our stories that we have been holding on to, for so many years? Is it possible to move beyond the pain and sufferings, that we underwent in our childhood or may be later in life? Is it right time to forgive all those who were the real cause behind these sufferings? Will we ever be able to recognise our real worth and beauty to start living a normal life? These are some of the riddles for which we need to find an answer sooner than later.

Here is an example of a five years old child whose father was working away from home. He used to visit them once in fortnight. This kid everyday saw how parents, particularly fathers played in the evening with their children in nearby park, teaching them various games and having lots of fun. Whenever his father came home, he would go to his room requesting him to accompany him to the park and

play with him. However, every time the kid got a scolding from his father saying that he is too tired to go and play with him and to leave him alone. At times he was shouted upon with abuses.

This happened almost every fortnight and this kid had only one belief forming up in his mind, 'I am unacceptable, unwanted and not liked by my father'. The same thing kept happening, every time his father came home. The kid during his high school got into habit of taking drugs and even started failing in the exams. Whether intentional or unintentional, the children start getting beliefs as they are treated by their parents, siblings, teachers and their friends during early years of childhood. These beliefs then form a noose around the neck, which they carry it for rest of their life. At times it is too late to mend it. This kid later in life, with the help of a therapist, realised that his father never meant what he used to think. He changed his thinking and belief to become a better person in life, letting go of his trauma of painful memories. Today he is a known therapist himself.

If your parents didn't treat you well and you would like to treat yourself better now and open up to love, I recommend that you start writing about your fears and feelings with the main purpose of putting your emotions into words. Try and identify when and what makes you feel good or sad. By putting everything on paper, you can then refer to your emotions, look into your behavioural patterns, and

recognize what made you feel a certain way and how you can mend it. Keep this record connected to yourself, so that you can make real changes in your life, by keeping it always updated and getting back to it whenever required.

What other thing best for you is to forgive all those who have given pain to you, in one way or the other, intentionally or unintentionally, during childhood or even later in life, when you have grown up. Forgiveness will always relieve you of the pain, that you have undergone for years of sufferings, as also relieves you of the big load that you have been carrying through all these years.

You should choose never to hide from yourself. If you try to do that to hide in the past memories and events, all you are going to do is to lose yourself further. By braving up and removing all the escape methods, you will find your raw being. By loving yourself you will allow others to love you. You would love yourself when you see your life is changing for good. Read through your own life book, moment you feel insecure and unhappy and you will see a sudden change in your feelings. You need to keep building a power around you which is full of love, positivity and compassion. What's more compassion than you have forgiven the person, who has given you so much of pain, through the years of your childhood or for that matter any time during your life. This is though difficult but not impossible

KNOW YOUR PAST

Well, it is said that there is no point repenting on your past. This statement is absolutely correct. While you need not repent on your past, you can go back and learn some lessons for having a better present or for that matter, better future. When we become aware of our beliefs, it gives us an opportunity to take an insight into our own lives and form the basis for personal development and self-growth. Become aware of, how we interact with other people, and how we react to some routine situations or events in our day-to-day life. Knowing what we believe in, helps us to identify the parts of our belief system that is anchored at the foundations of our life. Many people become what they believe in.

Who we are today and how we think, act and behave is largely related to what is our past story. Peeking into your past is an important step to understand yourself and becoming who you want to be. If we leave our past and don't understand its true meaning, we shall remain confused and will lack clarity about ourselves. Childhood traumas from our early life will dictate how we behave today. We may have had personal attacks in many forms during our childhood, from our parents, friends or others. These horrible memories become part of our developing personality, creating feelings of self-hatred, which affects the ongoing manifestation of our real personality.

Troubled early life experiences often determine how we define and defend ourselves. They leave a permanent impression in our subconscious mind, influencing our behaviour. If we had very strict or hard parents, we may be growing up with certain resistance, facing challenges in our life. We tend to carry this uncertainty into our later life. We need to change this pattern of our thoughts and behaviour by looking at the source of our limiting and self-destructive beliefs, which lies somewhere in our mind.

When we try to hide from our past events and experiences, we can feel lost and feel like we don't really know ourselves. Knowing your past is as important as knowing who you really are.

Make Sense of Your Past

Your past is somehow interlinked with your present. Reflecting on your past at times can make sense. You can always draw lessons from your past and improve things to come. Go into your past events which have affected your life, whether they are positive or negative. You can draw lessons from both. It would help you find meaning and value in your experiences. It will allow you to organize your thoughts and use them to grow. People who are reflective and create stories about their life tend to experience a greater sense of meaning, which can later contribute to happiness and progressive life.

While going into your past, be sure to describe the main lessons you have learnt, the challenges you had faced and overcome and the personal strengths you have developed along the way. You can even consider your bad and scary experiences so that you can take those memories out of your mind to move ahead.

Considering the past, you can easily set your present to a right direction based on those events. The lessons learnt can now be implemented for your growth. Thus, there will be no reason for you to repent on your past events and curse yourselves.

MOVING BEYOND CHILDHOOD PAIN

“Tell empowering stories of healing in the present and not sad stories of hurting from the past”.

When you remember those traumatic events of how you were hurt in the past, you define yourself by your pain and you essentially pick up, where others left off in mistreating you. It's painful to go over these events again and again, though it can be helpful for self-healing, if you want to make an effort. When you find involving in an old story, you need to remind yourself that you are creating a new story of forgiving and loving yourself in that act. Try to remember who all have hurt you and visualise that their actions may have been caused by their own pain and sufferings. You can now choose to take care of yourself, in the way you wanted to be taken care of, when you were a child.

The past is over, and it is done for good, you can do nothing about it. What is the need to punish ourselves and our present for something which cannot be changed. It is easy if you realise this aspect early in your life. Once you get this issue deep rooted in your mind, you will be so badly affected, that it will be too late to cure yourselves.

The best way to move from your past is to just erase those painful and horrific memories from your mind, like you press the delete button of our computer. Ensure that they are out from even recycle bin, else they may find their way back at some point in time.

Douse Childhood Sufferings with Empathy

Whenever others abuse us, silence us, disrespect us or disregard our feelings, we often take it to our heart and feel ashamed, as if we deserved to be hurt, because we were unworthy, bad, or flawed. We then tend to hide ourselves to avoid the pain of being seen. This act of hiding just creates more and more pain for us. It's not your fault that you feel ashamed, but it is your responsibility to heal it sooner than later. Empathy is a great healer for such people who are going through their past trauma. You need to empathise with yourself by choosing to be non-judgemental for what other people did to you or what you did in response. Take someone's help, if needed to get over it, whether it's a relative, friend or a professional therapist.

*RECOGNIZE THE BEAUTY IN YOUR
JOURNEY*

You may not feel that everything about you is beautiful, but there's beauty in the strength and courage that have helped you get where you are today. Whatever you did in the past, you were doing it best based on what you learned and experienced over the years. You need to focus and take some time to acknowledge how amazing your journey has been so far and how best have you displayed yourself. Consider how all the challenging events of past have shaped up your present, to create something unique and inspiring. Run through your past like a movie, in your mind and see, what positive messages you can draw, frame them for yourself and others to follow.

Here is the story of a girl, Sonali who was morbidly obese right from the early childhood. There wasn't a time when her parents wouldn't ridicule, reminding her of excessive weight she is carrying. She lived her childhood with phrases and taunts like 'reduce your weight, else you will not be able to do anything in life or no one will ever marry you'. These words got embedded in her mind like a gospel truth. She too started cursing her body day in and day out.

She remained aloof most of the time and never made any effort to have friends in her life. She never even tried to play any games or take on any hobby that she liked. Just for the reason that she had a belief that

she is not good enough to do all this and if she tries, she would fail miserably. As the time went by, her belief that she can't do anything in life grew stronger and stronger.

And then a day came when her father hesitantly suggested a boy to get married. Since she had that fear of rejection and belief that because of her excessive weight no one would ever marry her, she said yes without even considering merits of the boy, she was to spend her life with. Sure enough, in next few months of her married life, it became quite clear to her that the suffering of the childhood would never leave, as her husband too started ill-treating her. She felt herself weak with no strength left to resist ever increasing abuses and ill-treatment by her husband. For her the whole world was cruel.

Then one day life for Sonali saw a turn of events. A realisation of self-love appeared in her heart and mind and she decided to take on the world with whatever she is and whichever way she looks. She divorced her husband and found a good job for herself. Slowly she started liking herself, her body, the inner beauty that she had, and this made her stronger day by day. The non-empowering belief that she is not enough and complete got converted into empowering belief, "I can do anything I want, irrespective of how I look or how others see me". She started learning dance, music and everything that her family, friends and later husband would taunt about. If you look at

Sonali of today, she is the true picture of a girl who is bubbling with energy, self-esteem and full of confidence to take on any challenge that comes her way. I found her the most beautiful girl not only in appearance, but at her heart too. That is the real power of self-love and accepting yourself who you are.

You need to understand one fact clearly that past will never come back, you can't mend it, come what may, so why stick to it. Do learn lessons from the past and make your present happy, lovable and progressive.

“Let the past not be a noose for your present and future. Free yourself from those shackles and fly like a free bird.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 3

WHY DO WE LACK SELF-LOVE?

“When you are low at your self-esteem and self-worth, you will have a feeling as if, you have pressed your breaks and accelerator together, while moving ahead in life.”

- Author's muse

Why do we lack self-love? I think the most important reason would be that we do not know that there is something called as self-love. I shall be honest with you that till few years back even I was not aware of the word self-love. For me, love just meant loving others and receiving it in reciprocation. Once I got to know this word and started getting deeper and deeper, that I could realise the real beauty and value of self-love.

Even when we hear this word, maybe we will think of practicing self-love some day and start taking care of ourselves. But then somehow soon we forget and stop bothering about ourselves again. It is not something that you do start practicing and then suddenly stop halfway through. Or give it a start-stop kind of importance. It has to be an ongoing and continue process. You need to get in touch with your heart and mind on a regular basis and keep reminding them of self-love and care for yourself. Your heart,

mind, body and soul should be in sync, if you really want to practice self-love and taste the real flavor of it.

We all know ourselves and what our weaknesses are. We live in our body, we live in our mind and we are very well-aware of these weaknesses. So, we know where we fall short, and we highlight those things in our mind. Although we know what our strengths are, but we try to downplay them. However, most of the time, we don't downplay the weaknesses, because we know where we are imperfect. We need to accept these weaknesses with some compassion, like we have for others.

Knowing fully well what our strengths and weaknesses are, we tend to pull away that self-love and self-worth, because we see the problems, we see the flaws, but we don't see the greatness. These are some of the things happening behind the scenes that distract or suppress our sense of self-love. We surely need to be aware of these things so that we can start to break free of it and develop the self-love that can help us to be successful in relationships, in career and in living a healthy life, because this is the foundation for it.

EFFECT OF THOSE EARLY YEARS

“Even an unborn child can pick up our conversations. What we talk about them, becomes their inner voice.”

We all had our siblings and many childhood friends, we played, studied, did naughtiness and many more things together. And then our parents would always compare our inter se achievements. Something like “Why can’t you be like them” or “you are just useless, look at your friend doing so well”. How did you feel at that particular moment? A wave of unhappiness goes through your body or at times you get, envious, maybe, jealous of your best friend’s or sibling’s achievements. You just don’t understand, that in spite of best efforts, you fail to reach the level of performance, which can satisfy your critics, be it parents, teachers or caretakers.

In all probabilities you may not at that moment have been able to realise the effects of such a situation, but such unintentional parenting strategies aiming at boosting your ambition and motivation, often go wrong and fail to get to the intended outcome. On the contrary, your self-esteem is likely to get effected and will always be tied to your performance, at school, home or other places.

This repetitive comparison by your parents or even by your teachers or at times by your friends, is the beginning of a very unhealthy relationship with the self. Many psychologists have come out with the result of studies that show how our close friendships have power over our own sense of worth. So, what exactly is behind this phenomenon. Sometimes the success of others is a source of inspiration and a feel-

good factor. People take pride in their friend's or their spouse's accomplishments bringing them closer. Sometimes these achievements become threatening and may even disrupt the relationships. These complex interpersonal dynamics are the focus of how you carry out your self-evaluation/self-reflection and get away from process of comparison. Such competitions or comparing should be healthy and should remain up to a point, without letting your ego involved.

All those who are parenting their children, must keep this aspect in mind while dealing with them. Else, they too will be in the same situation.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Do you realise that when we talk of our assets and liabilities, we only consider the monetary aspect of it because that is what this world has taught us, making a balance sheet of what we have and what we have to part with. But if you see in a real sense there is much more than the monetary aspect to your assets and liabilities. It does include the real value of what you do to help out others, the kind of people around you, the pain and agony you have to go through, the appreciations you have from your friends and at workplace, are all part of your assets and liabilities that you carry always with you.

You need to clearly establish what are your assets and what are your liabilities. Since you have not

been able to make this decision, is the reason you never get time to know who you are and for what purpose you are accepting all these liabilities. The reason why you have no time to find yourself is that you never thought about loving yourself truly.

You need to ask yourself questions to find out who your assets are (build on them) and who are the liabilities (get rid of them):

- Who are the people in my life who add value to my happiness and progress?
- Who are the people who distract me or give me nightmares?
- Am I holding anger or resentment against anyone and can I get him/her out of my life?
- What are my habits those make me feel good and full of energy?
- What are my habits which are source of my energy drainage?
- Do I have a work-life balance? If not, What are the reasons?
- Look for anything else which irritates you and makes you feel stressed and distressed, even if it's a thought or a belief.

And more questions as per your situation.

Evaluate the answers deliberately. Keep asking these questions to yourself time and again during the course of your life. Add more values to your assets and

try and deplete your liabilities by moving away them. You will find all the happiness in your life.

SELF-PITY

When you are sad for yourself and you have lots of problems and sufferings, you feel that you are the only one who is in this state. You start dwelling on your own sorrows or misfortunes, which is an exaggerated sense of feeling over your own life, position or circumstances. This is called the state of being in self-pity mode. Most of us experience self-pity at some point of time in our life, and although it can serve to be a self-soothing medicine for a while that assists us in accepting or changing our circumstances, but more often than not it becomes a permanent feature. When self-pity becomes a regular habit, it not only impedes the progress we make in life, but it creates dangerous pattern of self-sabotage. It's bad for your body and mind that can cause many stress related problems.

Becoming stuck in this mindset of self-pity would mean that we run the risk of never learning from our mistakes in a positive way. It also stops us from feeling empowered, finding solutions and achieving what we want in our life.

There are people who would always pity themselves not because anything is wrong with them, it's just they have that kind of attitude to think that whatever is happening in their life is always worse

than what is happening in anyone's life. It's like the, the grass is greener on other side. What are the indicators to show that you are suffering from self-pity:

- You have a belief that you are not worthy of love.
- You tend to be an individualist with low self-esteem.
- You always take yourself too seriously, and find it difficult to laugh at your life and yourself.
- You are constantly thinking about past events and trying to mend them, which is just not possible.
- You tend to exaggerate and become emotional from time to time .
- You think that your problems are worse than anyone else.
- There is no one in this world who understands how bad is your life. The whole world is out to get you.
- You focus your thoughts only on problems throughout the day. You will never ever look at what went right during the day.
- You will never find your relations sympathetic towards your pain and sufferings. You will always crave for sympathy.

- Most of the time, you remain in ‘Auto pilot’ mode and do exactly what your subconscious mind tells you to do.
- You will hate to see others laugh, enjoying or feeling good.

You need to get out of your self-pity mode and free your mind. How you do that, is just stop doing or thinking, what makes you a person with self-pity. There is no end to self-pity once you get into this mode. The whole world feels like an enemy to you and you feel they are out there to get you every moment and at every time. You just need to change your thinking pattern and your attitude towards the events of your life, and the whole world will look new and the one supporting you in every moment of your life.

FINDING BEAUTY IN YOUR SCARS

“There is not a single strong person, who has had an easy and smooth past. You should be proud of your scars, as they are the indicators, that you have lived your life to the fullest. So just love them the way they are.”

We all have scars, some from the wounds we had by accidents, which are superficial, and few given by people, the way they treated us, embedded deep in our heart and mind. Superficial are the ones visible outside to everyone. The real scars are in our hearts and minds, which are concealed and can’t be seen, but surely felt by us and others, through our emotions and feelings.

The song by Canadian singer Alissa Cara, “Scars to your beautiful” was inspired by a traumatic experience in Cara's early teenage years, when she started losing her hair in chunks in the shower. The Canadian recalled: “It was one of the scariest things. It got to the point where it was visibly gone”. But the feeling of Self-love gave her all the confidence and that’s where she wrote this song, healing herself.

People hide themselves in shame when they start losing hair. But no one ever thinks that the hair on head does not make a person beautiful, but what is stored inside your heart and mind is more important. When your heart is filled with love and mind with positivity, nothing else matters.

When something unfortunate happens to us, we may become little emotional, but we don’t need to get desperate or depressed because life gets nasty sometimes. We need to find a sense of comfort in everything, no matter how we may have got hurt temporarily. When we conduct ourselves with grace and positivity, it reflects beauty inside us and we can keep choosing to smile and to recognize that we are strong, despite these difficult and challenging situations. We must accept that this world is an amazing place, despite few passing pains, sufferings, sorrows and tragedies. We may have been hurt, but we will heal and there lies the beauty in our scars.

Beauty is something we struggle with the very concept, what it means and why it matters. When we

think of beauty what do we visualize, pictures of those movie stars and models in newspapers, magazines and social media. We see beauty superficially as to how we look and how others see us. We always see beauty as something which can be measured and weighed. The real beauty is not physical but something that's experienced through a person's character and what he stores in his heart and mind, rather than by a deceptive physical appearance. The real beauty of a person always goes far beyond just the physical appearances. Beauty is the thin line between what hurts us and what heals, between the shadow of tragedy that lingers on and the light of joy. 'I find beauty in my scars.' Isn't this a wonderful thought?

We all have scars, outside on our body and deep inside us. Some we create ourselves and few given by others. Scars which comes from temporary wounds get healed in sometime, but others remain embedded inside. These are the scars; we need not feel ashamed about but see the real beauty in them. It is so beautiful to have lived our life really the way it came, and to have these marks to prove it. It's an evidence of our inner strength. Those who wear their scars like ornaments are indeed beautiful, unlike designer out fits and jewellery.

Being a part of this world and what you actually are, is beautiful, smile-worthy, despite your flaws. Beauty isn't something which is a false layer of artificial effects created to hide your scars. Beauty is

also not an artificial injected lip with fake smile or something else that we have fabricated through pseudo means. It's the smile we are carrying right from the day we were born, the smile that originates from our divine self and our heart, the smile that can endure through a rough and difficult patch of our life.

What it takes for your life to change, is a shift in your perspective and the way you think. You just need to fill yourself with all the positive thoughts and emotions. Smile, when you are in pain, smile even when you are in a difficult situation. Feel this smile and its sensation in all parts of your body, feel it in your heart and muscles, in your skin, in your toes, on your face and feel it everywhere and every time. You will find things getting sorted out and your skin glowing, as you smile more and more each day.

The truth is, that your scars help others to see for themselves that you have lived your life and faced difficult times and challenges on your way. And during this process, you have gone out there risking your life and in turn getting some marks on your face or body. In fact, that is called living life to the fullest. This also proves your commitment to the life and moral and physical courage to face unprecedented challenges as they come along.

Scars also tell the story of their healing over a period of time. We need to remind ourselves that, if there are no scars, there would be no healing. A

wound that was there once open, has now closed and healed. While in the process of healing it has left its mark as a scar to be part of you, reminding you and making you stronger as you grow in life.

There could be many more reasons for lack of self-love. They could be chaotic relationships, poor ability to communicate, lack of assertiveness, always being needy or eating disorders. However as you move through the journey of self-love, you will start enjoying it and surely one day, you'll find that this nagging feeling of incompleteness and shortcomings, has left you for good.

“Do we really need to bleed our heart to tell people that we care for them. Just tell your heart that you love yourself and the whole world will know”.

A random thought

CHAPTER 4

WHY SHOULD WE LOVE OURSELF?

“The day you start loving yourself, you will start attracting same from everyone around you.”

- Author’s muse

What does it really mean to ‘Put your own oxygen mask first before helping others’?

I am certain, this is not the first time you have heard this statement that you should “put on your own oxygen mask first before helping others.” You have heard this advice so many times travelling by air, but still we forget the real essence of this statement. If you are responsible for other people as a parent, friend, caretaker or any such capacity, you also have a responsibility to take care of yourself. This isn’t a case of selfishness or self-indulgence. The real idea behind this advice is that you can only help others, when you yourself are in a fit state, which you can only achieve provided you put on your own oxygen mask first, before helping others. Isn’t this a beautiful and powerful metaphor for practicing self-love. Indulging in self-care or self-love does not mean disregarding the needs of your colleagues, your family or people around you. It means first of all you need to take care of yourself and your basic needs, so that your help to others can be more effective.

When was the last time you told yourself, 'I love you' or 'I am enough' or 'I am complete'? May be never, because no one has ever taught you to do this. Many a time it looks so foolish for us to say such words to ourselves. But have you ever experienced standing and looking deep in the mirror and loudly saying: 'I love you'. You will immediately feel a ripple of pleasant sensations running throughout your body right up to your soul and your eyes will be bright and shining like stars in the sky. When you tell yourself 'I love you', is like remembering who you are after being in a state of coma for years.

Loving yourself means to accept yourself as you are and to come to terms with those aspects of yourself that you can't change. It means to have self-respect, positive self-image through unconditional self-acceptance who you really are. it does not mean being arrogant, egoistic or thinking that you are better than anyone else. It means that you consider yourself a worthy human being. It is extremely important to remind us that no one is perfect. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, and this universe provides us with all the resources to work on improving ourselves. All of us are unique and have specific talents and abilities to offer. We are all here for some purpose in life. Earlier we understand better it is for us. In order to appreciate yourself it is up to you to discover what makes you special in this world and to further develop and hones those talents. We have a responsibility to ourselves to do so.

Many of us just sit around and keep waiting for approval of others. If you get it fine, otherwise you start getting stressed out for want of approval from others. You need to Work on accepting and approving yourself. You are the only "you" that you have. It is in your best interest, to be the best you can be. Unless you start loving yourself, you will not be able to love anyone else. You will be able to love someone else only to the extent that you love yourself. So, you fist need to accept yourself who you are and then invest in your personal growth and development in the areas you need improvement. You should always work, to be the best of you.

We do understand that we all are human beings, but we do acknowledge that we have the potential and spiritual capability to rise above whatever conditions and obstacles are put in our way. When you love yourself, you endeavour to take care of yourself physically, mentally and emotionally. You take care, to look and feel your best by nurturing your body, mind and spirit. You will not only become more self-aware, but you will also generate feelings of worth and accomplishment.

Loving yourself and selfishness are absolutely two different things and they are poles apart. Love is all about an act of giving and receiving. The moment you can give adequate care, attention and sympathy to yourself, in all probability you can give it to others and receive same as well.

It is a very old saying that unless we love ourselves, we cannot love others. Love flourishes when we give it to others, but it always starts with 'me' first. All of us are responsible for our deeds and what we are. We just need to accept ourselves the way we are.

WHY LOVING YOURSELF IS SO IMPORTANT?

When You Love Yourself, You Accept Who You Are

God has created this world and has given us a chance to live and enjoy to the fullest. But we keep trying to create different pictures of this world and start living in those. There may be shortcomings and limitations in each of us, but we need to accept the way and who we are. If we accept ourselves, we accept the reality of this universe and thus we will be content in our life. As you begin to love yourself, your life leads you into right direction and you start shaping up your life around events that make you happy and more confident. With this kind of radical self-acceptance, we can combat any challenge or adversity, creating a life and a world around us, that we can be proud of.

It Gives Confidence and Approval

Once you start accepting and loving yourself the way you are, you move around with more confidence and self-esteem. Other people too like to see more confident persons around them. Thus, you start

receiving respect from everyone. People who love themselves are more likely to do better in dealing with their personal and professional life, and that too with full confidence.

You Will Avoid Self-Reproach

Most of the time we suffer from an early life trauma or some kind of events from the past. These events take control over our present if we don't tackle them properly. When we start understanding ourselves, we tend to get away from such traumatic incidents of our past and try to live what we are now in the present. Only learning some valuable lessons.

Your Body Language Will Show Your confidence

When you love yourself, you will always be bubbling with energy and feel more confident. You will find yourself glowing, which will make you more beautiful from outside and from within your heart. This way you would concentrate on your strong points instead of bothering about your weaknesses and imperfections. There are certain things in life you can't change which you need to accept gracefully. You will find a change in your body language and you will find yourself full of confidence.

You Will Have A Better Family and Professional Life

When you love yourself, you will start loving your nears and dears. Thus, you will have a better

understanding with your spouse, children, friends and other personal and professional acquaintances. When you have better relationship with everyone, you will start to live a better and meaningful family and professional life.

Self-Love Changes the World Around You

When we fall in love or start having relationship with our loved one, everything looks so beautiful and appealing. Same is the case when you fall in love with yourself. Your perspective and outlook toward life changes and you start feeling more confident of yourself. You start loving people and every other thing around you. You start finding beauty everywhere around you and the whole world looks so different and beautiful place to live in.

You Learn to Say NO, When Required

When you start loving yourself, it becomes easier for you to say no, when you don't align with, what others want from you. You remain firm in all of your decisions without getting perturbed about how others will respond.

You Build Resilience

Loving ourselves build our confidence and help us get better at combating challenges, those come our way. Loving yourself is such a super power, that it gives you ability and confidence to bounce back from setbacks and misfortunes.

MAKE SELF-LOVE FIRST PRIORITY

Self-love is the most important factor for living a happy life and is a foundation for any process of growth in your life. How to love yourself, is a process you need to know. It may look very simple to start with, but when you get into it little deeper, it starts becoming somewhat complex. It is quite easy loving yourself with certain preconditions. Many would only love themselves once they are shown love from others. You may love yourself if, you are looking slim and fit or may be if your friends are giving you all the complements for your great looks.

In a real sense it's not self-love as there are preconditions attached to it. Self-love is not selective based on your figure or good looks but just the way you look. When you really love yourself, there is love and happiness abundantly everywhere. You will feel your emotions overflowing. Now this overflow is what you can share with others. This is a stage when you are filled with feelings of love and happiness and yet there is lot to share with the world around you. That cup of euphoria will never be empty.

Many a times we live in uncertainty while in relationship, fearing that there might come a day when the person who provides us with love and protection will walk out of our life. On the contrary, if you are confident of yourself and you don't feel dependent on anyone in your life, you will feel

yourself as complete on your own without any fear of protection from anyone else. You can live without fear of being left alone by anyone you love. Simply because you love yourself and have high self-esteem and self-confidence.

I have mentioned few reasons why you should love yourself. There could be a long and never-ending list of benefits accruing from practicing self-love. You need to remember that Self-love can make you a better and a complete human being. It improves your physical, psychological and emotional state. Give it a try and you will see that you attract more good people and better luck into your life, than ever before.

“You need to love yourself more than anyone. You know why? Because you are the one who is going to spend rest of your life with you, while others may not.”

- A random thought

CHAPTER 5

ART OF FINDING YOUR UNIQUE SELF

“There are 7.8 billion people on this earth and each one is unique. Remember you are one of them, truly different and unique. Love and respect, who you are.”

- Author's muse

One fine day, a thought will always pop up in our mind “who am I, how did I get here in this world and what is the real purpose of my life?” It is not something that you can easily find an answer about. We all get lost going through the rigmarole of our life, forgetting who we actually are and why we are here in this world?

So how do you find out who you are? To truly know yourself is the most important skill you can ever possess. When you find out about yourself and know who you are, you have a clear idea, what you need to do to put your life on the track. You don't seek views from others or their permission to form opinion about yourself and your life. When you know who you are and what is the purpose of your life, you will be full of confidence and will start to make a bigger impact on this world in general and people around you in particular.

To find out who you are, is letting go of those chain of thoughts converted into our mental stories, especially the ones that tell you that you are deficient and need to be found or sorted out. Stories, something that have been created and kept within our mind for all these years and which can easily be gotten rid of. When you try and do that, there you are, totally found with all the answers you are looking for, about yourself. It's like returning home to yourself, after being lost for years.

Human mind particularly, the subconscious, is such that it will continuously remind of these thoughts and stories about your imperfections, flaws, and how your life is not up to the mark or may be that you are missing something in your life. It will create an enormous web of tales around you, about how you are incomplete and that you are not there as yet, where you should have been. It will give you the impression that, you are lost somewhere and need to be found. They will make you run in circles to get these missing things in order, to be found yourself again as a complete person.

What you need to do, is not to get entangled into this web by trying to find about yourself. Whenever you get lost in these thoughts and stories, just feel them, notice them and then let them go and be back into who you actually are. And then be confident that you are right here, perfect, complete and energetic, very much connected to the present.

Life is what you are living now at this very moment, pleasant, full of fun and happiness, but may be with few challenges.

FINDING YOUR TRUE SELF

Many of us live through our whole life without discovering who we really are and why are we existing in this world. Many a times we listen to our inner critics and get wrong ideas about ourselves. We unknowingly think of this self-understanding as self-indulgence, and we move on with our lives without ever asking this most important question: *'Who am I really and what is the purpose of my life?'*

Finding yourself is not like finding something that you had lost sometimes ago or finding about some unknown place on this earth. It's very much there in front of you, what you have to do is to take a look inside. In order to be the most important person to our world around us, we have to first understand who we are, what are our values and what we have to offer to ourselves, as also to others who are in our life. This unique and personal journey is so important that every individual will benefit after going through. it will also help us in the process of recognizing, who actually we are and what we want to be in life. It's an act of recognizing our unique personal power along with other facets of life.

Knowing yourself first before you start to know others, is the essence of real wisdom in you. The idea

of self-worth often be followed by a more prominent focus on self-esteem, that is how we feel about ourselves. If you ever wanted to improve this feeling about yourself, you first need to focus on self-esteem. Finding out your desires, your values, how you feel about the world and people around you and most importantly what kind of opinion you hold about yourself.

When we start the process of searching for our values and self-esteem, we often get influenced by the opinion of others. What they think about us, the way we look or conduct ourselves and may be our values, while they were with us for all these years. So, when we are in a process of searching our values and self-esteem, invariably we will find it corrupted by influence of others, mainly people who are close and matter most to us. We are so used to getting approval and authentication of others that in the bargain lose our real identity.

To get a clear and precise idea about your self-esteem you need to ask yourself questions and be absolutely clear as to what you think about yourself and not base your opinion on what others think and say about you.

LIFE STORY

“Your life story is the true reflection of who you are today and what you are going to be in future. Find the true meaning and mend where you can.”

In order to know who, we are, and why we act and behave the way we do, we have to know our past events which have happened over a period of time, right from our childhood. Getting set to explore our past is an important beginning to understand ourselves and start becoming who we want to be in the present life.

Writing a story about your life can help you find meaning and value in your experiences and therefore understand yourself better. It will allow you to recognise and organise your thoughts and use them to grow. People who write stories about their past tend to attach a greater sense of meaning to their present, which can surely contribute to living a happy and purposeful life.

I would suggest that you write your daily journal to have a record of all the events of past. If you have not done that, you can start now by writing your past story, and now on, updating on daily basis. This will give you a chance for self-reflection and learning a lot.

UNDERSTANDING OUR EMOTIONS

Emotion is a strong feeling, which is derived from one's situation, mood swings or relationships with self and others. Emotions are responses to significant internal and external events with intense feelings that are directed at some person or an event.

We need to understand our emotions. With emotional intelligence we can form our ability to recognise and manage our emotions and emotions of

others. We can develop this and keep improving by learning and practicing new skills. We need to understand and recognise anger, rage, fear, anxiety, guilt, shame and depression by having full understanding of our emotions. Anger is an extremely powerful emotion which creates huge amount of energy. But it is on us whether we use it for constructive purpose or for destructive one. Anger and frustration are generally first emotion that we experience when something gets in our way of making any progress in what we want to do. However, anger is generally sporadic and short-lived emotion. Anxiety, fear and stress will follow when we take this short-lived anger along with us and keep embracing it for a longer duration of time.

When we get in to habit of dragging and stretching our negative emotional events along with us, we start getting into a stage of what is called as Neuroticism. This term is used when an individual has a tendency of being into a long term negative emotional state and reach a state of hopelessness and despair. People in this state have a tendency of turning small issues into frustrations and it multiplies and carries on.

Therefore, it is so much important to understand and recognise your emotions, so that you can never get into a state of neuroticism. Following steps can control your emotions and regain rationality in any challenging situation:

Respond and Not React: We commit a big mistake when we react to the emotional trigger without giving it a thought or taking a pause. In this heat of the moment, you will act in a way or say something to someone, which you will repent later, the moment you come out of these emotions. When you encounter such emotions, all you have to do is to take few deep breaths and focus on your breathing, taking a purposeful pause. In a few minutes you will find yourself back into the normalcy and then you can respond to the situation in much better way.

Find a Healthy Outlet: The first and foremost part was to manage your emotion. Since you have done that part, now you will need to release these in a healthy manner. Emotions should never be kept confined within yourself. You need to share with someone you trust and recount to them what happened. It's always good to share your emotions and feelings with people whom you trust and who understand you well. It is always good to have opinion from such people to know, confirm and reinforce what you think about yourself. Try to put down your feelings and emotions into the writings. You will find that you will start to understand and recognising them better this way.

Understand the Real Meaning: Every event that happens in our life, whether good or bad, is meant to serve a higher purpose. Wisdom lies in when you start seeing past events and start discerning the real

meaning of any given situation. You may find it difficult to understand it in the beginning, but as you get used to seeing things like this, you will start realising the bigger picture falling into perfect place and order, that you look for in life. In spite of some emotionally upsetting moments in your life, you will build the kind of trust, that there exists an ultimate purpose, which you will come to comprehend soon.

No Negative Thoughts Please: Negative thoughts and emotions bind us to recurring negative thoughts, creating cycles of unending negative patterns. Whenever you are confronted with an emotion that make you feel or think that something bad is going to happen, just force it out of your mind and replace it with a different thought pattern. Think about someone who makes you happy or remember an event that makes you smile. Negative emotion will fade out, giving way to positivity.

Think About What You want

Many of us instead of focusing on our goals and strategies to put our life on a right track, get in to comparing and fault-finding mode. We start thinking all the time about what we don't want in life instead of concentrating on what we do. This is applicable across the events those happens in our life. We need to know what we want in our life, is fundamental aspect of finding ourselves. Understanding our needs and desires helps us realize who we are and what's

important to us. This may look very simple, but most of us are, to varying degrees, get attached to our feelings of wanting, making us vulnerable in this world.

Love Yourself First

Unless you start loving yourself first, you will never be able to find out the true measure of your self-esteem and self-worth and who you actually are. If you really want to raise the level of your self-esteem, start knowing yourself more and start loving yourself more. Self-love is the foundation for building your self-esteem. The moment you start loving yourself you will find the graph of your self-esteem rising.

BUILD SELF-WORTH TO HOLD YOURSELF WORTHY

What is Self-Worth?

Self-worth is when you have favourable opinion or estimate of yourself and your abilities to withstand any challenges in life. It is an ability that you perceive, when you possess self-understanding, self-love, and self-acceptance. A feeling of a confident person who deserves to be treated with respect. You have so much confidence in you that it really doesn't matter what others think about your abilities. Self-worth initiates power to radically transform your life for the better.

When you have high level of self-worth you start feeling worthy of good things. You start feeling

deserving of health, wealth, happiness and of course love, irrespective of the difficulties and challenges you face, or opinion of others in your life. In other words, you get a feeling of being unflinching.

You start accepting yourself wholeheartedly at all times despite your flaws, weaknesses, and limitations. It's about recognizing the real value of who you are, right here, right now, at this very present moment. You never allow yourself to be defined by outside forces, including people's opinions and that would mean you will never allow outcomes to shake your confidence, faith or resolve. This means that no matter what happens, you are steadfast and there is nothing from outside that can ever influence, how you feel about yourself. It's your influence and opinion that matters the most.

Building Your Self-Worth

Now how would you build your self-worth, if you feel that you are low on this. Or you have reasonably good self-worth, but you still desire to make it stronger. Building self-worth process is not something you can undertake and then forget about it, but it's an ongoing process and you need to form a habit of building your self-worth every moment and every day of your life.

It's like building a dream house. You prepare foundation and start putting layers brick by brick. Every layer of the house has to be meticulously made

keeping its alignment and strength intact. There may be many challenges during the course of construction, but if the foundation is strong, the structure will stand strong and solid. And then one fine day you will see your dream house ready. Same way you need to build your self-worth slowly giving it formidable foundation, making each layer with care and love and keep reinforcing it from time to time. It will always stand its ground because you put in place a solid foundation that you consistently built over time.

Here are few tips you need to consider while you are in the process of building your self-worth:

Know Yourself: For knowing yourself you need to get in to deeper and more profound level. What you have and don't have in life. What if you lose everything that you have. Will this have any effect on your self-worth. No matter what happens or what is taken away, you should not be affected at all. That's precisely what matters most when it comes to building your self-worth.

You may like to ask yourself few questions to further know yourself:

- Who am I? Why I am here in this world?
- What is my relationship with me and others?
- What gives me happiness and satisfaction in life?

- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- What goals have I to achieve in my life?

There are many questions you can ask yourself to know who you really are and how you see yourself to understand your true value. Another important thing is how other's see you and what they say about you. Although this does matter a bit, which you may consider, if you find some value in, but the main factor remains how you feel about yourself. The feelings of joy, passion and fulfilment, are also important factors to consider. These are the things that help you unlock the value you bring to the world.

Your strengths are your habits or actions that help build your self-confidence and that allow you to move forward with greater self-assurance. You should create your own evaluation of your strengths. If you're relying on other people to tell you whether or not you're good at something, your strength will turn into an afterthought abruptly, which you need to guard against. You must have belief in yourself without banking on others. That's what is essential and truly matters when it comes to building your self-worth.

Stop Inner Critic and Use Positive Affirmations: Stop criticising yourself and start using Positive affirmations such as "I am enough the way I am, I will be happy and successful come what may". These positive affirmations do wonders in getting over your inner critics and build a high self-esteem.

Accept Your Original Self: In the first step you know yourself who you are and why you are here and what is that you want out of your life. There will, of course, be some good things, some not so good and may be few things that you might not be too proud to admit. However, to build our real self-worth, we must face reality and be authentic with ourselves at all times. What it really requires is that you acknowledge your true nature including the good, the bad, and the ugly, and work accordingly on building or restructuring your self-worth.

“Forgive yourself for everything you’ve done in the past and accept yourself unconditionally without judgment.”

Embrace Your Flaws: You need to accept your mistakes and flaws, but never let them define you. You need to accept that you are a fallible human being and can’t be perfect. Accepting yourself with your limitations and flaws, is essential for maturing your self-worth, but just don’t let them define who you are. Embrace who you are fully and wholeheartedly and the fact that you will no longer allow outside forces to define you. Only in this way will you finally let go of everything that’s been holding you back all these years.

Start Loving Yourself: Now that you have fully accepted yourself, it’s time to acknowledge your true value. To do this, it’s important to start practicing self-

love. Which primarily means treating yourself with kindness, generosity and compassion. It's time to let go of all negativity and instead practice being compassionate with yourself. Compassion comes with self-love, which comes from self-acceptance and it stems from understanding of self.

One simple but still unique method to start practicing self-love is to get into the habit of talking to yourself in positive affirmations:

*I am complete, I am enough,
I am valued and special,
I love myself wholeheartedly,
I am a worthy and capable person,
I am high in self-esteem and self-worth,
And so on.....*

Talking to yourself in such affirmations will direct your focus and attention to the beauty hidden within you, leaving aside any negativity that you have. You are no longer looking at others for approval or acknowledgment. You're instead searching for that approval within yourself. And that's one of the biggest steps you can take toward building your self-worth.

Recognise Yourself and Your Abilities: When you have known yourself better and have total knowledge of yourself, you have fully accepted yourself who you are. When you start practicing self-love and self-compassion, people, events and situation

will no longer define you, because you start defining yourself, who you actually are. You alone remain on the driving seat of your life and the way it is required to be steered.

With this belief you start to respond to events and circumstances of your life based on your real strengths, rather than reacting, as done by people with low self-worth and self-esteem. Your true value is no longer measured by superficial and materialistic things that you may possess but comes from your own values and worth.

Consolidation: Now that you have identified and imbibed all the qualities of self-worth, it's time to consolidate what you have achieved. When you have undertaken steps in your life to know yourself and your worth, you are now ready to take your own decisions and stand by them. Come what may never give away your personal power and worth that you have identify and acquired for yourself. Keep building on and consolidate what you have achieved so far.

You must look more confident now, your body language should give away an impression of your confidence in your words and actions. Your authenticity should be seen the way you walk with your head high. This is the time you can define the success for yourself and others. This is the time you can even mentor others helping them to build their self-worth. Remember when you help someone, you

feel more strong and powerful. Make it a habit to adopt only positive affirmations in your day to day talks with you or with others. And thus, build your self-discipline to adopt this as way of your life.

“Finding yourself is indeed very difficult. why? Because we always look for our truth everywhere, but never inside our own self, where it is safely placed and preserved.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 6

DISCERN INNER CRITICS AND BANISH EGO

Ego a friend and a foe

“Ego is just like dust in the eyes. Without clearing the dust, we can’t see anything clearly, so clear the ego and see the world.”

-Buddha

Life for all of us is good if it offers endless opportunities, happiness all around by fulfilling our dreams, giving us success in every field, great relationships in life and so on. These are some of the expectations we have from our life. If we get all that we want, our life is great and if for some reason we get stuck somewhere and start struggling, that is the moment we start cursing our luck, circumstances and anything that comes our way, including ourselves.

Why there are many people around us who are happy and fulfilled and they get all they want in life. While there are many who keep struggling but are far from fulfilling their dreams. We all wonder why it is so that one person is fortuitous than the other. And If this is the case then who controls all this and decide whom to give what he wants and whom not to give.

When we do self-talking, our mind always takes and accept it as a gospel truth. If we keep cursing

ourselves, our mind will register same words in our subconscious and will keep reminding us time and again that we are not capable of doing anything, even if we are willing to do. We, unintentionally, most of the time, let ourselves get away with a huge amount of negative self-talk. Sometimes it happens almost every moment and it becomes like a continuous background noise in our mind. This kind of self-criticism can be seriously damaging to our self-confidence. So, what can we do to silence our inner critic or stop having negative self-talk?

We need to understand the common myth about inner critic. Your negative inner voices may not be holding you back, as many believe, but it is because of lack of awareness. You haven't got an idea what kind of invaluable resources, your inner critic can provide you. You have the ability to turn a confused, misguided voice into, a friendly force that fiercely fights for your happiness and success. You just have to recognise that.

Your inner critic can become the most loyal friend, you could possibly get otherwise. Your critic is already working diligently. It will always be with you on your beck and call, when you are going through challenging times or are not sure about certain decisions in life. Discover how to harness this powerhouse of energy. Have a deep-rooted connection with your authentic self and you will see the world will change for you.

Sort the Valuables from Worthless

At some point in life, limited negative self-talk can be a blessing, which may ultimately help you improve in areas where you find yourself genuinely lacking or wanted. But you may start struggling when it comes to clearly separating the dominating internal critic from your vital critical thinking abilities. It is really easy to recognize the voice of the critic, which would try and take control of your subconscious mind. It is fear-based, always reminding of your weaknesses, and would demand perfection. The critic never reminds you of your strengths while escalating weaknesses and failures. It will also start comparing you with others generating more fear in you.

The critic is unaware that we all make mistakes. It doesn't know that making mistakes are essential for achievement and personal growth. Much of the corporate sector now formally honour failures. It is becoming a tradition of rewarding employees for taking healthy risks. Unless you take calculated risks in life, success will remain a distant dream for you.

Our inner voice of critic will always feel authentic to us as it comes like sea waves, one after another, flushing our mind. You may not realize that this communication is neither rational nor justified. However, there are ways that you can find about authenticity of these messages. You just have to identify, if this is connected with any of your past events and outcomes. You have to separate it from

thoughts and feelings that you are experiencing from your own point of view.

There is a way to identify and separate useful meaning from these voices, that stroll through your consciousness. Communications that are rational and reasonable are input from your mature and empowering thoughts, while those which are insecure, immature or emotional, are expressions of the critic and are non-empowering. Truly listen to the untamed critic, and you will notice how ridiculous it sounds.

You have to separate what is the real truth and which communications are indicating self-criticism. Most unique quality of your critics is to make all efforts to control your life, especially when you compare yourself to other people in negative ways. Remember, other people serve as mirrors, so you can perceive yourself more clearly. If you are in a doubt, they are, too. The positive attributes you recognize in others, also exist within you, even if they are beginning to sprout recently.

There is a technique in Neuro Linguistic programming (NLP), called perpetual positions. You assume yourself in two or three different positions. It is like debating by two persons with one judge. Here you just have to take all the three positions yourself, think and decide from the prospective and point of view of each of them, as they would think. You will surely get your answers.

Silence Inner Critics

As a mature and wise person, we need to break the ways we are habitual of, either criticizing or soothing ourselves. These destructive actions can be made up when we possess judgmental attitude that tell ourselves that we aren't good enough to succeed or don't deserve what we want in our life. It may be an attitude that tells us we don't have to try or that we need to be taken care of or controlled. When we recognise our internal self and start standing firm, we learn not to act on such childish feelings but to find our real self and know our strength and ability. That's them time we start recognising and silencing our inner critic.

Learn to Befriend Inner Critics

You can replace your inner critic with a wonderful and true friend, who lives inside of you and talks to you in kind and supportive language. You can assign specific tasks to this part of your consciousness.

- You can start first by changing the very meaning of the critic in your mind from, always criticising, to a helpful mate.
- Be able to strain positive thoughts and ignore negative. Use these positive thoughts for achieving what you desire.
- Have faith on your critics, and form your ability to identify these signals and how they

can lead you to positive and productive decisions.

- Identify and accept your genuine shortcomings and make an effort to improve upon them.

UNDERSTANDING EGO

Some people allow their egos to take over the world around them so that everything they do or say become centre of focus. It is so important to realise that if we ever want to be appreciated and recognised by others, life can never just be about us.

We build our ego over a period of time starting from our childhood and make it as our identity. Once we get addicted, we remain stuck with this over the course of our life. We are more than just the mind. If we consider all the beliefs that we have built over our lifetime of what we are, about our personality, talents, abilities, faith, habits etc, we have the structure of our ego built in them. These aspects of our personality will be attributes of our skills, but our mental construct will be artificial, since it is all mixed up with our ego. This kind of description of ego may give the impression that it is something which is static. However, this is not the case as it is an active and dynamic part of our personality, playing an immense role in creating emotional events in our lives.

The ego is so difficult to define, explain or describe because it is not one specific thing with some

explicit characteristics. We go through so many events in our life starting from our childhood and they get embedded into our mind and keep getting stronger and stronger as we grow with them. Those beliefs we possess could be diverse and even contradictory to some extent. Each person's ego is different in nature and areas of one's life. The challenge of becoming aware of what your personal ego looks like becomes more difficult because the world around us doesn't reward us for directing our attention inward and noticing such things.

Being an egoistic is usually associated with arrogance and is the term used to describe someone who thinks he is better than others. Yet this is only one part of the ego. It is possible to have some positive self-esteem and some negative self-esteem, as per our different beliefs at different times in our life. The negative beliefs about our self, make up our negative self-esteem, while our positive thoughts comprise our positive self-esteem. Together, these positive and negative self-esteem forms our existing ego.

Mostly these two opposite sides of our personality are more or less equal in magnitude and offset each other emotionally. A person who is very hard on himself may have feelings of inadequacy. This creates painful emotions in our life and in order to disguise this pain and emotions, we may try and conceal them boldly, projecting an image of self-confidence person, while keep struggling with feelings of those inadequacies.

Egoistic or being arrogant is totally different from the confidence that we have, and it doesn't come from ego. A person can be completely confident of his proficiencies, without letting it go into his head and converting it into his ego. When we are confident of our strengths and abilities, we are full of humility, which is an indication, that we have no arrogance or ego in our dealing with other people around us.

Every person has some ego for sure. Now it all depends upon him as to how much control he has over it. If you lose control over your ego and let it go unchecked, it can cause tremendous turmoil in your life affecting close and intimate relationships. Negative feelings, such as rage, jealousy, disgust, sadness, anger, resentment, fear are all by-products of the ego.

SELF-LOVE AND EGO

Ego and self-love can go side by side at times, but when it comes to loving others, it starts overtaking all other factors. Every human being has two opposing forces battle against one another: love and ego. Both of these have their own plans, ideas, advice, effects and they are more often than not opposite. It depends upon us which one to choose to move our life forward.

The Force of Love and Ego

The Force of Love: Love is an extremely powerful force which draws us toward the goodness. It reminds us to be kind and sensitive at all times, and

scold us when we are not. We really can't see this force, but we all can feel it. It is such a strong force that it governs all others and is behind any phenomenon operating in this universe. This universal force is called the force of Love. It is not because of our upbringing, but the force of love in us, that makes us feel so uneasy when we are angry, rude, paranoid or may be bit jittery. Love is like a light, that enlightens all those who give and receive it. It is a force of gravity, since it makes people feel attracted to each other and has power that can multiply manifold. For love many battles have been fought and for love some have lived happily, while few have even given away their lives.

True love always draws us toward the good things in our life, good people, good relationships and above all positivity. It helps us to be kind and sensitive at all times. When you are in love you don't place demands over the other person or don't have unreasonable expectations because there are no such wants from your side. Why there are no demands because there are no expectations. There are no expectations because the equation between two is never set on the lines of being unequal.

“In the war of Ego, the loser always wins.”

Buddha

The Force of Ego: Ego is your sense of “I”, it will always be present in any consciousness though it's

not a problem by itself, however the force of ego is the root-cause of resistance to the way you want to live your life and thus is responsible for all the emotional and mental sufferings that you come across. The ego doesn't have any relationship skills, but it always tries to manipulate as a mean for giving and receiving love.

When our love is filled with ego, it's our ego which takeover the power to decide what we want or how we act in our life. The force of ego takes full control over our heart and mind. The truth is that the force of ego is manipulative and doesn't have any relative skills. Since ego gets into our driving seat, it generates the feelings of hate, jealousy, aggression, frustration, blaming others as a habit and thus pushing us into the state of stress, anxiety and ultimately depression.

Dealing with This Force

All that you need in life is love. When you possess the power of love, you tend to possess the capability of overcoming self-limiting ego and limiting beliefs. If you find that your relationships are not moving on as they should be, you need to try working on your relationship with yourself first. Keep your ego aside and build relationship with your true self. The undying, eternal essence of your being. You may not be working on your ego before starting your loving relationship but simply strive to understand it, explore it with some curiosity, and transcend the aspects of it that limit your growth and hinder your

relationships. It is more to understand it and amend it, rather than having any kind of conflict with your ego.

Remember you don't always have to be right. It is absolutely fine to be wrong sometime. You need to be content in life and don't always try to be better than each and every one that comes your way. At some point, you need to realise that the feeling of distorted self-worth that you get from sticking to your egoistic self doesn't outweigh true happiness.

“When the ego dies, the soul awakes.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Ego and Fear

Self-love is when you place yourself in the centre of your world and be in a state of love. However, egoism is putting yourself in the centre from a state of fear. Egoism is created by deficiency and scarcity. You might have experienced lack of love when you were a child and feel that you need to catch up on love now. By doing that you focus on this need to fulfil that vacuum. You experience love as a scarce resource. When you feel egoistic love, you will be fearful of sharing it because you are afraid that there won't be enough love left for you.

Egoism is like keeping secured for yourself something, without caring if everybody gets or not. Self-love is making sure everybody, gets an equal

amount, without much bothering for yourself, even if you get much less.

Learn to Befriend Your Ego

An unhealthy ego is like a protective gear, against the outside world, as we perceive, but actually preventing us from loving ourselves and our lives. An unhealthy ego will make sure that you remain within your comfort zone. You will tend to avoid uncertainty, as also unrealistic expectations of yourself and others. Unhealthy ego has its deep roots in fear, anxiety, limiting beliefs, and toxic thinking patterns.

When you start understanding your ego and begin to have a full control over it, the first spark of your inner harmony will shine forth. You will start realizing that rather than merely attaining a victory over your ego, you have now discovered your greatest ally. You need to rejoice as this is the beginning to have a healthy ego in the making. When you reach this point, you will start to discover the opportunity to construct a close-knit partnership with your other self. An ally who will be on your beck and call and will serve you for a lifetime.

Healthy ego would always help us tracking down and appreciate our strengths, accept our imperfections, and love ourselves unconditionally. Reminding us what is true and good for us, not forcing words that express what we truly feel, think, or want to do. Not waiting for others to conditionally

extend their love but love ourselves as we are, spend quality time, appreciate ourselves, smile in front of mirror, dating ourselves and doing many more such activities, that generate the feeling of self-love. Have an ego but a healthy one and you will see your life changed for good for ever.

Have Patience and Don't Be in A Hurry

Changing your critics, ego or fear can't be done in a jiffy. It may take lot of time to mend these long-acquired habits. It would largely depend upon, how much time you spend in a day to remain focused on changing them. If you are more focused, it could be done in a few days or may be couple of months. But should you get distracted form this process, it may take much longer. But you need to have patience and keep making an effort till you are out of these beliefs or habits.

Positive affirmations, such as "I love and accept myself right now," are usually prescribed as the antidote to self-criticism. Affirming the positive is truly empowering, when you actually believe the message. Unfortunately, trying to substitute positive words for negative feelings can delay self-discovery and problem-solving. This is particularly true when you use affirmations to hide feelings of inadequacy or to gain social acceptability.

Cognitive restructuring is a technique in which you substitute a positive thought for a negative

thought. It is only effective when you have no subconscious desire to hold onto a negative thought. Subconscious is the key word. Not too many people consciously want to hold onto a negative thought. So, keep your effort on and you will be able to do it. You just need to have little patience and belief in you.

“A healthy ego is built on belief that are based on love. An unhealthy ego is built on beliefs that are based on fear, hate and guilt.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 7

SETTING YOUR BOUNDARIES

“You have to set boundaries to be able to keep your self-respect intact, and if someone throws tantrum, just because you set boundaries, this is the validation that they are very much needed”.

- Author's muse

Boundaries are the rules and guidelines that we set up with other people which determine how we are treated in relationships and, which indicate what we find acceptable and unacceptable in their behaviour towards us. Boundaries clearly define what we will and will not put up with, from others. Being aware of our boundaries and setting them are two different hurdles to overcome. Setting boundaries does not always come easily. It's often a skill that needs to be learned with your experience and at times help from people you trust most. Healthy boundaries help us live with our desires, needs, and feelings. We can clearly say no to the things that we don't like or we don't want to do and yes to the things that we are comfortable with.

Setting boundaries is very important aspect of relationship, be it with yourself or others. Setting clear personal boundaries is the key to ensuring relationships are respected mutually. You need to set

the limits for acceptable behaviour from those around you or in relationship, so that they don't take advantage of you in any way. However, if you know and truly love yourself, you will know what kind of boundaries to be set for yourself.

If you feel that you are often made uncomfortable by others, the way they treat you, it may be right time to identify and reset boundaries to have yourself at a more secure and comfortable level. When you set weak boundaries, they leave you vulnerable and likely to be taken for granted or even harmed by others. When you possess a healthy self-respect, you tend to produce boundaries which would ensure that you are treated well as you deserve. This will surely protect you from exploitative relationships and help you avoid getting too close to people who don't have your best interests at heart.

You can have material, physical, emotional, mental, spiritual boundaries and so on. But your personality would be defined by what kind of boundaries you have. There are different kind of boundaries. When you have Soft boundaries, which get merges with other people's boundaries, you often become a victim of manipulation by others. Spongy boundaries are where we are unsure of what to let in and what to keep out. Then comes rigid boundaries, where you are sealed off so that no one can get close to you physically or emotionally. And finally, flexible boundaries, which are ideal and similar to selective

rigid boundaries, but the person has more control in deciding what to let in or what to keep out. You cannot be manipulated and exploited emotionally and psychologically come what may.

Don't Have Too Rigid Boundaries

What if you form a concrete box around you as your boundaries? You will remain within this box and whenever you want to flex yourself or want to move out of your comfort zone, you will feel pressure from all side and that results in stress and depression. Those are the real rigid boundaries, which always should be avoided, as these will not serve real purpose, but create problems for you, making life more miserable and stressful.

Here Is Lobster's Story

This is a great example of how to change and adjust yourself when you start feeling pressure of rigid outer self.

A lobster is a soft mushy animal that lives inside a rigid shell. That rigid shell does not expand when its body start growing, so how can the lobster grow? Well, as the lobster grows that shell becomes very confining and the lobster feels uncomfortable and under pressure. It goes under a rock formation, to protect itself from predatory fishes, casts off the shell and produces a new one as per its new body size and starts all over again a fresh.

Again, after some time the present shell also becomes very uncomfortable as its body grows and grows. Again, the lobster goes back under the rocks once again, to get rid of old shell and get a new one as per his growing body. The lobster repeats this process numerous times through his life.

We human beings need to learn lesson form the lobster. When we are encountering a state of stress in our life, we go to the doctor who prescribe us with medication and that gives us temporary relief. We don't try and understand the real reason behind our suffocation. What we need to do is to lay off for a while and think why we are encountering such a situation. We need to change the stressful situation rather than focusing on stress alone.

“We need to treat the situation rather than treating ourselves from pain.”

Setting Boundaries Without Being Selfish

Many of us find ourselves saying ‘yes’ to everything whereas we need to say ‘No’ to some of them at least. Without caring for yourself, your health, your commitment, you just take all the responsibility on you. You must be at times talking to yourself and getting into resentment, anger, and self-loathing, wondering how you can escape your own tangled web of responsibility. If you are doing all this, you don't have to worry much, as there are many of

us who are in the same category of taking more and more responsibilities and are unable to say 'no.' This is a habit which develops from childhood due to many reasons and circumstances. While there are people who would always say 'No' to everything, similarly, there are people who are in a habit of saying 'yes' always and every time. When you tell either yes or no blindly, without weighing pros and cons, its harmful and you may have to repent later.

These situations can occur in any areas of your life, family, friends, work or relationship. The more you start to please others, there is all likelihood of your suffering from physical, mental and emotional health. This is a trap where once you get in, you will be sucked more and more inside.

In the beginning when you start to set boundaries, you may feel as if you are betraying trust and faith, your friends and loved ones have placed upon you. It is likely to challenge your deeply held beliefs about your place and contribution towards these relationships. It can create some serious situations where you are afraid of letting people down and generate problems that can disrupt the harmony of your relationship which you have shaped with great efforts.

These are all your assumptions which you are creating for yourself. Boundaries are vital for managing our relationships and your status as you deserve. Our

abilities to successfully set boundaries can improve once we realise how we see ourselves in relation to other people around us in our life.

Are Boundaries Justified Across Relationships?

The simple and straightforward answer to this question is 'yes'. Every relationship needs boundaries to be healthy, happy and long lasting. When you enter a relationship, you do not go with your own values and beliefs, making you a single entity. You have to respect each other and value combined needs. However, you may have to keep your self-identity intact and need to function competently as a stand-alone individual in all other relationships and interactions.

Setting boundaries in relationships allow our partner to see us as a person with values, beliefs, interests and how we want to live our life. It gives them the chance to appreciate who we are and what we do in the broader context of contributing to our personal and professional life. It fosters healthy respect and understanding for each other, than just being in a relationship.

You May Have to Compromise Sometime

Just go back to a past event where you felt compelled to say, 'yes' even while your heart from inside thought otherwise. How you must have felt, suppressing your own needs, putting aside the concerns of your own body, and ignoring the warnings from your brain reminding you that it is enough and no more.

Now just think about an event or a time where your heart and mind genuinely agreed for a 'yes' to help someone who needed your support badly. Remember your commitment for offering your support would largely depend upon how the person's values aligned strongly with yours, and the way you responded with enthusiasm and energy. The boundaries you set will vary from time to time, by person and relationship that you are dealing with and the kind of situation you are in.

Keep Your Emotions Away

We need to keep our emotions under check while we are in the process of setting boundaries. For those of us who feel high levels of sensitivity, empathy and compassion, the use of violence, aggression and intimidation are the least favoured ways of communication. The signs of aggression are an indicator of poor boundary setting since it suggests that a person is unable to cope up with the restrictions which results in extreme reaction with negative emotions. Creating boundaries does not mean that you will always be right so that you start getting into arguments with others.

Your time, energy, and resources are not unlimited, and you can't help in each and every one that you would like to. And as you begin to look after everyone in your life, remember you also have a duty of taking care of yourself.

Quality of Relationship After Setting Boundaries

If you are genuine and you have taken due care while setting the boundaries, in all probability the quality of your relationship will be better and improve from what it was before. Some of us care deeply about how others perceive us. We tend to base our sense of self-worth on how others respond to our presence. If people are new to work under these boundaries, the shift can be both surprising and at time difficult for them.

Change can be difficult for some people, especially if they are dependent upon you to get something done. Those who are expert at manipulation may try to emotionally blackmail you. Others may realise, be more compassionate and may consider that they have been asking so much of you, without even considering how you can handle all this.

When you begin to set boundaries, people may take some time to adjust to the new rules. These situations can be little challenging to begin with, especially for those who have worked so hard to keep the relationship steady and going. However, as people see you in this new light, they begin to respect you taking little time to adjust. There may be few who would not accept your boundaries as it may hurt their so-called ego, but you need to ignore them as they may not be truly your well-wishers.

HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES

We have already reached a conclusion that boundaries are essential for healthy relationships and,

living a happy life. Setting and sustaining boundaries is a skill, which unfortunately many of us are not aware of and find it challenging. Setting boundaries can take practice, courage and may be support from people you have faith in. Some of the aspects to keep in mind while setting boundaries are explained below:

Self-Awareness: First and foremost, you need to know who you are and what are, your strengths, weaknesses and goals you have to achieve in life. You can't set workable boundaries if you're unsure of yourself. So, first of all you need to identify your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual state and limits. Then you should consider what all can you accept with reasonable comfort and what makes you feel unsure, uncomfortable or confused. These findings about ourselves will help us dictate and identify what our limits are.

Know Your Core Identity: Core Identity is the essence of who a person is and described by attributes that belong to and describe an individual. You need to answer some questions before you discover your identity. Exploring your identity across multiple planes will give you the chance to know your self-worth. Take your time to identify your unique qualities, personality, values, feelings, emotions, abilities, desires, strengths, weaknesses, and much more. It's easier to set boundaries when you know exactly what your values in life are and how will you protect them

Know What Your Needs Are: Until your basic needs are met, you can't make your life move smoothly, come what may. You need to be very clear of what your basic needs are. Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs gives us a roadmap of our needs as we go through our life. You must take care of yourself before helping others. Unless you yourself are secure and safe, you can't even think of helping others. So, it's imperative that you should never ever think of compromising your basic needs.

Honour Your Feelings: Again, boundaries are all about understanding your feelings and honouring them. You may notice that you have not been able to follow and stick to the limits set. Just ask yourself questions as to what has changed and how you can adjust to the situation, without doing much to the already laid down boundaries.

Have Solid Frame of Mind: First and foremost, you need to be clear and certain that come what may you will set your boundaries. We might fear initially about the reaction of our partner. Many believe that they should be able to cope with a situation or say yes because they are a good person in relationship, even though they feel drained out or have an impression that they are being used. We may wonder at times that do we really need to have such boundaries.

Understanding the value of mutual boundaries aren't just a sign of a healthy relationship

but they are a sign of your self-respect. So, you need to be firm that come what may, you will set boundaries and work to preserve them.

Consider Your Past, Present and Future:

Your past life can at times put hurdles, the way you would like to shape your present and future. Your early upbringing and role that you played in your family can affect your present. If you have held the role of a caretaker, you learned to focus on others, letting yourself be drained emotionally or physically. Ignoring your own needs for the sake of others may have become the norm for you. Also, you need to consider the people who are around you in life. You need to let go of your past role that you played and see the new role now while setting boundaries.

You must bear in mind that those close to you may not always be fully supportive in your attempts to change. They are used to the old ways of doing things. As is the case with any change, we may have to consider paying a price by losing someone along the way. However relationships those are based on strong foundations, faith and true love, will survive these challenges and grow more and more stronger. We may not accept those who have no respect for us in our lives.

Once you have established clear boundaries, you will attract more respect from others. This would give you a chance to be what you really are and getting

what you really deserve and need. Emotional manipulation by others will no longer prevail giving way to a, loving and long lasting relationships.

“The boundaries have to be agreed and respected mutually. It should not be like one-way traffic, which need to be enforced.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 8

POWER OF THE UNIVERSE AND SELF-HEALING

“Our nature has a great power of healing, which no medical science can ever invent. We just have to feel its presence in the space around us and tap into this amazing life force energy.”

- Author's muse

When we genuinely love ourselves and start accepting and approving of exactly who we are, everything in life thereafter starts falling in place. We start getting abundance in life. Our health starts improving, relationships start to find its place and become more and more fulfilling. Once we start getting abundance in life our overall wellness starts getting in to shape and then we can create an environment for our self-healing.

SELF-CARE

Taking Care of Yourself

How can we really explain what self-care is. It is something that refuels us, giving required energy to move around and do what we have to. When you take care of yourself, you don't have to give anything to anyone. And remember taking care of yourself, is by no means a selfish act, as perceived by many. It is not

only about considering it as our basic need, but an essential prerequisite, before we start thinking of taking care of others.

Self-love and taking care of yourself is the most important thing you can be doing in your life. Well, if for any reason, you are not valuing yourself or are feeling unworthy, you may be attracting negative thoughts and experiences into your life. These can create a negative feedback loop between your belief systems and what is manifesting out into your reality. Self-care and self-love will always go hand in hand. When you love yourself only then you will take care of yourself.

And if you are not feeling empowered from within and are predominately experiencing a lack of inner peace you may be out of alignment with your true self (Mind-Body-Soul). A lack of self-love and care not only degrades your psychological state but also your physical state and when your “cup” is empty you are unable to give to yourself or help others.

So, it's paramount that you strengthen your self-love habits and learn to connect to your true self. You are part of this Universe which has created life and made you what you are today. You need to identify this cosmic energy. Our mind and body are surrounded by an energy field which is nourished by this cosmic energy and you have access to all the knowledge, power and wisdom that it contains.

It fills you up so that you can be present for other people in your life and possess the kind of energy to make desired impact you want in this world. Your relationship with yourself is the foundation for everything that you have in your life. When that is steady and solid, everything else is so much more manageable. You can give what you want more easily and freely to the people in your life. You will be much more kind with no anger or grudges and more open and loving. You will have space and big ideas, will come up with solutions to problems, and the energy to implement them. Isn't that the beautiful thing to believe and understand

If you had to disregard everything and everyone in your life to prioritize self-care, sure, that might be selfish to an extent. But you should never attempt that to build and maintain a solid relationship with yourself. A self-care practice only takes a little time, that you're probably already using to relax or just whiling away.

We have layers of energy surrounding us without realising its presence. The universe has in place systems for self-healing of any injury or ailment that our body has. However, we are never able to realise its presence as we don't even know about our own body. During seminars and my lectures, I often ask everyone how many of them have ever spoken to and have patted their body parts and always I find a

sense of astonishment in them as to what is this question all about.

But when I explain how this energy around us can heal them without going to a doctor and taking any medicine, they do realise it's worth. We fail to believe that our body has a great capability to heal itself from any ailment, but what is needed is an understanding of healing energy present around us and giving time to body for healing. Above all we should be able to channelize this energy through meditation or focusing on our body parts and seeing them healing and getting better. (please follow body scanning meditation practice explained in chapter 12)

Here is a story of Avantika, married with two children. Suddenly one day while the family was on a holiday, she started feeling giddiness and had fever. She took it as a holiday fatigue and just took usual medicine to overcome these symptoms. After a week of coming back from holiday, she again had the same issue and little severe this time. She was taken to doctor where some tests were conducted. And then a call came from hospital to see the doctor immediately. The whole family was devastated when they were told that she was suffering from blood cancer and that too in the advanced stage.

Now started visits to various hospitals looking for good doctors and treatment. The chain of chemotherapies started with losing hair, taste and

ultimately will to live. The condition started deteriorating day by day. She and her family left all hopes of coming out from this trauma. She was almost lifeless lying on her bed all the time. And then one day, a sudden flush of sensations ran through Avantika's body reminding of her grandmother's word who said, "nature is a great healer, provided we have faith and will to get over our bodily disorders". She wanted to give it a last try.

She started living more with nature, meditating and generating feeling of self-love and will to live for herself and others. She gathered whatever energy she had left with and travelled to the places, she loved most, the mountains, green meadows flowing Streams and chirping of birds. All this gave her much happiness she needed and the energy and will to get over this trauma. She also started helping people, who were in real need and thus generated feeling of compassion in her. And then in next few days she started getting her hair back, feeling more and more energetic, getting her taste back and eating her favourite food. In just couple of months, she was back full of energy and will to live a happy life. It's almost two years now that she revived, living a perfect and healthy life. She does go for routine check-ups, but doctors are astonished to see her recovery. That the power of nature and self-healing.

The case of Avantika is not the only one. In last ten years, I have come across and heard of many such

cases all over the world, where cancer and other terminal diseases were cured with purely brain intelligence and energy healing and by showing more compassion to ourselves and others. In one of the cases a person with multiple fractures in the spine was healed by understanding the power of this wonderful source of energy present in the universe.

Self-love is vital for understanding the concept of healing. When we love ourselves, we attract positive energy that is necessary for a healthy balance between mind, body and spirit. We cannot recognize love in others unless we have it for ourselves.

Let's talk of emotional health, which is as important, if not more, than your physical health. Once you are emotionally strong you will automatically become stronger physically. So, when you love yourself, you love your thoughts, you love and understand your emotions and you love every part of your body. So, when you practice self-love you are physically and emotionally healthy and mentally strong.

CONCEPT OF ENERGY HEALING

Energy healing is a predominantly old and traditional healing system that restores the balance and flow of energy throughout the body, mind, and soul. This practice is very much prevalent across the world now and works directly with the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of well-being. When

the flow of energy gets disturbed in our body that's where we get ailments. There are different ways that energy healing is done, but the very fact of presence of this cosmic energy in the universe remains the same.

We do need to understand the concept of energy healing so as to attract this energy. But before that we need to acknowledge, have faith and understand the presence of energy around us. Once we feel that presence, there will be different kind of benefits which we could accrue from this energy.

Power of Healing: Energy healing is an alternative approach to treat and heal not only physical pain, illness or chronic conditions but also emotional healing too. Many of us don't get long lasting benefits from allopathy treatment which has many side effects. That is the time we need to turn towards energy healing to get our power back. And this is the force to reckon with.

More Energetic: Vitamins and tonics do not provide you with permanent source of energy. But however, energy healing does change your life for good and you start feeling as vibrant and energetic as you used to be.

Power to Take Balanced Decisions: This is the great benefit of energy healing and may be many of us are not really aware of this fact. When you understand and are connected to the cosmic energy, your ability

to get connected to your subconscious mind increases. This helps you change your negative beliefs which otherwise cause hinderance in your progress, and you start taking balanced and powerful decisions for progressive life.

The concept of energy healing isn't about treating your ailment in isolation. It's about maintaining and enhancing your energy levels in terms of your physical and emotional well-being, making you more confident and vibrant in living your life. Knowing and understanding which of these benefits will best support you at this time will give you the focus you need to most effectively bring energy healing into your life.

CHAKRAS AND SELF-HEALING

Chakras are the circular vortexes of energy that are placed in seven different points on the spinal column, and all the seven chakras are connected to the various organs and glands within the body. These chakras are responsible for distributing the life energy to all parts of our body. One need to understand the importance of keeping these energy points open for receiving rich source of energy from the universe. It's important to recognize this as a core issue for you that your entire energy system and ways of being, have been built on these energy points which receive energy from the universe and keep your body energetic and healthy.

Choose energy healing techniques and a daily practice that focus on calming down the fight-or-flight response. This will be an essential part of your energy healing journey. You need to get serious about creating your personalized energy practice, whether your goal is to heal disease, restore daily balance or get energized for an active life.

THE POWER OF PLACEBO

The placebo effect is defined as a phenomenon in which some people experience a benefit after the administration of an inactive substance or pretended treatment. Stimulate healing has been around for quite some time now. Now even science has proven that under the right circumstances, a placebo can be just as effective as traditional treatments.

Energy healing does have an aspect of the placebo effect to it, may not be directly but in conjunction with your brain intelligence. It can lead to unconsciously shifting thoughts and intentions to help you find new, higher vibration beliefs that ultimately support healing. Our mind is a powerful healing tool which can keep our body in great shape of health. The idea that your brain can convince your body a fake treatment is proven fact and is called placebo effect.

Placebo effect is all about creating a connection between the brain and body and convincing as if the body is taking actual treatment. Placebo as such is not

a treatment for any illness but it regulates thinking pattern in your brain and in turn the brain activates its perception about those symptoms. There have been placebo surgeries and successful too.

How placebos work is still not quite understood, but it involves a complex neurobiological reaction. All of it can have therapeutic benefit. The placebo effect is a way for your brain to tell the body that it needs to feel better. So, you may like to give yourself a placebo.

So, give yourself a Placebo of self-love and regain your energy and great healthy living.

Energy healing encompasses a broad range of therapeutic modalities, all of which focus on channelling the healing energy into our body. We just have to understand and have faith on the fact that this universe and nature are the great healer. One very important aspect of energy healing is that it's not a pill for an instant relief, you need to have patience and give it some time to work on you.

“Whenever you hear or read anything about the mother nature and its power of healing, you are not learning something new, but are remembering what your ancestors have been preaching. You just need to plug into it.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 9

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH

“One can choose to go back to the safety of a comfort zone or move forward toward growth. You can leave your safety, only once you have self-confidence, and that comes from the feeling of self-worth and self-love”.

- Author’s muse

Most of the time we approach our work with lots of pushing and striving for an aggressive evaluations of our performance. Our critical inner voice will always try to play a significant role in creating fear and panic on the way. We have calling from our mind telling us to work hard, try harder, and when performance is not up to our own standards, it would deliver some very critical commentary.

Taking a kinder approach of self-love can help you easily navigate day-to-day work challenges that you face and open more doors to your career potential than a pushing, prodding and overly critical mind. When you start loving yourself, you will love any work that you are doing.

There are millions of people, who go about their daily work cursing every minute of it. Many of them are just not happy with what they are doing.

There is nothing wrong with the work they do, but it is the way they think about their work. If you don't value your life's work, you will never have respect for yourself. How can you make a progress in life, if you are not at peace with who you are and what you are doing for your living. You will never ever be able to convince others of your own worth, if you yourself don't care for it. However, if you truly and unabashedly love yourself, you'll tap into your true, amazing potential with ease. Because:

You Will Truly Discover Yourself

Being aware of who you are is crucial when you want to make changes in your personal and professional life. By practicing self-love, you'll discover your innermost thoughts, your feelings and your true longings. You'll learn about desires you never knew before and uncover strengths you've long forgotten about.

You Will Stand Tall

When you love yourself, you emanate a level of self-confidence that is unmatched. Your body language will show your self-confidence and that is the time when people will start noticing you and taking you for what you are. That is when you will stand tall in a crowd. People would like themselves to be seen around you.

You Will Tackle Challenges With Ease

When you're at peace with yourself, you'll handle complex situations in a completely different

way. You'll know that those circumstances have nothing to do with your worthiness as a person or your abilities as an expert. You'll be more open to seeing these times as learning experiences and opportunities for you to grow. This will make a major difference in your life and career as you will search for different ways to achieve what it is you want in life by yourself.

You Will Take Good Care of Yourself

It's obvious that when you appreciate yourself for the person you are, you'll take good care of your body, mind and soul. You'll eat a balanced diet, and you'll create the margin in your life you need. You'll have more energy, balance and peace of mind, which is more than needed when you're about to change your life.

You Will Believe in Yourself

It is really difficult to get your dream job or success in the business that you wanted since long, if you don't believe in yourself, your strengths and your abilities. Loving yourself makes you more confident to face challenges and come out as a great winner. You will be amazed at how clear your mind gets once you get rid of all the limiting beliefs that have impacted and limited your life.

You Will Focus On What You Like

Very often we are afraid to be our true selves, because we are trying to please or be accepted by

others. We can make career choices that we feel are safe or appease others. When we begin to give ourselves the love and unconditional acceptance, we will be less concerned with what others think and will be free to make professional choices that are in alignment with, what we genuinely want. We excel when we respect our unique talents and doing what we love to do.

It takes time to fully tap into self-love, but once you're there, your life will never be the same again.

SELF CONFIDENCE

Your self-confidence is made up of how much you know yourself and how much you really love yourself. This can affect all aspects of your life, especially your career. Your self-confidence is your perception of who you are and what you can handle. In terms of your career, your self-confidence might revolve around your work identity and whatever you believe you're capable of doing.

Your self-confidence can influence your career decisions. For example, if you believe in yourself and are confident to take on any challenges, you will pursue more opportunities for growth. However, on the other hand if you lack self-confidence, it will make you feel as if your potential is limited as you will have more focus on your weaknesses. You need to constantly look for new and better opportunities to be progressive in your life and that you can only do if you have confidence in you.

“With realization of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world.”

Dalai Lama

It's not easy to overcome the fear of how people will judge, the fear of rejection and many of the obstacles that it will put in your path. But what others think and say has a real power if you let it affect you. Most of the people around you just see a limited version of you. Nobody can understand about how and what you want to achieve in your life. Only you can know and understand about your efforts towards achieving those goals you have set for yourself. And don't forget there are many around you who would envy your progress and with their low self-esteem and poor values they would always find an opportunity to knock you down. Don't let this affect you. Build your self-confidence to get past other people's judgments and see yourself the way you are and the way you want to be.

If you're looking to gain confidence and self-esteem, you first have to make peace with yourself. Take your time to get to know yourself and feel confident and comfortable in your body and with your mind. It's not easy and it won't happen overnight. Everyone has flaws and insecurities. It takes time, is a constant process and requires a lot of understanding.

Many of us don't even know who we are and what we want to do with our life. If you're one of them, don't panic as you are not alone. Take your time to discover who you really are, what you like and what is true to you. We all have some good skills, find out what you're good at and make them excellent. Make a list what your strengths are and make sure they are reinforced and make a list of realistic weakness and work on them to improve yourself. If need be don't feel shy of taking help from anyone. You must know even a small child can teach you something that you don't know.

“Be honest. It's you and you! Be honest with yourself.”

Taking a kinder approach of self-love can help to more easily navigate day-to-day work challenges and open more doors to your career potential than a pushing, prodding and overly critical mind.

Here is the story of Anita who finished her MBA and was looking for a job in some reputed multinational company. After some anxious days of uncertainty, the time came when she was called to join for her first ever job. She was so excited to start her new professional journey. She celebrated with her family and friends.

Her first few days were full of excitement and she promised herself to work hard and do well in life. But then one day things started to take a different

shape. She was harassed by one of her seniors for getting back sexual favours. More she resisted, more traumatic it became. Since this was her first ever job, she was not confident that she would be able to get a job in any other reputed company, should she decide to quit. She was harassed on one pretext or the other on a daily basis. She started getting into a stressful state and took help of pills to get over it. Her condition became worse with passage of each day.

Her parents were not financially strong to support her. However, they advised her to leave the job. She was at the lowest level of self-esteem and self-confidence. One day when she couldn't take it anymore, she decided to quit. Next few days were worst when she had nothing to do and got into the state of depression. Then came a ray of hope when her friend suggested her a new job, though not in a very reputed company. She hesitated initially but later decided to join.

She started liking the new job and found better environment in the office. She went through few books on self-love and personal development and also took help from a life coach. Soon she regained her confidence and promised herself to forget her past and take this new opportunity with full confidence and best efforts. She started doing well in her team and soon got her first promotion. This gave further boost to her efforts. After few years of hard work, she got an opportunity to join a multinational company

as a HR manager. She was full of confidence with her self-esteem and self-worth at her best. Then on she never looked back and kept doing well in life. Presently she is a country HR head in a reputed MNC.

If you are confident of yourself, there is no storm, howsoever severe it is, can change your course. You just need to have faith in your ability and yourself and all such challenges will just wither away. No one will ever try to force his way through and take advantage of you.

BUILD YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

One of the main reasons to have obstacles in achieving greater success in your personal and professional life is your low self-esteem. When we are low in self-esteem and self-confidence, we start doubting our abilities and judgment which prevents us from setting harder goals for us, as we see them. This gets stored in our subconscious mind as a belief and undermines our success. When people have low self-esteem, they can't bargain for raise in salary or promotions and thus keep suffering in their professional life.

Self-Esteem Makes You More Valuable

Self-esteem is an individual's subjective evaluation of their self-worth and values. It is all about, how much you appreciate and like yourself.

It involves how you believe in yourself, such as the appraisal of your own appearance, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors.

Most psychologists have accepted the fact that self-esteem is determinant of a healthy personality. When you like and respect yourself, you always perform and behave better than if you did not. The more you start liking yourself, you will find yourself more confident, more efficient and effective in each area of your life. Self-esteem is the key to peak performance.

Another aspect of self-esteem is called 'self-efficacy.' This could be defined as how effective you feel when you are at work or you accomplish something for which you feel good. When you start getting feel good factor for something you have achieved, you start experiencing positive feelings of self-efficacy.

Last but not the least, you need to stop comparing yourself to others. Comparison is disillusioning and a bad habit. People who are not confident with themselves are the ones who start comparing with others. You are the only one of your kind, so be the best you can and start to support yourself more, like you would for a friend. Surround yourself with people who make you feel good, who don't put you down or make you feel less worthy, but

rather those who hold you up whatever be the situation.

“Life is all about growing in age, experience, wisdom, personal and professional domain. The day we stop growing, we are as good as dead.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 10

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH SELF-LOVE

“You have to learn to love yourself, before you get into any relationship. Your relationship with yourself will sets the tone for every other relationship you have in your life”.

- Author’s muse

There is a strong link between self-love and the health of our relationships. It can be difficult to be in a relationship, if you don’t have a great deal of self-love. When we show others how much we love ourselves, we set the tone for how we want others to treat us with love and respect. Your partner, spouse or anyone else in relationship will treat you differently because, they are seeing you treating yourself differently. It is as simple as that, when you treat yourself with love, compassion, and respect, others will treat you the same way, if not better.

I have found that as we build a healthier and more robust relationship with ourselves, our taste in people around us greatly improves. And in comparison, when we don’t hold ourselves in high regard, the standard we have for those whom we allow in our lives will sometimes be drastically low. As we raise our standards and live our lives from a place of high self-esteem, self-

confidence and selflessness, we will naturally find ourselves much better placed, without getting influenced by views of others. We want to grow, improve and develop ourselves to be able to conduct the way we would like.

We all want love in our lives and attract and maintain a lasting loving relationship. But the real truth is that deep inside us we don't feel lovable enough. However, if you want to have an everlasting and smooth relationship with your loved ones, you have to generate loving relationship with yourself, and that you can have by truly loving yourself.

When we are born into this world, the first thing we need is love from everyone. There's no doubt about that. How do we get love is through getting connected with our family. We get our identity when we get attached to a family, a clan or may be part of a nation. However, many of us live our lives in fear of rejection. This is because we get overpowered by negativity and fear, longing for love in our life

There are some simple steps that you can take right now, that will considerably increase your desire of being lovable and worthy of love.

“You will attract love to the degree that you believe of your self-worth”.

In order to find love, you must believe you are lovable. How do you do that? Well, it's actually very simple. You have to say to yourself everyday:

'I am lovable - just the way I am. I am worthy of love. I deserve love and I am capable of offering love.'

Many of us go into great details about the qualities we would like to have in our partner. We often look for perfection. The way they look like, what do they do, what are their values and so on. That is absolutely fine to do, but most of the time we forget to think about what we have to offer. It is so important to do little introspection about what qualities your partner will be looking for in you. So, you need to consider and offer all the positives you have in you.

When you compare and match all that what you are looking for in your partner and what you can offer, then say these positive affirmations to yourself: ***I am perfect what my partner is looking for. I'm warm, I'm kind, I'm funny, I'm interesting, I'm sexy, I'm compelling and so on.*** You will see that, in no time, you will get all these qualities, if you don't have already in you.

What people actually look for in a relationship includes love, warmth, kindness and above all respect for each other. Somebody who can make you laugh, someone that has got your back and someone who will hold your hands and support you no matter what the circumstances are. Someone who will love you for you, just the way you are. You too should imbibe and offer some of these qualities, which you are looking

for in others, so that you get a feel of being lovable and that it should not be a one-way traffic.

How to Strengthen Your Relationships With Love

Remember, that first step towards building a relationship with anyone else is to improve the one you have with yourself. When you are happy with and love yourself, then all of your other relationships improve concurrently. A happy and content person is always very attractive to others and is loved by everyone. It is like a chain reaction, love yourself more, if you want more love from others. This would mean that no self-criticism, no blaming yourself for things gone bad, don't keep complaining and there is no need for you to feel lonely. It means being very content with yourself in the present moment and choosing such thoughts that make you feel good now.

Experiencing Love

There are no set guidelines for experiencing love. You may experience love in different ways and with different emotions and feelings. For some of us to experience the feeling of love is when we are kissed, hugged or touched in a warm manner. May be some of us would like to just hear the words "I love you", "You are everything to me", "You always make me happy", "You are an amazing person" or words and phrases to that effect. Well, there will be some of us who would like to see a real validation of love, with things like some beautiful gifts or flowers. We all have

our own way of experiencing feeling of love and that is the way we feel comfortable with returning the gesture.

In a similar fashion, you too need to treat yourself to romance and love. Show yourself how special you are. Pamper yourself and always try to surround yourself with things that you like most and whose presence make you feel cheerful and energetic.

Life always throws back to us the feelings we have inside us. If we think negative, we will attract negativity and negative people in our life and if we are positive and compassionate, we will have positivity and people with compassion in our life. It's as simple as that. As you start developing your inner sense of self-love, confidence and a feeling of romance, the right person to share your growing sense of intimacy in your life with, will automatically be attracted to you. It is the Law of attraction and is very much pertinent in case of love.

You may like to get into the fulfilment thinking mode. For that you need to change the way you think and create pleasant thoughts in your mind. You are required to throw out and away all the negative thoughts about love and romance and instead, think about sharing love, approval, and acceptance with everyone you come across.

“When you learn to love yourself, the whole world will reflect this back to you”.

Believe Yourself

For maintaining a lovable relationship, you need an absolute belief that you are lovable. When you are confident of your worthiness, everyone else would have respect for you. You must have full confidence that your beliefs will remain unchanged. How do you do that? It is as easy and as simple as that. You just have to believe that you are lovable.

Look in the mirror every day and tell yourself "I love you. You are lovable, you are worthy of all the love and you deserve all the love." Keep praising and tell yourself "I deserve love because, I am enough, I am complete, I'm a kind and amazing person, I am a lovable person, because I am who I am." Such affirmations are great way to fill yourself with self-confidence to attain them.

Don't curse yourself by feeling bad about how you look, what you are doing or what you are earning, because you are not your salary, you are not your job, you are not what you used to be, you are not how much you weight, your shape, your size. You are definitely not what you were during the years gone by.

ALL RELATIONSHIPS BLOSSAM

When you are able to contribute to the fulfilment of your own needs, then you won't be so needy and co-dependent. It has to do with how much you love yourself. When you truly love who you are,

you stay centred, calm and secure and your personal and professional relationships are wonderful. You will start responding to different situations and people in a different manner. You will change with your outlook to the different events in your life. New and better people will enter your life, and perhaps some old irrelevant ones will disappear. This can be little scary at first, but when you really understand and start following it, you will find it most wonderful, refreshing, and exciting.

Remember, when you possess positive and affirmative thoughts, you will be a happy person, everyone will want to be with you and all your relationships will improve. When you have little or no love for yourself, you tend to be more negative with yourself as well as others. A negative person will always look for negativity in others and thus will remain deprived of positivity in whole life. This is a vicious cycle, which doesn't leave anyone till one changes itself to be positive in life.

This is the stage, if continues for long, can start generating stress and depression in us. We start hating everyone who feels that we can't live without their support. Before it gets too late and beyond repairs, you need to start looking at course correction to your life. We always hesitate taking help from someone, a friend, relation or a life coach, fearing what people would say. But once you realise your life is more important than what others think, life

changes for good. Earlier you realise it better it would be. It's really difficult to change your habits as you grow more and more in age.

Learning Self-love in Relationships

You may find yourself wanting in a relationship if you don't possess a great deal of self-love. Often the insecurities will lead to conflict and sometimes the conflict will lead to breakups resulting into state of depression. Learning self-love is an ongoing process. It's not something that you will get in a flick of a second or learn from books or social media. You need to generate this feeling from within you.

Nurturing Your Relationships

You need to maintain a degree of space and independence. It will not be proper to allow the relationship to captivate your identity and to lose yourself as a person who you are. You need to maintain your own habits, traditions that you follow and your peers whom you have faith on. Maintain a healthy lifestyle, apart from doing your own thing to nourish and nurture your soul.

Remember you are your own master, and you can create happiness in your life, the way you like to be. Your partner or others in your life can't make you happy. They can only make efforts to enhance the happiness that you nurture in yourself, but it is not their responsibility to make you happy. You should not rely on others for

happiness, you will more likely drain the space between you. Make sure you take the responsibility yourself.

If you choose to be happy that would imply that you are accepting the truth that the only person you can change is, you. Rather than trying to change others, you work on yourself and make sure you meet your own needs first. Instead of saying, I will be happy when....., you need to choose happiness now, at the present moment, which is indeed a precious one. You will have to get rid of thoughts of the past or the future and decide to be happy in the moment.

Create every moment special for you and your spouse doing the little things that makes you happy. Enjoy these wonderful moments and nurture yourself, like going out for a walk together, sitting down with a cup of tea or taking ten minutes to meditate. This can help settle unwanted thoughts in your mind, allowing you to be present and to find a moment of joy in your day.

Reflecting through your past with positive mindset can also help you feel lighter and more present and makes it easier to choose happiness. Reflecting through your past pain and trying to overcome it, should be an ongoing process. while it's good to do it but remember it should not hold you back from choosing happiness.

“Remember when you are in a relationship you are not just learning about the other person, but you are also learning about yourself.”

Work on Your Flaws

Don't get disheartened when you see your flaws. Your habits that you have imbibed in the past may irritate your partner. We all have our flaws. Few of these can always be ignored, but you need to work on the flaws which you feel are creating hurdles. Whatever you decide, don't let it get in the way of self-love. Counting each other's flaws is a natural part of a relationship. It doesn't mean that you are a difficult person or that you are not lovable.

Nurture Yourself with Love

Remember love is a pleasant act and not just a momentary feeling. Experts have always maintained that love is something you choose to do, not an emotion that you feel. Though this is often said about loving another person, but this is so true about loving yourself. Even if you don't feel like loving yourself, chose to act in a self-loving way. Make time to nurture yourself and fulfil your own desires.

The best way to do this is to schedule exclusive time for yourself every day. This is a time when you put any other commitment or people aside and just be with yourself. Do simple activities that you enjoy. For me it's going to the gym, reading some fascinating

stories and eating my meals mindfully, enjoying every bite that I take. You may like to meditate, do yoga, read, write, sketch, paint or anything you love the most.

You always need to keep in your mind that self-love is important for enjoying a happy, healthy, and respectful relationship. When you love yourself and feeling good in a relationship, you fill your surroundings with positive energy and vibes, benefiting both you and your partner. However, if you feel that you are struggling with your relationship for any reason, just focus on yourself, work harder on self-love, and you will see things will improve as you move on.

“A healthy and mutually respected relationship will never force you to sacrifice your dignity and self-respect. Never ever try to compromise.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 11

MINDSET MASTRY AND KNOWING YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

“Our subconscious mind has no power to think and guide, what we want to do. It’s simple, honest and straight forward. What we feed in, is exactly what it manifests.”

- Author’s muse

Many a times we ask ourselves or others, these very common, but rather difficult questions. Why is one person happy and enjoying prosperity while another sad and miserable? Why is one person a great success and another a failure? Why is it that so many good, kind-hearted and religious people suffer, while many immoral people succeed and prosper enjoying a great life? There are many more such questions, we wonder why. Is there a definite answer to these questions? We will find that out in this chapter.

The subconscious mind is something that has a huge impact on every action that we take in life, but unintentionally we overlook. Instead, we tend to focus more on our conscious mind, which contains the critical and logical thinking function of our brain, that connects to what we are doing in the present moment. The subconscious mind is the powerful layer, which is difficult to be felt, but it plays a major

role in our decision making and the way we react to various situations. It stores the awareness of all things, the conscious mind cannot recognize. Once the subconscious mind is tapped into, this remarkable part of our brain will become a great asset for us.

The root of our insecurities is anchored in our subconscious mind, through the programming done over the years, in the form of limiting beliefs such as, I am not good enough, finding faults in our appearance or actions. These beliefs determine not only how we feel about ourselves but also how we live our life and what results we are able to achieve. But is it possible to access our subconscious mind and to change the way we think about ourselves and others? The answer is very simple, yes you can do it and without any major effort. You just need to connect with your subconscious mind, communicate and recognise what all is stored there.

We use our conscious mind to process the information we see, hear and feel, through our five senses. We think that we are making our decisions through our conscious mind, which is not true. The information is routed through our subconscious mind, which then conveys to the conscious, what decision to take or how to react or respond to the situation.

Most part of our thinking process is affected by what is stored in our subconscious mind. This is

proven in many studies. On an average a person gets more than 60000 thoughts per day, of that almost 90% are negative and 70% are repetitive. This may look exaggerated but is true and proven fact. You believe it or not, we all choose our thoughts. We do make a choice to have a thought and then we get the same thoughts again and again. You can always refuse to think a positive or a negative thought yourself. Can we really have any control over our thoughts? The answer is yes, you can, provided you can focus your mind on the present moment and that is possible only through Mindfulness and Meditation. Different kind of meditation has been mentioned in later chapter.

Some try to bury their past away or accept it and move on to the future rightly believing that nothing can be changed about it and therefore it should not be thought about again and again, especially the painful part of your past life. However, there are many others who would like to tag along their past with every event of present. They get stuck in their past deeply triggered by memories or sometime overwhelmed by old feelings. We should always learn from our past and take lessons for our future, but too much reflecting on our past events is detrimental to our personal development. If our future is based on the negativity of past, our lives will be filled with dread, stress, anxiety and upsets.

Our subconscious mind is a preprogramed system like a computer, with our past life experiences,

rooting back as far as childhood, to respond to a present situation. We keep strengthening these programs during our lifetime. Our subconscious mind is not capable of cognitively distinguish or process our thoughts, but it can bring about some sort of memory, whether good or bad, which may affect our judgement of a situation. It has been proved beyond doubt that we have only 5% of our conscious mind while 95% is subconscious. Every aspect of our belief is stored in our subconscious mind which has been programmed over a period of time. Our actions would largely depend upon what kind of experiences have anchored more into our subconscious mind. Such actions then start dictating our behaviour, emotions, personality and how we deal with ourselves and others in the present moment.

When we are always in a thinking mode, we will never make good or balanced decisions. This would many a times may lead to our own pain, suffering and regret. Regular and continuous process of thinking can often bring about feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness, insecurity, anxiety and thus low self-confidence. This is likely to restrict our personal growth. Thus, even if we want to make things better for ourselves, we are left powerless because of this phenomenon.

We often find ourselves less confidence in our professional life, especially when dealing with prospective clients, because at the back of our minds we may have

already formed that notion that we cannot negotiate effectively. We could be less enthusiastic at the prospect of meeting people or putting across our viewpoint in a meeting, maybe because at one point in our earlier life at school or may be other places, we were witness to a situation that has traumatized us from doing so and this has been planted deeply in our subconscious mind. We are likely to handle failure differently because of these past experiences, deeply embedded in our subconscious mind.

You can choose to change this programming of your subconscious mind. Identify your negative thoughts pattern by making a note of it and then follow it up to find the route cause. You would definitely reach to the point where it originated, be at the time of childhood or some events later in life. Just replace these with positive thoughts by making new connections in your brain. Keep strengthening them and you will find that sooner or later you can get rid of your negative thought process.

Keeping ourselves motivated plays a big role in overcoming the negativity stored in our subconscious mind. It is our motivation, which comes from within us, which can address and overcome these feelings of rejection or failure.

BELIFS THAT KEEP YOU STUCK

'Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.'

Many of us grow up believing that nothing we did was ever good enough, and this is something we

keep carrying with us. It affects every aspect of life: hobbies, skills, relationships, even our understanding of our body, appearance, and mental health. We often think that we must have done something quite terrible in our past to go through any of this, not to be good enough.

For sure and certain that we were not responsible for these attitudes and beliefs, other people did this to us, so we literally can't let go of the pain they caused. We neither gather the courage to confront them or stand up to them or may be forgive them. But blaming others hasn't helped us move on and become the person we want to be in life. It's made us feel sluggish and sick whenever the thoughts and memories worked our way into the consciousness.

Take a minute to think of your beliefs about yourself. How many of them are accurate and really pertain to you? Which is the one that exclusively belong to you and is not a generic? Try and get into its origin and challenge it. You may find answers. When you change your beliefs, you change your thinking and thus a positive change in your life.

It will definitely take time to work through these beliefs, and I don't suggest that you get yourself under pressure or keep a deadline for it to change. It has taken years to form and firm it, so give it some time. But yes, you need to have a concerted and continuous effort to change it. Do it all at your own pace, in a way that suits you. You are a work in progress and be positive.

Some Facts About Beliefs

- Beliefs are the views/opinions that we accumulate through our life, that represent our standards.
- Beliefs are our ideas that we commit and support, come what may.
- Our beliefs are the rules that we buy into and endorse every time.
- Our beliefs determine the attitude and perception we have towards various things in our life.
- Our core identity beliefs determine how much confidence and self-esteem we have in our day-to-day affairs and interactions.

Limiting Beliefs

Limiting beliefs are those which constrain us in some way or the other. They are the beliefs which are in the form of our thoughts and opinions that we believe to be the absolute true. They tend to have a negative impact on our life by stopping us from moving forward and growing on a personal and professional level. We tend to believe them blindly and do not think or say the things they discourage. In doing so we make our own life miserable.

Once a limiting belief is triggered and activated, your outlook changes. You see everything through a

new filter. You start looking for validation from people around you, which is not a great idea. Doing so, you may always find something as per your perception that would confirm this belief. For example, you are in a professional discussion when someone gave a contradictory view of what you said and rather than reinforcing your point of view, you remain silent or get defensive. Later you start blaming yourself. You have a limiting belief of low self-confidence.

Questions You Need to Ask yourself

When you are talking to yourself it is so important to understand what kind of questions to ask yourself. Many of us would start asking non-empowering questions and you will always get negative and non-empowering answers. You need to understand the difference between empowering and non-empowering questions. When you ask something to yourself, your brain does not differentiate between right or wrong. The answer or the decision by you comes as you have programmed yourself. So, if you tell anything negative to your brain the answer will be negative by your brain. Here are few examples of limiting and empowering beliefs.

Limiting Belief: I am not good enough. I need to have plenty of wealth to be happy. I can't become what I want in life, because of my background. My age is catching up to take on anything empowering. I am

not a good public speaker and will embarrass myself, if I speak in front of a gathering.

Empowering Belief: I am good, enough and complete. I will always be happy come what may. With proper training, hard work and concerted efforts, I can become whatever I wish to be. Aging for me means that I have the experience and wisdom to do anything. I can speak on any topic by acquiring proper knowledge of the subject.

“Challenge the limiting beliefs that makes you feel bad about yourself.”

In all likelihood you are holding on to all kinds of negative and inaccurate beliefs about your worth, your potential and what you deserve. In actual sense these are not facts, but you formed these beliefs based on few past experiences and years of immature statements by people around you. Earlier you realise and pick these limiting beliefs better it will be. But if you delay too much, they anchor permanently in your subconscious mind and then it becomes difficult to replace or take them away.

Now how do you identify your limiting beliefs. Please start writing answers to the following questions and analyse in depth:

- In what areas in your life, you are not achieving what you really desire?

- In which all areas you always feel challenged?
- What areas in your life have you tried to improve but did not get the results as you desired?
- What aspects of your life make you unhappy and discontented?
- In what areas of your life do you feel weak, powerless, incompetent, or held back?
- Do I always remain in my comfort zone?

GETTING RID OF NEGATIVE BELIEFS

It may look little weird to ask someone to change beliefs. But remember it is possible and once you start doing it and change from limiting to empowering beliefs, you would automatically start feeling high in self-esteem and energy. There may be many times in your life where you have changed your childhood belief automatically as you have grown. This is a natural process as you grow in life with better understanding of events around you.

But there may be some beliefs which are deeply anchored into your subconscious mind and which are really difficult to replace. That's where you will face challenges in changing them, but if you keep your wits together, you will be able to go through this phase. Here is how you can choose to replace your limiting beliefs:

- ***Identify Your Limiting Belief:*** There are two ways to do that. Externally you need to focus on your actions and internally on your thoughts. Make a list of all the beliefs that you get and are impacting your life. Examine what kind of feelings you get with each of them, negativity or depressive. Keep making your notes. If you are struggling with these beliefs, they are limiting and non-empowering.
- ***Identify Evidences to Prove That Belief:*** Start poking yourself to find out proofs for this belief that you have identified. Since they are non-empowering beliefs you will be able to find enough proofs to counter their credibility.
- ***Replace With New Empowering Belief:*** Once you are sure to get rid of your non-empowering belief, start replacing it with your new and empowering belief. Try to find such proofs in different situations to make it stronger.
- ***Keep Strengthening Your New Belief Every Moment:*** Once you have strengthened your new empowering belief, eventually it will start getting incorporated into your belief system through your subconscious mind.

You can keep repeating the process in a similar manner for different non empowering beliefs to change them one by one to empowering beliefs.

When you change your belief, you go through a transition period between the old and new beliefs. You go back and forth unable to decide where to go. You may get mood swings, you may get angry at yourself and others, but you must remember that when you are learning something new and giving away what you had embraced for so long, it does take time. You need to have patience till you are well acclimatised to your new belief. Don't beat or curse yourself but keep yourself strong and slowly but steadily build up your new belief system for good.

A change in Feeling is Change in Destiny

What you tell your subconscious mind your actions get synchronised as per your directions. You just have to be connected with your subconscious mind. Your thoughts can change you and others too. If you feel people are good at one place, your will find people of another place good too. You need to row your own boat.

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Awareness of the mind-body connection is by no means a new phenomenon. But its real and true value started getting into practice in the early 20th century. Researchers began to study the mind-body

connection and scientifically demonstrated complex links between the body and mind, particularly the subconscious mind. The placebo effect along with power of self-healing, explained in earlier chapter in treatment of many diseases and disorders, is a proof of mind and body connection.

Your mind and body are powerful allies. How you think can affect how you feel. And how you feel can affect your thinking. Constant worry and stress can cause some serious ailments which then take shape of chronic and sometimes terminal disorders, difficult to treat.

Similarly, constant pain or a health problem has direct effect on your thinking pattern and emotions. You might get stress, depression and become anxious about these bodily problems and how you handle to treat them. However, your mind and the way you think can have a positive effect on your health. Maintaining a positive pattern of thoughts in life might help you to better handling of your pain or stress and stay healthier. Those who are in negative frame of mind find it difficult to overcome these health issues

So, when you have a strong connection with your mind and you start understanding your subconscious mind, you will naturally have a strong body and that is where you start building more and more relationship with self-love. It is a cycle, when you

love yourself, you will have a positive mind and in turn a healthy body.

I am sure you got the answer to the question that came up in the beginning of this chapter. You can definitely design your own destiny provided you know what has been stored in your subconscious mind over the years and the way you react or respond to the situations in the present.

“The day you control your subconscious mind, you will start steering your life the way you like.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 12

MINDFUL LIVING AND SELF-LOVE

Buddha was asked, “What have you gained from meditation?”

He replied, “Nothing!” Then he continued, “However, let me tell you what I have lost: anger, anxiety, depression, insecurity, and fear of old age and death.”

Mindfulness and meditation practices were inspired mainly by teachings from the Eastern part of our World, particularly from Buddhist traditions some 2500 years ago. However originally great Sadhus in ancient India used to do these practices and they were their own scientists who would have a deep look inside their soul for days and months. They used to feel an energy around them which could transform their life. Mindfulness is a way of life to be with yourself in the present moment.

Mindfulness is the only and the best way to find yourself and find love, compassion, empathy and emotional intelligence. There are numerous definitions of mindfulness, each explains a uniqueness of mindfulness and its true value.

In very simple terms, mindfulness means, living in the present moment. Essentially it would mean maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our

thoughts, feelings, emotions and bodily sensations. Another definition says: *“Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing and not reacting or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us”*. It also includes that you are truly at peace and in touch with yourself. Nothing anyone does or says bothers you and no negativity can touch you.

A moment-to-moment awareness of one’s experience without being judgmental. In a sense, mindfulness is a state of your mind. Meditation and certain other activities may help getting into the state of mindfulness but as such, it is not equivalent to or synonymous with them. However, regular practice of meditation is surely a great source of getting into the mindful living mode.

We all get thoughts every moment of our life. What happens when we are doing something very important that suddenly a thought comes in our mind from nowhere, may not be even remotely connected with what we are doing. And then we keep doing what we were doing without realising that our mind has moved away and wandering somewhere else. Now during mindfulness meditation, you seek to interrupt this automatic chain of thoughts, by getting your mind back to an object of concentration. This could be your breath or rise and fall of your belly during breathing or any other thing you are focussing upon. This practice of repetitively getting your focus back to the breath, or

any object of attention during mindfulness practice, helps develop a different relationship with the present moment and maintains our focus on what we are doing. This habit helps us to always be with, what we are doing and not getting caught unaware during a presentation, meeting or anywhere else, when you move out of your mind to different thoughts.

POWER OF YOUR THOUGHTS

Your mind is always listening. Every word you say or think becomes a blueprint, your mind turns in to reality. So remember....

*Your beliefs become your thoughts
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.*

Mahatma Gandhi

Our life is like a real story, which every moment we are weaving together from our thoughts, feelings, and emotions we experience each moment. Still most us would like to remain attached to the memories of our past and the expectations of the future. Rarely do we try to remain in the purity of the present moment. Often, we get entangled in our past memories, events or traumas, that we embrace throughout, is what

creates stress each day of our lives. Often, we face the events and situations those are simply the ups and downs of living each day. But there are times in our lives when the stress, pressure, disappointments, and anxieties can seem overwhelming.

Fortunately, we have a most appropriate way to recapture this connection to our true self and that is by practice of meditation, which allows us to experience our own source. With the regular practice of meditation, we control patterns of our desire, that spiral around our consciousness. Although such patterns are the field of our manifestation. We are the thinkers of what thoughts we get from the vast and unlimited ocean of consciousness. Through meditation, we gradually bring our awareness about who we are, which in turn brings love back into our soul and helps us in rediscovering our self, which can then never really be lost.

With meditation we gently move away from stress, tension, fear, and confusion, that often accompany us, when we are at the crossroads, and thus we can regain our connection to a calmer, gentle and more peaceful life. And from then on, our life gets filled with love, joy, fulfilment, balance, and peace for times to come.

Mindfulness Helps Navigate Difficulty

The regular and uninterrupted practice of meditation helps us navigate the route of our life (like

a GPS does to find unknown locations), as we travel along this route. We slowly and gently, start acquiring certain qualities and create the conditions for a shift in perspective. Our goals may not seem relevant, even when, as if by magic, they are achieved, while we move along smoothly on that found path.

We can consider mindfulness as a conceptual model, which helps us to understand elements of the human experience. Mindfulness is the map and not the territory. To really know the genuineness of a map, you need to physically see the territory of that map. Similarly, here in mindfulness the territory is the experience of events itself which one has over the years during lifetime.

When you try and understand your body, thoughts, and emotions through the practice of Mindfulness, you start to see things more clearly. It takes the emotional charge out of situations, that you may have been thinking would last forever. Things will start to change for good. When you stop reacting to situations and start responding mindfully, you will be having the ability to move forward in any given situation, without affected by emotions, feelings or your ego.

Your Relationship with You and Others

We all crave love, intimacy, and genuine connection through our conscious mind. However, our unconscious mind which has stored our habits

and reactions, based on our past experiences, can get in the way of our most important relationship skill, which is Mindful communication. When we practice mindfulness, we are fully present for the beautiful, dynamic, but at times complicated human relationships and we bring our Mindfulness practice truly off shields. Every relationship we have in our life would always begin with our relationship with ourselves. Relational mindfulness gives us awareness that we need to connect more deeply with others.

When we apply mindfulness to these everyday situations, we can shift away from our habitual reactions and start listening, rather than hearing, to open ourselves to respond with compassion. We start understanding our trigger moments better. Rather than reacting, we can recognize that those every-day moments are opportunities to respond, through practicing mindfulness.

RELATIONAL MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Relational Mindfulness focuses not on the individual practices, but on mindfulness practiced in relationship to other people. It is based on the simple understanding that the most skilful form of love is attention. It's more or less like normal meditation, where the focus is on the relationship, rather than on your breath. You just need to imagine a web of connections between you and every other person. Some of the principles of Relational Mindfulness are given below:

Deep Listening: With mindfulness you understand the difference between hearing and listening. You tend to focus on what others are saying and then give a pause to think and respond. When you can pay attention to these moments, you give yourself the opportunity to investigate what's behind them and what emotions are attached to it.

Mindfulness Speech: Whatever you speak, just think what meaning it is going to convey to others. When you are more mindful, you tend to add your emotions and feelings in your speech and that conveys exactly what you intend to and make other person understand what you really mean.

Taking a Purposeful Pause: By pausing before, during, and after conversations, you can stay connected with your deeper self as you engage with others. Each time you take a pause, breathe, and turn your attention within, you invite yourself into the present moment. You can return from distractions or automatic chain of thoughts, that can cause you to disconnect to, whatever you are doing. If, due to chain of thoughts you are creating an inner story which is generating anxiety or judgment, you can pause and consider if this is really what you want to give your energy to. And then you will again find yourself in the present moment.

Turn Towards Challenges, Rather Than Running Away: Most of the times we try and turn

away from the challenges that we face in our life. No one would like to face moments of discomfort, uncertainty and anxiety. But being challenged is a natural and inevitable part of being human. Relational mindfulness teaches you to turn towards discomforts and challenges to build a deeper capacity for presence. When you start feeling difficult emotions during an interaction, you can gently acknowledge it and be with it. This discomfort will make you more compassionate and help in your inner healing which otherwise you may not understand.

MEDITATION PRACTICES

Meditation is a practice that will help you come to grip with what it means to love yourself. Meditation is a simple, but time-tested practice to generate feelings of love not only for yourself, but also for everyone you know. It is a wonderful practice to clear your mind of unwanted thoughts, by bringing your awareness back to what you are doing. Awareness is the process of thinking, feeling, and perceiving. According to Buddha, meditation starts by focusing on ourselves and generating that soft, warm feeling of love in our body. This practice should be done daily and is as important as brushing your teeth.

How often have you spoken to your body parts or may have thanked them for their constant support in keeping you healthy and going. You need to get in

touch with every part of your body and truly love them. There is only one way to do, and that is by meditating. You need to be in the present moment to meditate and that's the best time to get connected to your body parts.

Getting connected to your body parts not only creates self-love, but you tend to start understanding them better and can feel in case something is wrong somewhere. The purpose is to tune in to your body, to reconnect to your physical self and notice any sensations you feel. Even serious ailments go away when you meditate. This fact has been proven across the world over, where people could repair even broken bones and treat life threatening disease, like cancer, with meditation. It's not only self-love that is generated with meditation, but you get sense of compassion and empathy, which makes you and your mind stronger and calm.

From mindfulness meditation's acceptance of the present, and the constant reminder to come back to yourself, whenever you get distracted, comes self-forgiveness. A change in that self-criticism habit. A letting go of self-criticism and feeling of gratitude towards others, and an embrace of yourself as only human. We learn to get rid of thoughts which are self-criticising and focus our mind on more positive visualisations and outcomes.

Through mindful meditation, we learn to accept ourselves as we are good or bad and from there,

clear the way for our mind to become a calmer, clear creative, less anxious, full of compassion and happiness. The space otherwise filled with all the negativity. We start breathing in all the positive energy from this universe, rejuvenating our body with every inhale of fresh air.

There are different types of meditation practices. The main purpose however remains to create a sense of calm and inner harmony, as also altering consciousness, finding awareness and achieving peace. Some of them are mindful meditation, transcendental meditation, walking meditation, eating meditation, body scanning, meditation for loving kindness and many more.

MEDITATION FOR BEGINNERS

Basic meditation is for beginners who would just start with this practice. It takes few months of regular practice before you start doing more advanced meditations. I would suggest that in the beginning you should start with at least 10 mins of meditation and slowly increase the duration with time and practice. You may have an alarm set so that you don't have to look at the watch and distract yourself. When I started my basic meditation, I would put meditation music for 12 minutes. Two minutes for preparations and 10 minutes of meditation. The music can avoid distractions from unwanted outside noises. It is great to be amongst nature while meditating, if it is possible. A garden with light breeze, a riverside or a

beach side would be perfect place to get into meditation mode. However, if this is not possible, you can create an environment wherever you are, by making the surrounding peaceful.

You can do meditation at any time of the day, but the best time remains early morning hours. Actually, the best time for meditation is before the sun rises. It is strongly desired that you start with early morning meditation and thereafter you can do anytime of the day.

Preparing for meditation

Wear Comfortable Clothes. You should not wear any kind of tight fitted cloths which are distracting in any way. They should be loose and breathable.

Find A Distraction-Free Place. Especially when you're just starting out, it's important to clear your environment of all distractions. A candle, some flowers around, or some aromatic, can be great little touches to enhance your meditation experience. The light should not be very bright, else it will cause distraction.

Sit Comfortably. Sit on a cushion on the floor or chair or even a sofa with a straight back. Do not lean on the back where you are sitting. The upright spine helps you to concentrate better without putting pressure on your breathing. Stay as erect as possible but don't be stiff.

Position Legs As Comfortable To You. You can extend them out in front of you or cross them beneath you if you're using a cushion on the ground. The most important thing is that your posture remains straight and feet should rest flat on the ground, if you are sitting on a chair or sofa.

Position Of Hands. Keep your hands on your lap one over the other or on your knees with both palms facing upwards for receiving energy and blessings from nature and Almighty.

Steps For Meditation

Motivation - You must have some motivation to do meditation. It will be this motivation that will bind you to regular meditation practice and get the best out of it. But never have any preconditions for the meditation or expect miracle in limited time.

Awareness - when you close your eyes for meditation get aware of where you are and where you are sitting. If sitting on chair feel the chair under your seat, feel the back of the chair, feel your hands touching your knees, your shoulders and every part of your body. The moment you focus of these body parts, you will get a sensation confirming that you are connected with these parts.

Focus On Your Breathing -This is what meditation is all about. Don't try hard not to think. Remember you can't stop your mind from thinking. So, it will be better that you focus on positive

thoughts and on your breath. When you start focussing on your breath, you will find that all other thoughts from the outside world will vanish on their own, without you having to worry about how to ignore them.

Concentrate on your breathing in the way that is most comfortable for you. Some people like to focus on rise and fall of the belly as you breathe, while others like to focus on the point where breath touches the nose in the process of inhalation or exhalation. Just bring your mind to focus on some aspect of your breath. If you find it difficult focusing on your breath initially, you can even count your inhale and exhale cycles up to 10 and then back.

Bring your attention back to your breath whenever your mind wanders. Even when you have gained lot of experience with meditation, you will still find your mind wandering. You need not get worried or perturbed on this aspect. Whenever you have thoughts creeping in, you just try to ignore them. Bring your attention back to your breath and let thoughts fade away again.

You must not get restless, as in the beginning everyone has difficulty in focusing for long. Remember, after every wandering of your mind, when you come back to focus on breath, is itself a practice for mindfulness. Don't have too many expectations from meditation practice. It is not some pain killer that you will get an instant relief. Give yourself time

and understand this practise well before you start expecting results. You need to have a regular routine of your meditation. You can start with few minutes initially and then slowly prolong it when you are comfortable.

Before you open your eyes, rub both hands gently and when they are little warm put them on your face, shoulders and eyes. Feel the peace you got after meditation and enjoy those relaxing moments before you get up to start doing your other routine work.

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

Generating A Feeling of Self-Love

Loving kindness meditation is a popular self-care technique that can be used to boost well-being, reduce stress and generate the feeling of self-love. Those who regularly practice loving-kindness meditation are able to increase their capacity for forgiveness, connection to others, self-acceptance, compassion and much more. The technique is easy to practice and can provide a sense of calm in few minutes of the practice.

During loving kindness meditation, you start generating feelings of kindness, forgiveness and loving energy toward yourself and others. You will start having warm and pleasant feelings of compassion and empathy, in addition to gaining many benefits from other types of meditations.

Practicing Loving Kindness with Self-Compassion

Mindfulness and self-compassion are very much an integration of common purpose. While self-compassion is to be kind to yourself when you are facing challenging situations or sufferings, while mindfulness makes us open to sufferings with spacious awareness. Both have similar positive effect on you. Loving-kindness meditation creates self-compassion, empathy and perspective for a person which ultimately creates a feeling of self-love. Loving kindness meditation is an excellent antidote to negative feelings towards self and others and also for giving love unconditionally to self and others. Such mindful meditation in self-compassion have been proven to lower levels for stress hormone called Cortisol and increase heart rate variability, which is your body's physiological ability to deal with stressful situations.

“Practicing loving kindness meditation daily in your life builds an attitude in you for self-love before you start loving others”.

Buddha

There are different ways to practice loving kindness meditations, each based on different issues that you are facing in life, but each variation uses the same core psychological operation and that is to generate the feelings of loving kindness. During your

meditation, you generate kind intentions toward certain people including yourself and others.

The following is a simple and effective loving kindness meditation technique which you can try anytime.

1. Find a comfortable place and sit quietly. Close your eyes, relax your muscles, and take few deep breaths right up to your belly and gently roll out in exhale. Feel the rise and fall of your breath. Bring your complete focus on breath for few minutes. Whenever your mind wanders just get it back.
2. Generate a feeling from within and start experiencing complete physical and emotional wellness and inner peace. Get a feeling of perfect love for yourself, accepting yourself as you are, complete, enough and beautiful at heart. From breath bring your focus on these beautiful feelings of inner peace and harmony with yourself and others. Breathe in all the love from space around you and breath out all the negativity that you still have.
3. Repeat few positive and reassuring phrases to yourself. Following phrases are few such examples, however you may create your own as per your liking and situation:

May I be happy

May I be safe

May I be at peace

May I be healthy and strong

May I love myself the way I am

4. Bask in these feelings of inner peace and self-compassion for a few more moments. If your mind wanders anytime, gently bring it back to these feelings of loving kindness. Let these feelings merge with you and get embedded into your heart.
5. In the beginning for few days, just be with these feelings. With regular practice, shift your focus to loved ones in your life. Begin with someone, who you are very close to and whom you love the most. Feel your gratitude and love for this person. Stay with those feelings. You may want to repeat the following phrases or similar ones that bring about feelings of loving kindness within you:

May you be happy

May you be safe

May you be at peace

May you be healthy, peaceful, and strong

*May you be loved by everyone in
your life*

6. Once you have maintained these feelings toward that person, you can bring other people who are close to you giving them the warm feelings of loving kindness. You may like to do for people you have not met or seen, but they are suffering on any part of this earth. Generate feelings of connection and compassion for them. You may even want to include those with whom you are in conflict or you hate them, for they have given you pain and suffering. Show your magnanimity by granting them forgiveness and greater peace.
7. When you are done with the complete practice, slowly open your eyes. Feel these pleasant moments with your open eyes for little while. Remember, you can revisit these wonderful feelings you generated, throughout the day by maintaining your focus.

This meditation practice is just a guideline for you to start. You may like to suitable modify it as per your feelings and requirements. As long as you maintain focus and attention on positive feelings of loving kindness for you and others, you can expect to gain benefits from the practice.

MEDITATION WITH BODY SCANNING

Body scanning is a powerful meditation practice that connects mind with body and allows us to find a haven within our own self. With your eyes closed, maintain focus on your breath as in other meditations. When you are connected to the present moment, focus and bring your attention to each part of your body in turn, from your head to the tips of your toes. You can go slowly, feeling and imagining each and every part of your body as if you are feeling them, blessing them and thanking them for being there for you. First you can focus on your outer body parts e.g. head, forehead neck, shoulders, back, eyes, ears, nose, lips, chin, legs, feet, toes. Then you can start with each internal part, starting from one end, stomach, lungs, liver, heart, throat, brain, spine and more. Bring more focus on the parts where you feel pain or discomfort. Feel sensation in each part of the body and imagine that they are working to their best ability.

Don't let yourself get distracted by pain or discomfort within your body. Just focus on how it feels. Is there any tension? Are you facing pressure anywhere? Is it warm or cold? When you allow yourself to find inner calm within your body and start connecting and appreciating each of your body part without judging, all your body parts will start relaxing and will get relieved of any pain or discomfort. This is a powerful technique, especially for those who have

some ailment or are not confident about their body parts.

Once you finish just relax into the moment for few minutes before you open your eyes. *Remember, when you love your body and each part in it, you are truly in love with yourself.*

Visualise Yourself to Greatness

So many people across the world love these techniques because this can leave you feeling different every time you do it, centred, peace within self, focused, energetic and refreshing. The regular practice will amplify these sensations for generating positivity in you. You will start visualising yourself, walking in the lush green meadows, standing on top of a mountain or next to a stream, listening to ocean waves or chirping of birds or with your favourite hobby. You may like to choose some place that feels warm and vibrant and tune in to the sensations.

The most challenging part of the practice is extending blessings of loving-kindness to people who have wronged us, the people we dislike or even hate, for what they have done to us. The rationale behind loving kindness practice is that if you can send positive vibes and blessings to the people you hate most, they would not behave as they did or are still doing. And this also allows you to clear your heart of any burden of hate and pain that you are carrying with you.

After blessing such difficult or not so good people in your life, you move on to other things those have some value in your life. You may even like to extend it to this universe or environment around you. Consider this universe as source of energy which is keeping this world and all human beings alive.

It's fascinating to think about a world which is filled with people whose sole purpose is to love themselves and others. I'm not so naive as to think that if everyone practiced this, we would live in a perfect world of loving people around us, but it is reasonable enough to know, how such regular practice would shape you to generate respect and regard for yourself and other human beings. As also its regular practice will change your view of the world in general and people around you in particular, generating feeling of self-love, as also loving everyone around us.

“Mindful living is divine, make your present moment a wonderful experience of your life.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 13

CULTIVATING SELF-LOVE

“You need to love yourself. Love yourself so much to the point that your energy and aura rejects anyone who doesn’t know your worth.”

Buddha

Cultivating self-love is an exquisite endeavour to have healthy and happy relationship with ourself, as well with others, in our life. Even scientific research has proven some remarkable benefits those are accrued from self-love. How do you cultivate self-love? The simple and best way is whatever you do, just add a little flavour of self-love into that. When you think, when you walk, when you eat, when you speak, whatever you are do, don’t forget to add your emotions full of love.

Isn’t that too simple to do. So how do you start? First thing in the morning and the last thing before going to bed, you have to look into your eyes in the mirror and say loudly:

‘I love you; I really love you; I love you exactly as you are.’

It may look little funny or weird in the beginning but when you get used to these affirmations, you will start enjoying and loving them. It will also

instil confidence in you and make you more cheerful and energetic.

Get Rid Of Unhealthy Ego

I have written enough about ego in earlier chapters. You need to clearly differentiate between healthy and unhealthy ego, before you start process of cultivating self-love. Just get rid of ego that is stopping you from living a happy and progressive life.

“Once you have identified your unhealthy ego, just throw it in a deep sea, never to find it again.”

Stop Bothering for Likes

How do we normally start our day? First thing after getting up we pick up our mobile phone looking for the messages, where we have been liked, praised or a thumbs up. And imagine if we don't find such affirmations, what happens to our mood and emotions. Millions of photos and messages are shared on Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and many such platforms on social media. every day, with posts receiving huge no of comments and likes every day. Each 'like' on our posts or photo boosts our energy level giving us a feel-good factor and plays a positive part in our emotional responses. However, this kind of feeling is just momentarily and vanishes as we get busy in our daily routine.

I have seen people going for morning walk with phone in one hand. Either they are talking on the

phone or sharing messages while walking. What is the use of such activity when you can't be with nature at least for a while. Same scene you find elsewhere during family outings or even at the dining tables at homes or in restaurants.

Never look at your phone immediately after getting up. Finish your morning routine and then you can check your phone. Give yourself a break from all electronic gadgets once in a while and be with yourself, nature or in the company of your loved ones. Designate gadget free area in your house and take a pause to rejuvenate yourself.

“While you are moving too fast, you are missing the real rhythm of life. You need to slow down, to feel and hear in silence, what life is whispering at you.”

Do Not Embrace Perfectionism

Most of us have been advised right from our early years that perfectionism is a great quality to possess. Everyone has a notion that with perfection you move towards perfect work, perfect relationship and a perfect life. As also this personality trait will give you the opportunity to excel in all personal and professional arenas.

The advice about perfection started right from our childhood by our parents and teachers. In reality, however, perfectionism is bad for you, its harmful when excessive, like addiction to cigarettes or any other thing. A shorter lifespan, eating disorders,

stress, depression, and suicidal tendencies are few of the adverse effects on health that have been linked with perfectionism. Recovering from some of the terminal diseases is also harder for perfectionists as compared to people who embrace their imperfections with grace.

Moving Away From Perfectionism

This word has been mentioned time and again in this book for the simple reason that perfectionism is one of the main root causes for depriving yourself with self-love. Like any change, getting rid of perfectionist tendencies requires a degree of trust within yourself. So, how can we move away from perfectionism? First and foremost, you need to get into your mind, that there is no one perfect in this world and there is no need to curse yourself over those, so called imperfections that you may have. You also need to realise, that feelings of imperfection move you away from your sense of self-worth, making you more stressed and depressive. Remember you deserve much better deal than this.

You are very much entitled to live your life to the fullest, but When you have developed this inner bully of perfectionism, you often come out with an unconscious reflex, to put yourself down for every minor abrasion in your life. Care for yourself is the process, and know that the only person stopping you from emulating and adopting such behavior is you.

Just get this feeling out of your mind and you will find yourself living a fulfilling life.

Embrace Self-Compassion

Self-kindness means when we feel warm and understanding toward ourselves, specially at a time when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than flagellating ourselves with self-criticism. Self-love and self-compassion are more or less can be used interchangeably as both are connected with attachment to self. When you have self-compassion, you start building resilience to face the adversity. You start helping others to recover more quickly from a traumatic situation. It also makes us strong to face with failures in our life.

There are three elements of self-compassion that you need to know and work on them. Firstly, there is *Self-Kindness*, which generates feelings of care, comfort and forgiveness toward oneself. Second is *Common Humanity*, which is to recognize that we aren't the only ones who feel pain, understanding this aspect and being compassionate towards the pain of others. And last but not the least is *Mindfulness*, which brings calmness into the present moment avoiding any attachment with painful emotions.

If you are struggling to foster self-compassion in your personal and professional life, don't blame yourself for it. Just keep trying sincerely and with a little practice, you will improve each day.

This is a skill which you can learn easily, just need to focus more on yourself.

Move Past Self-Pity

You need to move past that habit of having pity for yourself. Self-pity is painful and cause of stress and depression. One of the quickest ways to lift yourselves out of self-pity is to have compassion and find ways to lift others up. When you start empathising with others and help them make their lives more positive and worthy of living, you stop focusing on your negativity. You start seeing your life altogether from a different perspective and can count your blessings. Helping others boosts your self-confidence and gratefulness and make you happy and content in life, full of positive vibes.

Here are some more ways to get past self-pity: -

- Allow yourself to experience emotions like grief, disappointment, and loneliness head-on. Face your emotions boldly irrespective of any situation.
- Start looking for positive things in every aspect of your life. Shed all negativity from your thoughts.
- Appreciate yourself and celebrate your success, however small it is.
- Build self-esteem and appear self-confident when amongst people. Don't look for approval from others.

- Practice gratitude for what you have. Don't curse yourself for what you don't have.
- Always be optimistic and kind to yourself.
- Stop complaining about what others do. Focus on what you are doing.
- Meditate to find out your true self

Fostering A Positive Self-Image

Self-image is our own personal view, or mental picture that we have created about ourselves. Self-image is like our own dictionary that describes our characteristics, including such things as intelligent, beauty, ugliness, talented, selfishness, and kindness etc. These attributes form a portrayal of our assets (attributes which gives us strengths) and liabilities (attributes which gives us weaknesses) as we see them. Building self-image occurs over a lifetime, based on many factors, some due to your own behaviour and perceptions and some due to your dealing with other people around you in your life.

Self-image is a product of our experiences and events happened right from our early childhood and they have a major influence on building self-image through our future. They are like mirrors reflecting back to us an image of ourselves that we have created and visualised. Our experiences with people who are around us and matters most to us, such as our teachers, siblings, peer and family, add to the image that we have created for ourselves. Our close relationships with

other people reinforce what we think and feel about ourselves.

Based on this perception we start developing either a positive or a negative self-image. The strengths and weaknesses we have adopted, affect how we act today. We regularly take in information and evaluate ourselves in several areas, such as physical appearance, emotions, performance and relationships.

If we have a positive self-image, we recognize our own assets and potentials while being realistic about our liabilities and limitations. However, when we get into visualising a negative self-image of ourselves, we focus more on our faults and weaknesses, distorting failure and imperfections, thus making our own life miserable.

Creating A Positive Self-Image

Self-image is not permanently fixed. Part of our self-image is dynamic and changing. We should always make an effort to develop a healthier and more accurate view of ourselves and keep challenging the distortions those come on the way. Self-image change occurs over a lifetime. When we accept and love who we are, we then start learning to form a healthy self-image. Others start loving and accepting us who we really are.

Steps To Develop A Positive Self-image

- Make a self-image inventory both positive and negative, as you perceive. Reinforce

them by reasoning. Try and shed negatives, like we did in the case of beliefs.

- Stop criticizing yourself and focus more on your positive qualities. Banish your inner critics.
- Ask significant people in your life to describe your qualities.
- Define personal goals and objectives that are reasonable and achievable.
- Identify and explore the impact of childhood labels that you or others have created.
- Do what you like most without looking for approval from others.
- Develop your strengths and try improving your weaknesses.
- Learn to love yourself. Give yourself a smile every morning.
- Give yourself positive affirmations every time of the day.
- Remember that you are unique so let loose and have fun.
- Meditate to be emotionally intelligent.

Build Your Body Image

Body image is very much part of self-image. Our body image includes what and how we look like. But many of us are more concerned about how others see us and how others think about our body image. So, it

is how we feel and react to our own perception of our physical attributes and how others see it.

Body image development is affected by many factors from the time of childhood, including influence of family, peers, and others. A sense of positivity about your body image contributes to enhancing your psychological ability to fight with physical and mental disorders. Whereas distortions in our thinking contribute to a negative body image.

Body image is not always fixed during lifetime. Our body experiences change with age and events in our life as we grow older. Maintaining a positive body image throughout your life is a difficult aspect but not impossible process to do. Always stand next to the mirror and see if you can feel negativity in way you look at and talk to others. Try changing that in case you find anything which is not normal as per your perception. Continue to have a self-talk with your subconscious mind and have it in sync with your positive thoughts. Remember it is your subconscious mind that you need to mend to be in a positive state.

Self-Reflection And Comparison Process

Self-reflection means taking a pause to think, contemplate, examine and review yourself as part of increasing your self-awareness. It's about carving out time to review yourself. It is the interpretation and understanding of experiences to guide present and future behaviour. It is to find yourself who you are.

Self-reflection is like looking into a mirror and describing what you perceive of yourself. Everybody will have a different perception and way of assessing himself. The way you look at yourself and others, the way you behave with others and many of your other attributes. After self-reflection you need to compose a small write up to help you imbibe the lessons learnt in your mind for future reference.

No matter in what role you are, whether at home, in relationship or at work, reflection is an important part of learning. You wouldn't like to try a plan second time around if it has failed the first time. You would either do it a different way or change the plan completely looking for better outcome. When you evaluate your skills, you will be able to identify changes you might need to make.

There are three common elements of self-reflection process. A trigger, an awareness (either positive or negative) and critical analysis, to extract deeper meaning from an experience and development of a new perspective.

Self-Reflection is your ability to connect to your own thoughts, emotions, decisions making and behavior. It's imperative that you always be self-reflective about what happened in the past and learn some lessons. Use these lessons in the present and future to improve your thought process and decisions making.

Don't Run After Someone Who Doesn't Want You

There are many people, who would like to want someone in their lives, who doesn't want them. It could be to build a relationship or may be for some other purpose. They try hard to do everything they can to make another person convince that they are perfect match for them. Unfortunately, that doesn't work. Love is not something which can be earned, worked for, bought or run after. Love is not to be given a chasing. It comes from within when you get an inner calling. Stop trying to earn the love of someone who doesn't love you and create a situation of going into stress or depression. Don't miss someone who doesn't miss you. Find someone who wants to love you, for who you actually are, someone who really loves your very soul, not to have to earn it conditionally. You will be a very happy and content person.

Be Emotionally Intelligent

Self-love is the very basic factor for answering the difficult question as to who we really are emotionally. Emotions play a very significant role in knowing and loving ourselves. If an emotion keeps coming up again and again, it would mean that most likely you have not allowed yourself to fully feel it yet. But the more you resist something, the more it persists. So, if you can just take a few moments to pause and feel, you'll be surprised at how quickly that emotion is resolved.

You need to be emotionally intelligent to manage and regulate your emotions. When you are emotionally intelligent, you not only understand your emotions but can also know and manage emotions of others. And if you can do that, you can truly love yourself before you start loving others. There are some simple steps you can follow to be emotionally intelligent:

Self-Awareness: Is the ability to focus on yourself and to know if your actions, thoughts and emotions are aligned with your internal standards. Self-awareness allow you to know how your emotions can affect the people around you. Self-awareness also help you in identifying your strengths and weaknesses.

Self-Regulations: Is the ability to understand and manage your state, emotions, thoughts, and behavior, in such a way that are acceptable to you and others. People who regulate emotions effectively don't make rushed or emotional decisions and stay in control of their thoughts and actions.

Motivation: Is the process that initiates a spark in you, guides your actions to maintain goal-oriented behaviors. Self-motivated people always work hard to achieve their goals and are a happy and content lot.

Empathy: Having empathic attitude is critical for managing your emotions as also of others. People with empathy tend to put themselves in someone

else's shoes. They help people around them in understanding and meeting their challenges with boldness.

Social Skills: Are those skills which we use to interact and communicate with others. Acquiring these skills, result in positive responses and avoid negativity. People who are good at social skills are great communicators. They are just as open to hearing bad news as good news, and they are expert at getting others to support them in any situation.

Get Out of Auto Pilot Mode

When we are in autopilot mode, we are reactive to all external events and information. We even react to our conversations, be it professional or personal. Many a times we realise that what we said during a conversation, was not exactly what we intended. This happens when you are in autopilot mode and reacting to events and situations. Thus, you need to get out of this mode and start responding to events and conversations rather than being reactive. This will ensure you remain confident of what you are doing or saying and doesn't have to repent later. You can understand more about it by practicing mindfulness and meditation.

Learn To Listen To Yourself

Talk Sweetly To Yourself: 95% of your mind is subconscious. That means whatever you do is as a

result of directions coming from your subconscious mind, which is already preprogramed by years of experiencing events in your life. So, when you talk to yourself it gets stored in your subconscious mind and the instructions followed accordingly.

You need to be very careful as to what and how you talk to yourself. If you are talking positive affirmations, your mind will guide you to be positive in life and thus be happy and progressive. However, if you are talking in negative language to your mind, you will be guided to the negative outcome of anything you do or speak. Even your language and also the body language will be negative. So, your self-talk must have positive affirmations, sweet and soothing one.

Here is the list of activities that you need to carry out over the period of your lifetime to build a sense of Self-love and also cultivate self-love and self-worth within you. You can pick and choose them, as they apply to you or the situation demands:

- Stand in front of a mirror and loudly say “I love myself, I am complete, I am enough, I am what I am, and I love the way I am”. See amount of confidence that you will have in you, every time you stand in front of the mirror and say this.
- Forget your past and make your present most wonderful moment in your life. The scars of past will give you only pain and will hinder

your present and make it full of negativity. The earlier you realise it better it will be.

- Don't try to compare your body and your colour with others. You and all the parts of your body are unique and must be loved.
- Have a positive peer group. The people around you should be such that they help you in doing what you love to do, rather than just give you negativity and stress. It's better to have few good, positive and quality friends, rather than having too many full of negativity and no values of life. Bring the right people into your life. You have limited time in your life to waste on people who want to take smile and shine away from your face.
- Travel solo to your loved destinations. Travelling alone gives you lot of time to be spent with yourself. Go and see places and find love in every such place.
- Get on with your hobbies that you like and love most. These hobbies make you feel better and stronger.
- Make your mind stronger. Exercise regularly and eat brain food. If you have a strong brain you will automatically have more self confidence in life.

- Read, read and read. But please read only positive and good books and articles those provide you some sense of living a good, happy, healthy and meaningful life. New learnings are good for your brain to remain active.
- Have a dream and memory board in your house. Dream board for making sure you are reminded of your dreams every day and memory board to refresh your pleasant memories which you cherish.
- At times you must treat yourself to something you feel like having but don't need. Whether it's a designer dress you have been eyeing for years or a trip to the destination of your dreams. Remember there is a fine line between saving for the future and living your life today.
- Give more focus on your body language than your body parts. Don't overdo make up. At times it spoils the real beauty in you. Your body language and way you conduct yourself have more meaning and value, than your superficial attraction means.
- Mindfulness is one of the best practices you can do every moment. Feel the moment and you will love everything whatever you are doing. You will stop reacting to the situations.

- Make compassion a habit. You may not be aware but compassion, gratitude and helping others can relieve you of some of the most dreaded diseases and disorders.
- Set boundaries and don't be a scapegoat. You will start loving yourself moment you set limits or say no to work or activities that deplete you physically, emotionally and spiritually or express poorly who you are.
- Be kind to your failures, "don't beat yourself, instead treat yourself". Failures will give you strength to withstand more challenges in life.
- Focus on what you have to be grateful for and what you have. Don't bother much about what you don't have.
- Make a list of everything which is working for you. This will give you a ready reckoner of things you must do and also how to do.
- ***Quality Relationship*** You start setting high parameters of love in relationship once you get into self-love mode. This helps you accept only quality relationships and discard or repel anyone whom you feel is below such parameters. That is the time when you get more and more confident of yourself and your relationship gets more and more stronger day after day.

- ***Self Confidence*** – Your self-confidence starts building moment you start liking and loving yourself.
- ***Style And Swag*** Have a unique style and taste to create selflove for yourself. Look for sense of aesthetic in everything you wear and do.
- ***Family Bonding*** Have a strong and everlasting family bonding. Spend as much time together as possible with your extended family. You may even have to forgive people for what they have done to you. You will surely feel better.
- ***Drive And Motivation*** – You get such a drive and motivation that you can accomplish anything that comes your way.
- ***Explore Your Spirituality*** - Faith is the foundation for self-love, as believing in something opens up your soul to the beauty of belief and trust. Spirituality helps you read and understand your intuition better and it will also take you on a journey to learning things about yourself. These new thoughts, beliefs, passions, and feeling of raw emotions will make you more authentic, as who you are.
- ***Unclutter Your Life*** – when you think of uncluttering your life start from the place which you use maximum. You may start from

your closet or your working table. Getting rid of your old stuff, which you have not used for years, will make room for new things to come into your life. It is as good as cleaning your mind with old and wasted thoughts. Once you get rid of old and negative thoughts, you will make space for positive and fresh empowering thoughts. Love yourself enough to know what best is stored in future.

- ***Plan A Self-Care Day*** This is what you need to do, to plan a self-care day may be during a week or month:
 - Open your schedule and earmark at least four days in a month as your selfcare days.
 - Plan what activities you love and need to do to enhance self-care and self-love, which can boost you for rest of the week/month.
 - Take responsibility for your life and cherish these moments and keep yourself energetic.
- ***Releasing Shame And Loving All Of You*** If you've had any experiences where you had to keep your truth quiet, particularly as a child, it's time to reclaim it and value its power. When you do that, you will release negativity

that has formed mental block in your subconscious mind, depriving you living your life to fullest. There are many circumstances when we have our truth kept confined within our heart. When we do that, we start to discredit and devalue our ethos and identity. Release yourself from these shackles and breathe freely.

Actually, this list can go on and on and is never ending. I would recommend everyone to have your own, to do list made and put it at a place where you can easily see it. You also need to write your journal, on the progress you achieved from time to time and in case you need any midcourse correction.

We will always have some kind of suffering to endure in our life. The answer is to deal with it. Don't repress it. Be mindful and surround any obstacles with love. Instead of separating us from others and feeling less than someone else, see the connection. When we look for similarities, they soon become obvious and love is more likely to appear.

“When you start cultivating self-love, you start living your life on your own terms and conditions.”

A random thought

CHAPTER 14

A DAY FILLED WITH SELF-LOVE

“You need to start loving yourself right now, right from this very moment. Don't wait until it is too late. If you wait, you will never ever be able to catch up with serenity of life.”

- Author's muse

Each one of you need to practice self-love every moment and every day of your life. However just to give you an idea and a feel, as to how will a typical day look like, when you want to really experience that amazing feeling of self-love. Just try for a day and I am certain that you will keep doing this again and again, till it gets into your daily routine and become very much part of you.

Remember today, no negativity, no negative talk with self or others, no stress, no anger, no hyperactivity, no addiction and nothing that can bring even a moment of negativity or unpleasantness.

Stay and Feel Your Bed

When you get up in the morning, slowly open your eyes with a broad smile and feeling worthy, beautiful and enough. Feel your pillow, sheet and quilt/blanket, love and thank them for the lovely and relaxing sleep you had. When you thank such lifeless,

but still so useful things in life, you feel closer to them. By thanking your pillow and bed for the lovely and relaxing sleep, it's you who will have a feel-good factor and relaxing moments.

Devote little time to connect with God, your soul, your body, your heart and your mind. Sit on your bed for couple of minutes to thank Almighty, as you will be able to experience yet another beautiful day, being still part of this world. Remember there are many across this world, who will not see the light of next day. Slowly put your foot on the mother earth, feeling that powerful energy it stores and provide you, each and every moment of your life.

A Technology Break

Remember you need to be away from all gadgets like mobile, television, laptop and others. By giving yourself space from technology and social media, is actually one of the best things you can do for yourself and your mind. You should not put an alarm on your mobile, rather have a small alarm clock and keep your mobile away from your bed side. However, you can have your music system handy. Nice music is a wonderful means of relaxation on such a wonderful day.

Positive Affirmations

Go in front of a mirror and say loudly "I love you, I am beautiful, I am complete, I am enough", or

any such affirmation to get a feel of completeness. Cuddle your pet, if you have one and play for a while to make him and you happy.

Energise Yourself

Make some fresh lime in lukewarm water, with a dash of honey, as this will rejuvenate you. Thereafter you can have your tea or coffee, which you can enjoy in your bed or in balcony, as you like. The flavour of tea/coffee must fill up your house. Try listening to chirping of birds or that sound of cool breeze or may be that sound of splashing waves, if you happen to be near a sea.

A Dose of Mindfulness

Now is the time to get a dose of some mindfulness. Go out to the garden, if you have one or you can sit in your balcony or at a comfortable place in your room, to go through at least 15 to 20 minutes of meditation. There are various types of meditations that you can practice daily, but loving kindness would suit best for this day. Play some light and soothing meditation music. You can also lite a candle with some fragrance. You can as well do some mindful walking in your lawn or nearby park. This will refresh your mind by being with nature.

Have A Hearty Breakfast

After you finish with a relaxing dose of mindfulness, is the time to pamper yourself with a

hearty breakfast of your choice. Fill your plate with the food that will nourish your body and mind. A bowl of porridge, a bowl of fruits, some nuts and anything else that you love the most. Prepare the lovely breakfast mindfully, feeling each and every moment in the backdrop of some lovely music. Have your breakfast enjoying every moment and each bite mindfully.

Be With Nature And Body Treatment

Put on your best dress and head to the best place in town or nearby that you like most. Just drive down there and spend some time with the nature. The universe gives us and our body the greatest strength and energy, which no other vitamins can ever provide. You can even go for a small tracking, if you so wish or you can even swim at your favourite place or any activity you love most.

Come back for a pampering body treatment and a massage to give you total relaxation. Have a lunch at home or your most favourite place and enjoy every bit of it.

A Quick Siesta

Hit your bed in the afternoon for a quick beauty sleep. A power siesta will rejuvenate you (Research has found that a brief, afternoon nap provides the greatest rejuvenation, when compared to naps at any other time of the day). Wake up and take your mobile for a while and fix up dinner with your closest friends,

who are full of positivity. Remember never get into the company of a negative person as you will undo what you have achieved so far through the day. It's so important to have positive peer group around you in your life.

Some Quality Time

Before you meet your friends, do some shopping, which you were avoiding for days. Buy some cloths, books, cosmetics or anything you love most, but you couldn't buy for some reason. Don't forget to buy small gifts for your friends. It doesn't matter what price tag this gift has. It is your emotions and feelings, that will make it special and also you will get so much of positive vibes, when you receive gratitude for these gifts from your friends. You can also find someone, who really need help in any manner, be it monetary or any other kind. Just lend a helping hand and this gesture will fill you with positivity and sense of compassion. Enjoy your dinner with your friends but remember not to have or let anyone else have, a negative conversation. These moments should be pleasing, relaxing and most enjoyable. Get back home before it is too late.

Have A Schedule Before You Hit The Sack

After you are back home, just close your eyes and enjoy every moment that you spent during the day. Cherish and promise yourself to have more such fun filled and self-love days in your life.

Prepare a schedule of your daily mindful nighttime habits (about 30 to 45 minutes before bedtime). These should be performed daily and not on such special days alone. This could include:

- *Try some aromatic before bedtime*
- *Practice restorative yoga*
- ***Design Your Bedtime Rituals-*** Meditate, detach from TV/Mobile, hot bath, self-massage, read something inspirational, listen to your favorite music, have herbal tea etc.
- ***Practice Gratitude-*** Write down for what all events of the day, that you want to express your gratitude for. You can also have a gratitude jar next to your bed. Keep filling it with gratitude slips and open them once a while, to go through these gratitude moments.
- *Lights out latest by 10.30 PM.*
- *Use a sleep mantra or small prayer to get into sound sleep*

Before you hit the sack, once again go in front of the mirror and say exactly what you said in the morning. Last but most important of all, don't forget to say your prayer, thanking Almighty for giving you a wonderful day today and ask for more of such days in future.

*‘Of God give me more of such wonderful days
and fill the ocean of self-love in every part of me,
every day of my life. Thank you, God, for this
wonderful day.’*

And get up next day fully recharged with love and energy to give a kick start to yet another wonderful day.

There is never an end to finding your true Self-love. This was just an example of typical day filled with self-love. Continue this wonderful journey and experience this feeling each day. Try to do at least few selflove activities each day and don't wait for a special day to come.

Remember this book has shown you the way, but you need to make an endure to embrace self-love yourself and that too alone.

*“I can show you the way, but you will have to walk.
I can't walk for you. And if you don't want to walk,
who am I to force you to walk.”*

Buddha

*Thank you for being with me on this love
filled journey.*

Hope you enjoyed!

APPENDIX A

ARE YOU PRACTICING SELF-LOVE?

Here are few questions for you to introspect, as to how much self-love you have and where all you are lacking. You can always improve the areas you find yourself wanting. The list is never ending and can go on and on:

- *Do you often like spending time alone with yourself?*
- *Do you encourage yourself, the way you would do, with your best friend or your children?*
- *Do you react to the situations or respond?*
- *Do you always honour commitments, you make to yourself?*
- *What kind of inner voice you have? Can you make any sense of it?*
- *Are the relationships in your life positive?*
- *What are you tolerating from others?*
- *Do you like to share your experiences and opinions with others?*
- *Do you always have a habit of saying 'yes' to everything, even when you feel the answer should be 'no'?*
- *Do you seek approval from others?*
- *Can you take a compliment?*
- *Do you curse yourself, when you fail in any of your endeavours? Or don't meet your expectations.*

SELF LOVE MANTRA

- *Do you have a belief that you deserve to be happy in your life?*
- *Do you practice meditation and are you mindful in your life?*
- *Do you practice compassion and forgiveness?*
- *Do you say affirmations, when you look at the mirror?*
- *Do you have some activities that are just for you, the way you like them to be?*
- *Is there anything which is holding you back from loving yourself?*
- *Do you think your ego stopping you from progressing in life?*
- *What are your assets and liabilities in life? Can you deplete your liabilities and build on assets?*
- *Can you start practicing Self-Love right now? If not, what is stopping you?*
- *Do you still live on the past (sad events, hurts, painful experiences), or you have got over them as a bad dream?*
- *Do you write a journal for self-reflection?*

APPENDIX B
A SMALL COLLECTION OF SOME
BIG REMINDERS OF LIFE

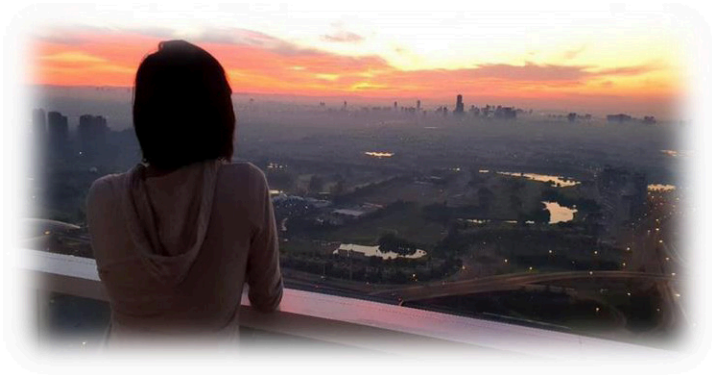


“Difficult tracks invariable lead to amazing destinations.”

Our life is too short. We get engrossed in our daily routine and forget to see around us. Here is a small reminder of things, that you can focus upon while undergoing journey of your life. Find a moment to practice and have a fun filled journey in company of beautiful people, who care about you and whom you need to give care, attention and your Love!

SELF LOVE MANTRA

Your First step is to explore yourself, who you are and what is purpose of your life. The truth is hidden within you, so don't go searching and wasting your time. You will get to know it, moment you start looking inwards.



Realise the power of now, the present moment. Enjoy the charm in everything that you see and do, the world will look beautiful.



Create your own story with lessons you draw from your past experiences. Use them to better your present and future, as also Inspire others.



Online connections are no substitute for human relations. Enjoy warmth of every relationship. Look for beautiful people (beautiful at heart) around you to share your experiences of life. Show them that you really have concern for them.



SELF LOVE MANTRA

Get into the habit of Mindful communication and listening. Take a pause before you respond to anyone's statement or a situation. All your relationships will improve.



Forgive everyone, even your enemy. You will find yourself out of shackles of pain and hatred in your heart. Life will become more meaningful.



Negativity will attract negativity and problems will attract only problems. Try to have positive thoughts and solutions will automatically arrive.



Do regular Meditation and Be Mindful through the day, you will remain focused, healthy and cheerful for ever. You will learn to be more compassionate.



SELF LOVE MANTRA

Always remember to start your day with positive thoughts and gratitude for what you have in your life. Don't keep chasing what you don't have.



Do your best in your life, but don't try fighting the Destiny. You surely can design it however, when you love yourself and are full of self-confidence.



Nature has all that we need to live this life. Try and explore the beauty and healing power of this amazing nature around us.

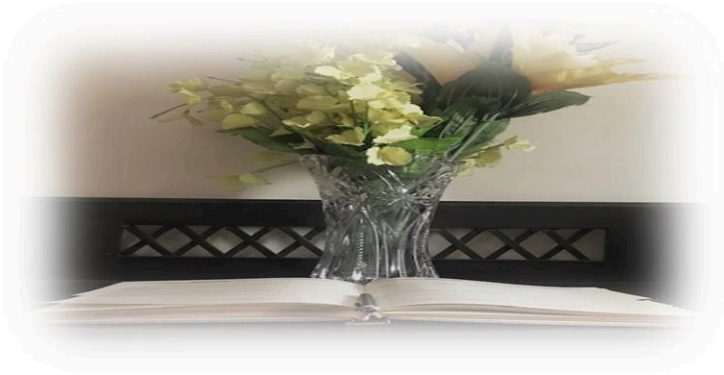


Make your own bedtime rituals to have a tension free and sound sleep, so that next morning you are ready to face the world, a Fresh.

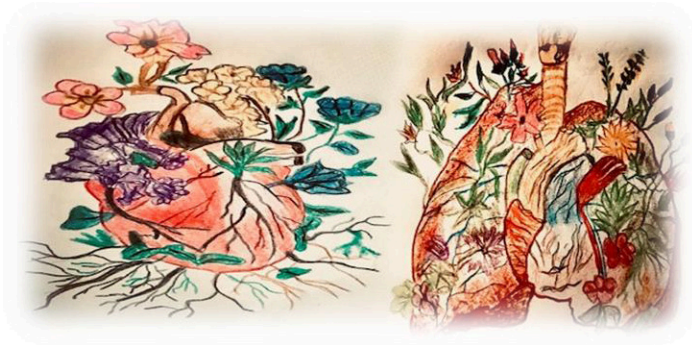


SELF LOVE MANTRA

Write a journal daily and read it at least once a week. There will be lots of learnings for you to mend your life, as also help improving others



Fill your heart with love and compassion and your lungs with life force energy, with every breath you take. Let them bloom.



And there are much more, please keep adding....

Self Love Mantra

The process of cultivating self-love is slow and requires patience and commitment to create an empowering inner dialogue. You carry around with you loads of negative beliefs: 'I am not good enough' or 'I have issues with my looks or with my body' and similar ones. By exposing your so called imperfections, you look for people, who speak the same language, thus reinforcing your beliefs.

Imperfections make you unique and perfect. Embrace the wholeness of who you are and personify goodness by just your presence. To accept yourself, who you really are, means to embody your strengths and limitations, your shadow self. It is true recognition that you are already worthy, irrespective of your limitations.

In this book, I have tried to cover every aspect of self-love, wherein you can build yourself to be loved by you and others.



Brig Arun Gupta has served in Indian Army for over 34 years and thereafter in corporate sector for six years. Presently, he is a Life coach, Mindfulness coach, NLP Master Practitioner, and a motivational speaker at national and international levels. He is affiliated to various Educational Institutes and Corporate sectors for changing the mindset of young and adult minds, to understand the purpose of life, and spread awareness for living a healthy life full of love and compassion.

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