



## Awakening to Abundant Life Week 3- Loving Yourself.

Beloved New Thought teacher and author Louise Hay considers the development of healthy self-esteem as the most important healing practice. She said *“Everyone suffers self-hatred and guilt. The bottom line for everyone is - “I’m not good enough.” When people come to me with a problem - whatever it is - the only thing I work on with them is loving the self. Self-approval and self-acceptance are the keys to positive changes. When we really love ourselves, everything in our life works.”*

Many spiritual teachers, including Jesus, have taught self-love. Unity believes that loving ourselves is a part of loving God, for we are one with the Creator. If we don’t love ourselves, we can’t fully love others, nor do we really love God, for we are all One.

We have believed false ideas about ourselves because of our experiences and what others have told us, especially in early life. As adults we tend to recreate the emotional environment of our early childhood and the kind of relationships we had with our parents.

We may also treat ourselves the way our parents treated us. We have internalized the messages of early childhood, positive and negative. These patterns keep repeating in our life experience until we become aware of them and choose to change our beliefs, thus changing our current experience.

It doesn’t help to blame our parents. After all, they were doing the best they could with what they knew. If they didn't know how to love themselves, they couldn’t teach us how to love ourselves.

The past is past. If you believe you’re a helpless victim, the universe will support you in having more of that experience. Your power is in your ability to choose differently now. What is most important is what you are choosing to think, say and do now, because these things create your future.

We can undo negative beliefs by replacing them with positive ones. As we consistently practice positive thinking, we create new neural pathways in the brain. Eventually the subconscious mind will take on the new, positive pattern of beliefs. So let’s get started! See the other side for ideas to practice loving yourself.

**Exercise 1**— Get a pen and paper and actually write a love letter to yourself, in your handwriting, describing all the things you like and appreciate about you. Write about things you do well, positive traits and loveable characteristics. It may seem awkward at first, but let yourself appreciate you. Keep the letter and re-read it when you need a reminder of how you are wonderful.

**Exercise 2**— Look in the mirror, looking directly into your own eyes, and say to yourself; *“(Say your name), I love and accept you, just as you are.”* It may feel uncomfortable at first, but continue to do it, daily, until you begin to feel the self-acceptance. During the day repeat the affirmation over and over. Post the affirmation around your home and in your car. Say it 400 times a day for a month to experience a real shift.

**Exercise 3** — Every time you see your self in a mirror, look at yourself and say something positive about yourself. Start and end your day with mirror work. If things seem to be getting worse it means things are moving in consciousness and change is beginning to happen. Keep it up! Continue to look in the mirror and say *“I love and accept you just as you are.”* Notice if you are feeling differently about saying that the more you do it.

**A New Normal**— Be good to you: get enough rest, water, exercise and healthy food. Reinforce your positive new behavior with healthy rewards. Treat yourself with an activity you enjoy but rarely indulge in, like spending time in nature or listening to your favorite music. Stimulating your pleasurable responses releases feel-good bio-chemicals. These good feelings reinforce the positive new beliefs. And you deserve it!

**Reinforce the inner work:** Don’t criticize yourself or call yourself bad names. That’s repeating what we heard early in life. Be kind to yourself. Say nice things to yourself. Listen to what you’re thinking about yourself. If it’s not positive, stop and change your thoughts to something positive. You can say *“Stop, cancel, clear!”* Immediately say something positive instead.