

SELF-LOVE

The Catchword and the Big Lie

Self-love is a very common buzzword whose true meaning has been missed out somewhere in the variety of interpretations. Could this be part of the strategy towards a distort? Maybe, and maybe not! I have decided to concern myself with what this catchword is not, and not how it works.

There is a universal meaning of affection. It shows in our attitude to life. Affection translates to self-love and gives every action its true meaning.

People have conditioned their minds on how certain situations should pan out. This is however a dangerous way to experience life. Being that our mind is limited by the immediate environment and experiences we have encountered, it would be more sensible if while holding on to our beliefs and ideas we leave room for the unknown. And that unknown could be the kind of answers you have never thought of asking questions that could answer them.

Taking the Concept beyond the Lies

Self-love is a state of mind's growth through appreciation for oneself. It must completely comprise actions that support our physical, psychological, and spiritual growth. Anything short of this is not self-love in its wholeness. Yes, none of these vital areas of personal growth must be lacking.

Turns of events do throw screening tests on the human mind to access its level of growth, and the response we give consciously or sub-conscious all sum up to the grand total of the individual's self-development. Hence, without growth there cannot be self-love. Or else there would be a total misinterpretation of events in every given situation.

True Components of a Balanced Life

There are four (4) components in self-love that makes this phase. Every successful effort to examine the human mind in respect to its level of growth agree with all the four (4) components of self-love as shown in the wheel below:

Connection

It is a common saying that a man is the sum total of the product of his environment. If your connection is always negativity breeds it would counter your mindset and truncate your expected outcome in life. When you live in the reality of your present atmospheric activities you cannot shy away from this truth. Consequently, it becomes essential to develop or build genuine relationships that are akin to the projected life envisaged. You cannot fail in this vital component of a balance life and hold claim to self-love!

Wellness

How is your mental and physical wellbeing is cared for? Are you aware that stress is as mental as it is physical? So, you cannot care for one and leave the other out, otherwise it would be like shooting yourself in the foot. Don't be too busy to take a rest, drink water for hydration, eat nutritious meals,

and exercise for a bit. This is the ultimate way to show maximum love to yourself. How can you play down on this vital component of a balance life and claim self-love?

Finding Meaning

Nobody can actualize what they do not understand its meaning. In order to develop self-love, you must intentionally search the meaning your life brings to every other aspect of life. Finding meaning to your life simply is knowing yourself and exploring the depth of your being. Don't allow emotions to mislead you. When I feel good about myself, it means that my thoughts align with my personal perception of me.

Likewise, negative thoughts, otherwise known as automatic thoughts, may not align with how your higher self sees you. Whenever this happens, it is a red flag that you need a change of perspective. But if you choose to dwell on that negative, you create an obvious meaning which progresses to a decline in self-confidence, and further wanes your self-esteem.

Yet this must not crush your willingness to examine and explore your dark side. You must acknowledge how bad you can be and how horribly unloving you can behave. When you know how deep and dark your dark side is, it helps you to be more aware of your being and the meaning to your life becomes clearer. It is by so doing you will begin to find it easy to ask for help and easily to accept your flaws. The wall of resistance that keeps your mindset oblivious to your humanness will begin to deplete functionally.

Take it from me, the phenomenon of self-love is not complete until you give a description to life's meaning. The end result is a human who understands their emotions better, and not afraid to accept their humanness, thereby, expressing love in a more understood pattern. Also, it is receptive to the love they express clearly.

Healthy Thinking

How you perceive yourself is the bedrock of your self-esteem and what would inform your ability to love yourself. Your self-esteem is so great that in spite losing social status or financial standards your view of yourself can still be within a healthy and positive range. It takes healthy thinking to achieve this! How do we get there?

Certainly, it's common to see people develop nervous breakdowns each time they are asked what they do for a living. The reason is not farfetched either. It is because people think their worth is valued based on their social status. However, that is a misguided form of thinking. It worsens when they lose that job or relocate, which makes them feel bare, naked and worthless, and hence decelerating to low self-esteem and social phobia.

Lately someone asked how do we differentiate self-confidence from self-esteem? My simple explanation to this remains: while self-confidence is your ability to trust yourself and your skills, self-esteem is a mind-concept, it is your perception of your self from the inside out which is not affected by any external situation. Understand that wherever the thoughts you have through life comes from, it forms a defining meaning for the life you portray. If the thoughts are negative, the lifestyle tends towards negativity, contempt, conceit and paranoia.

Changing Your Bearing on Life: Healthy Thinking

It is easy to trick yourself into believing you have self-love when you are a high achiever or you get to achieve their set goal or ambitions. However, reality gets painful when plans don't go right (or tough setbacks hit) and unrelenting efforts to get back your plans on track seem futile or dawdling. But if

you explore available help and means of changing that form of thinking to a healthier pattern, a full life of love awaits you.

Of course, it might not be easy to take quantum leaps, but small consistent efforts with positive intentions to focus on what you appreciate about people, life, and events will get the job done over time. I love to tell people that the ability to formulate more positive thoughts is an inner decision that erupts from a spiritual stance. Your spirit has to be in a surrendered state which is the catalyst for creating a positive mind-set for thought and emotion. So instead of loving yourself, focus on being someone who loves, that is, allow love to flow through you as often as possible. In a more practical way I will highlight five (5) action plans on how you can change your pattern of thinking:

- ☐ Focus;
- ☐ Accept;
- ☐ Stop;
- ☐ Create;
- ☐ Recognize.

Focused and Intentional Habits

As discussed earlier in this chapter, focus on being someone who loves. If you had a former habit of criticizing everyone and everything, the new order of thinking would be to appreciate more, looking out for the things you appreciate about people, things, and life. Simply put, adjust your body and mind to appreciate people more.

Accept What It Feels like to be Loved

When you cultivate the new habit of appreciating people genuinely, your mind builds a mental picture of what it feels like to be loved because you have successfully given that degree of love. Then after, the next step is to allow your mind to accept this mental picture.

Imagine losing a loved one, a beloved job, or even getting terribly ill. How would your loved ones treat you? Odds are they would respond with kindness, affection and tolerance towards your predicament. That is exactly how you are to show love to yourself when the worst hits.

Stop Comparisons

We cannot conclude on ways to reform healthy thinking without dwelling on the dangers of comparing life situations. Comparison is a killer to self-love. You do yourself a disservice each time you make the mistake of making comparison between other persons' lives and yours. Tendencies are that we could be comparing someone else's failure with another person's success, but we truly have no idea how that person perceives their own life. Instead of comparing your life with anyone else's, spend your time nourishing your body and mind.

Create a Mental Picture and be Patient with Yourself

I believe every individual had a childhood dream of becoming happy in life. We all wanted happiness even when we were not sure what we wanted to become in the future. But as we grew into adulthood what happened? We went through a lot of mind-changing experiences and confronted stark realities of life which have left impressions on our outlook to life. Yes, that's the popular

narrative. But developing a healthy pattern of thinking is achieved by creating a mental picture of the future you deserve or desire, and making daily commitments by working to close the gap between your dreams and your reality.

Recognize the Monstrous Imposter Syndrome

It is very easy to continually talk down on yourself, laugh over it, or call it a joke each time you are faced with a challenge. If you fall for this, it's only a matter of time, note that your sub-conscious mind believes what you have told it, and indeed you experience difficulty living your best life and being your true self. This is the Imposter Syndrome! It is an internal experience of believing you are not as competent as people perceive you to be. That means even when you put out a great job well done, you attribute your success to luck — because you do not believe you can be as good as the resultant outcome everyone praises.

Imposter Syndrome is a problem of dysfunctional thinking caused by multifactorial mechanisms, including personality traits and family background. And according to research, studies show that families with over-the-top-achievement expectations usually have a perfectionist effect on their children, it grooms an internalized fear of failure, which further triggers a compensatory mechanism of looking for validation in the guise of mentorships or in authority. Glaring signs of imposter syndrome include:

- ☒ Experiencing frequent anxiety;
- ☒ Attributing achieved successes to luck;
- ☒ Frequent internalized fear of being laughed at;
- ☒ Looking for validation in authority figures or over-dependence on mentorships;
- ☒ Permeating self-doubt. You have to understand that self-doubt is not bad, but when it becomes permeating, that frequency might cripple your self-confidence.

The Concept of Acceptance for Balance

Most at times we find it difficult tolerating other people we see as worthless or undeserving. We build walls rapidly when we cannot understand other people's actions. And that is because it is easier to love what you love about people that you admire than accepting people you do not have admiration for. But more than that, are you aware that life is filled with a lot of mysteries? So is every human we encounter, which should give us the hint that you do not have to love everyone in the sense of familiarizing, but you must however accept every human as they are — that is the first step to self-acceptance and then self-love.

The next time you meet a guy who chews his meal so loudly beside you, and you are tempted to hurl hateful comments at them, you can remind yourself that acceptance takes time and you are practicing to be better at accepting people with their flaws. One central fact that you must never forget as we close this chapter is that every action has a resultant effect. Life as we know it has a lot of unspoken, unwritten rules and that is part of the reason why every action has a ripple effect — self-love is not a luxury, but a necessity in our present world, and you must show compassion for others and more importantly for yourself.