

## SELF-LOVE... THE BEGINNING NOT THE END

The personal development movement and all its relevant strands consistently speak about being eternally 'on the journey'. There is such a strong emphasis on the idea that we never reach the destination and that we're always travelling towards it. We believe this concept is flawed and that there is in fact a primary destination that can, and needs to be reached and that, as a result of reaching that vantage point there are many other destinations that then await the traveller. After all, what would be the point of taking any journey if there is no point of arrival? For us this makes no sense. The joy and ecstasy of arriving is the point of any journey, and we all know from our own experience the joy of reaching a destination, especially if we've been longing to get there. In our view the whole purpose of self-improvement and personal development is self-love; it's that beautiful place where the mind opens and expands in accordance with its potential. It's a loving, kind, benevolent place where one's creative intelligence can express itself fully. And once you arrive there and indulge in its splendour you realise that it is not the end of the journey but the doorway to new beginnings.

Self-love could be described as the initial destination, the point at which you are truly introduced to yourself, and arguably for the first time become really aware of your reason for being and so are able to pursue your potential and purpose with loving focus. Once you make it to this divine outpost your life makes more sense. You also realise that the real purpose and challenge of the journey is to sustain your new-found well-being. In fact, it could even be said that the first phase of the journey is the easy bit and that it is holding onto its fruits that asks the most of us.

Many of us are living a lie. It's not always a conscious lie; it's probably better described as an unconscious dishonesty, where we're simply not true to our own hearts and minds. In fact, most of us don't even know what our own truth is because we've not spent enough time sitting and dwelling on what's important to our inner world. We are busy living up to (or more accurately – living down to) the expectations of the world around us. We walk blindly behind the Pied Piper of materialism and limited thinking, chasing the illusions of success and status and being disproportionately concerned with how we are perceived by the world, all the time ignoring our inner compass, that divine bit of the self that is always striving to point us in the right direction. Sadly, because we don't have sufficient experience of silence and reflection in our lives, we just don't see the direction in which that inner compass is pointing. And even when we do, we don't have the courage and honesty to step away from social conformity and dare to be an individual who dances to the beat of her own drum.

It's time to recognise that once you hold self-love in your hands you are actually at the beginning of your life. It has nothing to do with your chronological age; this is all about awareness and understanding. When the destination has been reached, after a period of rejoicing and celebration, a new journey, one of sustenance, begins. This is a pattern repeatedly found in nature... there is a point of conception, which we call the beginning... then there's the evolution, the various stages where we move from point A (birth) to point B (maturity); this could be called the journey... and then there's fruition (the destination), the climax, where the point of the journey can be understood. It is at this point that fruition becomes conception again and a new destination conceives a new journey... And the eternal cycle of growth and change continues to spin.

This is why it is important to understand that self-love is both a destination and the dawning of a new era. If you are interested in discovering the 'you' you are capable of becoming, unlocking the unlimited promise that lives in the trillions of cells busily working to keep you alive and if you long to dance in the tender embrace of the arms of the universe and become part of the divine conspiracy, and a spiritual architect, helping to design a better world for you and for me, then

obsessively pursue the goal of self-love. Be relentless in your pursuit of it. Don't think of it as something that belongs to someone else, for it belongs to you. In fact, it's the one gift that only you can give to you. You cannot get self-love from another: by its very definition it's something only you can give to yourself. Stop looking for it outside and start cultivating it within (see How to Achieve Self-Love). The more you promise yourself this prize and repeatedly commit your efforts to its attainment, the more it's guaranteed to turn up at your door. Stop doubting yourself. You can do this. Do it now! Self-love is the greatest prize because it gives you access to truth and eternity. The endless cycle of life will support you and serve you in all your efforts. You'll never become empty as its wealth becomes your wealth. Life's constant replenishment and eternal promise will ensure that 'your cup runneth over'. The more you give the more you'll receive, not because you ask for it but because the pure intentions of self-love guarantee all your needs will be met. Remember, self-love gives you access to the best of you, the best in others and the best that life has to offer: how can you lose?

Quietly reflect on the following mantras. Recite them again and again and they will help you find that loving, contented space deep within....

With every breath I take I become more whole and complete

Through my growing faith and self-belief, everything I need comes and finds me

The eternal power of the universe flows through my veins.... How can I fail?

I am love, I am loving, I am loveable

I quietly delight in the wealth of my own resources and inner beauty

I truly am the master of my own destiny

Rivers of courage and confidence flow abundantly through me

The power of self-love is now my constant ally and I rejoice in its company

I am peace, I am love, I am abundance, I am success

Self-love is the greatest love of all... it offers me the keys to truth and wisdom

Change your self-talk by rewriting your inner script. The inner narrator is very obedient. It will honour whatever script it is presented with. This is why you must pay attention to the script you give it each day because if you don't present it with one that you now choose, it will revert to what is familiar, to what it knows. You truly are the master of your own destiny but it's important that you choose a better internal dialogue.