

Society tells us: "Love others." But I tell you: "Love yourself." How can you love others if you cannot love yourself? The way you have been told to love others, turn that to yourself. You are probably very good at loving others; you have loved many times, many ways. Now turn that to yourself. Aren't you just as important, just as precious, just as love-worthy, as anyone you love? The true revolution is finally loving yourself for real; bringing yourself back into the equation—not in an egocentric or arrogant way, but in the manner of kindness, of compassion, of genuine caring. This self-love has the same tone and feel as the way we love a sweet child we see at the park.

Most of us are conditioned to believe that some people are worthy of love and some aren't—and that it's selfish to include yourself. But no criteria has to be met to be worthy of love, and to be worthy of loving yourself. The people you love, did they have to meet any criteria? Did they have to prove something, for your heart to be open to them? So to love yourself, just be as kind to yourself as you have been to the people you love. Open your heart to yourself. Attend to yourself lovingly.

No one ever teaches you to love yourself. They teach you, "Love this. Love that. Love him. Love her. Love God. Love me." Nobody teaches you, "Love yourself." And yet this is the most important teaching. Consider what the world would be like if all little children were taught how to love themselves. If you know how to love yourself, you are that

much more loving toward everyone else. How you treat yourself and how you treat others are two sides of the same coin. Can you imagine caring enough—really caring enough—about this life, about this society, about this world, to actually love yourself? That is the biggest contribution you could make to the world. That changes everything. That means your energy becomes a truly positive energy in this world, rather than one more ego screwing around, trying to get this, or do that—but rather, quietly radiating love. Can you imagine a life like that?

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And this is not some far away goal, some impossible dream. It doesn't matter if you think you are too negative, too damaged, too remedial, or too anything—it is possible for anyone. The surrounding circumstances (or beliefs) are irrelevant. It is possible for you. But only if you are willing to be more selfish, i.e., only if you are willing to actually love yourself. It is not something you do 'in place of.' It is something you do inside, while you are doing everything else. It is just about remembering, and doing it—nothing else. It is the natural way you are meant to live.

And when you do, what you will see, what you will immediately experience, is exponentially more love for others. You will see yourself everywhere you look, in every pair of eyes. And you will know you are doing it for real, if you notice more and more compassion in yourself.

This is why I say to you, with no hesitation, that there is nothing selfish in loving yourself. If you can love yourself, then you will really love other people. Consider that if you can really love yourself, it is the beginning of real truth, of real peace, of real understanding. If you really love yourself, life will have a whole different quality. You will start enjoying the little things (and daily life consists primarily of little things).

Most of us are striving for some kind of satisfaction, for happiness, for feeling

good. But the striving doesn't get you there. Loving yourself does. Love yourself, and good feelings will come by themselves, without striving.

And remember, you have to love yourself just as you are. In fact, if you are like most people, there is nothing wrong with you. You have your strengths and your weaknesses, just like everyone. You have your good points and your bad points, just like everyone. You have your gifts and your talents, and your faults and your foibles, just like everyone. If you are like most people (and the chances are 99.9% that you are) then you are okay enough already. You came here okay, you are okay now, and you will leave here okay. You are just a tiny human being, no matter how exalted or how wayward, how intact or how impaired. You are fundamentally acceptable, no matter what you think or what you have done. Life already decided that, by putting you here. More precisely, you are life. Life takes whatever form it

takes. You may be a soft person; you may be hard person. You may be an intelligent person; you may be a foolish person. So what! You are life. Whatever you are—good or bad, cautious or reckless, kind or unkind, irritable or cheerful—you deserve love, and to love yourself, no different than anyone else.

And consider that recognizing how to improve is not the same as judging yourself. So don't judge yourself. When you do, it is probably too harsh. And if you must judge yourself, then do it fairly—judge yourself as what you really are: Just a human being, with good points and bad points, with strengths and weaknesses. This is the only reasonable judgment. Anything else is likely unhelpful, or is just too unloving.

If you are willing to love yourself, you will start loving everyone. If you are willing to love yourself, you will see that all differences are just on the surface—that they don't actually mean much. You will have more the feeling that we are all in this together. You will start accepting everything just as it is. This is one of the hallmarks of a true spiritual path—that you are more and more accepting.

But consider that it has to start with yourself. If you really love yourself, you will really accept yourself. It is not the other way round. It is not that first you have to accept yourself, and then you will love yourself. That is the hard way; it rarely works. What works much more

easily is just to love yourself, the way you love others. Then you will accept yourself truly, just as you are. You will see that nothing is so horrible, nothing is so terrible in you or about you, that your life has to be about fixing it. All of that is an exaggeration at best, and an illusion at worst. All of that is not the truth. All that striving to be better takes you away from yourself.

Consider what life would be like if you truly loved yourself (rather than a life of always trying to get somewhere). I guarantee you that it will be a better life. Can you imagine a life where you are just as important as everyone and everything else? (Which is exactly the same as the converse, a life where you are no more important than everyone and everything else.) Just put yourself back into the equation.

And in fact, only you can do it. It is, after all, your life. And only you can be willing to love yourself. No one can do it for you. And in a life where you love yourself, in that kind of life, sinners become saints. In that kind of life, small moments become glorious moments. In that kind of life, a smile from a stranger becomes a sunrise. In that kind of life, happiness comes naturally. In that kind of life, the light outshines the darkness.

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B.S.S. Premodaya's lifelong work has improved and transformed the lives of thousands. Permanent inner peace, egolessness, the end of suffering, selfless service, and surrender to the divine will, is possible for anyone.

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Love Yourself

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