

What Loving Yourself Does Not Mean

The words “self-love” or “loving yourself” often trigger preconceived notions and perceptions that are not accurate to what loving yourself truly means. So before you come up with your conclusions and head down unnecessary rabbit trails, allow me to explain what true self-love is in its purest form by first explaining what loving yourself is not.

I would hate to begin on a faulty definition or perspective. I believe we have not apprehended the power of this subject because we have been misinformed as to what healthy self-love or loving yourself truly is. Our ignorance and misunderstandings have kept us from the power of this precept.

Because this topic is alien to most, we need references for what loving yourself is and also what it is not. This will help enhance our discernment for what is pure and true.

In growing to love ourselves the way God loves us, let's discover what it is not.

1. Loving yourself is not being self-centered. Focusing solely on one's self with little regard for others has nothing to do with self-love and is more self-idolatry. Selfishness and self-centeredness are counterfeits that are not concerned with loving others authentically, but elevating one's self.

True love says I am willing to lay down my life for another.

When I love myself, love flows me to others unhindered, without interference.

Those who are narcissistic are not operating from the heart of true self-love. They live what is often referred to as an egocentric reality, where their lives are all about

themselves. Narcissists find ways to remain in a selfish world that is vain, spending very little time thinking about or empathizing with others.

Many who proclaim they love themselves are often typical narcissists because they make most situations, conversations and scenarios circle back to themselves. Their emphasis always seems to be what's going on with them, their viewpoint and their feelings. This is not love and should never be called love.

People who love themselves properly give it out right away. They spend little time obsessing over their own lives. Once love is received, it naturally goes out. They have settled love in their hearts, so it flows out very freely. You can observe someone who loves themselves in a healthy way because they give out love with very little effort. And when others love them back, they receive it without awkwardness.

2. Loving yourself is not self-indulgence. Many times I hear from well-intentioned people who share examples of how they are “loving themselves.” Yet they deliver tales of foolish financial decisions and endless hours of wasteful activities, all with a label of self-love. This is not what I am speaking of.

Eating a tub of ice cream and emotionally checking out with television is not self-love. It's actually a manifestation of lacking self-love, because those coping mechanisms do not add life. In fact, those habits can often drive people further into unhealthy emotional prisons.

3. Loving yourself is not self-exaltation. Years ago, I remember watching someone who was working overtime to draw attention to himself. He went out of his way to make sure people were noticing him. I overheard an observer say, “Well, that guy really loves himself.” This is a classic mistake. He doesn't. He actually hates himself but needs extra attention

to fill a void in his heart. The extra energy he exudes is so he can feel the affirmation of people's eyes observing him. This is not self-love.

When you love yourself properly, you are able to honor and prefer others. You think about others, not as a detriment of yourself or a survival mindset of looking out only for yourself.

We were designed to love the same way we breathe. Every time we inhale, we exhale.

4. Loving yourself is not self-pity. Scores of people live as victims whose lives have been defined by their limitations.

The victim mindset has become a modern plague over our generation. Victims become bombarded with problems so much that they find themselves imprisoned by them. Without healthy self-love, they confuse self-pity as a way to comfort themselves.

Because our lens of love has been damaged, when pain comes, we too often turn to pity as a source of comfort. Yet pity keeps us in a victim posture and distorts what love really is.

Convinced that no one is showing them love, victims seek to comfort themselves by bringing attention to their pain. They can even see it as loving themselves, yet it becomes a personal immersion into their problems and woes.

Instead of loving those around them, they become isolated in their own trouble, leaving them emotionally unavailable to others. They are trapped in an emotional prison. This mindset is light-years away from self-love. In fact, self-pity is an absolute counterfeit.

What other characteristics would you say would not be a part of healthy self-love or loving yourself? {eoa}

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the 1990s. As a teacher, author, coach and radio host, Mark is deeply passionate about awakening hearts and equipping people towards transformational living. His message involves getting to the core hindrances that contribute to the breakdown of our relationships, our health and our day-to-day peace. He is well-versed on struggles that originate within our thoughts. Through his own personal transformation, Mark is experienced in helping people overcome and live fruitful lives. He is the author of five books and hundreds of teachings. He hosts a weekly radio podcast show called "Transformed You" and blogs at . His writings have been featured on sites like .

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