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101 Ways to Love Yourself



By **Regina V. Cates**

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Love is more than the feeling of caring you have for other people. The people and pets you have deep affection for feel you love them by the way you treat them with respect, kindness, and loyalty. The same is true for loving yourself, which is consistently treating yourself with the affectionate actions of love too.

And, understand that to love others well, you must love yourself first. It's not selfish to love yourself first, it's responsible. Only when you consistently give love's behaviors to yourself are you truly able to give love to others.

Here are some of the ways you can love yourself so you have lots of love to give.

- 1.** Each morning look in the mirror and see the real you. Say, "Good Morning," to your physical body. Your body is a wonderful gift. Without your body the heart/soul that you are would not be able to experience life. Acknowledge your body. And beyond your face, hair, skin, look deep into your eyes, into the window of your soul, to see and appreciate who you are inside – the REAL you.
- 2.** Make a list of everything that is right with you. That is, all of the ways you are confident about yourself and the positive behaviors you consistently display – patience, peacefulness, respect, compassion, etc. Carry the list with you and refer to it often to remind you how wonderful you really are.
- 3.** Celebrate each positive step forward. When you pass up a piece of cake in favor of eating an apple – CELEBRATE! When you walk a mile instead of stopping half way – CELEBRATE! When you refuse to ego-box with a rude person – CELEBRATE by saying, "Way to go. I am proud of you!"
- 4.** Develop an overall purpose for life. "I am creating a – joyful, confident, balanced, patient, respectful, healthy life." Have a theme about how you want to consistently behave because this helps you stay centered and balanced when life throws you a curve. Remaining focused on the purpose you have for how you move through life, helps you get through the challenges that arise.
- 5.** Take yourself on dates. Go to the movies, enjoy a cup of coffee at a café, visit a museum, or public

garden. Appreciate your own company by doing something you enjoy.

- 6.** Apologize when you do something that is hurtful or offends someone. Part of self-respect, which is a cornerstone of self-love, is being able to admit when you are wrong, because that is the action that gets you back on the right track. So, when you do something hurtful to a friend, apologize. Real friends care more for friendship than pride.
- 7.** Laugh at yourself. Not in a self-deprecating way. Laugh in a way that says, "I'm moving through life without taking myself too seriously."
- 8.** Honestly accept yourself as you are now. If you are overweight – accept it. If you smoke, drink, take drugs, are impatient, self-centered, are co-dependent, whatever, ACCEPT the truth of how you are behaving now. Consider acceptance as the starting point necessary for you to take the actions required to become the person you really want to be.
- 9.** Smile. Loving yourself is joyful.
- 10.** View mistakes as opportunities to grow. Wrap your heart around the truth that you are not meant to be perfect. You are going to make choices that in hindsight could have been better. Don't beat yourself up with the should have's, could have's, and would have's that come from knowing now what you did not know at the time you made the less than best choice. Love yourself by not making the same negative choices again.
- 11.** Make a list of what you are grateful for and add something new each day. Be genuinely grateful for what you already have in life and tearing up the list of what you do not have will be gratifying.
- 12.** Have faith in your ability to deal positively with life as it is, as it comes. And rely on your belief in a power greater than yourself to lift you up in times of challenge.
- 13.** Leave no room for the distress that comes from regret. Stay emotionally present and spend time with whom and what you love. Listen attentively and say everything you want and need to, because life can change in a heartbeat. Do your best to purposefully leave no room for regret.

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14. Define spirituality for yourself. Develop a practice that results in you living as a nonviolent, responsible, respectful, supportive, non-judgmental, peaceful, and positive person.

15. Treat yourself kindly. Thoughtfulness is an action that emotionally connects you to your heart.

16. Listen to, watch, and read what uplifts you. Just as you are what you eat, your attitude and outlook on life is based on what you allow to influence you. Be highly selective and look for the positive.

17. Spend time with people who do good things. Join a local environmental group to clean up your parks, rivers, lakes, and streams. Assist in educating your community about recycling. Work with a local animal shelter to bring the benefits of spaying, neutering, and adoption to your city. Get involved to end hunger in your community. Volunteer at a homeless shelter. Serve as a mentor to an “at risk” child.

18. Write a letter to your wounded inner child. Let him or her know you are a strong, confident, and dependable adult who is now fully capable of making good decisions. Let your inner child know you will keep him or her safe.

19. Get enough sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, increased stress hormone levels, and irregular heartbeat. Deprivation of sleep alters the functioning of the immune system, which helps the body fight disease. Sleep deprivation also causes weight gain and affects the way the body processes and stores carbohydrates. Not enough sleep alters the hormone levels that affect appetite.

20. Learn something new each day.

21. Embrace the wide range of your emotions. Cry when you are hurt or sad. Laugh when you are joyful. Express anger, frustration, and disappointment in healthy ways.

22. Make a list of people you admire and the reasons you admire them. Adopt the admirable qualities they have.

23. Be sensitive to your needs. Don't push down what you want and need in favor of pleasing

someone else. It won't work. Eventually you will grow resentful.

24. Evaluate rather than judge. Rather than jump to judgment, ask questions of yourself and other people. Do your research. Look for facts rather than rely on opinion. Remember opinion is not fact. Opinion is: (1) a belief or judgment that rests on grounds insufficient to produce complete certainty, and (2) a personal view, attitude, or appraisal. Evaluate and seek fact for yourself rather than blindly believing or spreading the opinions of others.

25. Send yourself a love letter. Be mushy. Be supportive. Be honest about how you really feel about yourself. It's not being arrogant or self-centered to be self-supportive. Being your biggest fan and loudest cheerleader is self-loving.

26. Think before you act. Just stopping to ask, “If I take this actions what is the likely outcome?” will help prevent you from making careless mistakes that could hurt you or other people.

27. Ask yourself hard questions. Honestly looking into your heart is not easy. But it is self-loving, because standing alone in front of the mirror of candid evaluation is how you gain a clear understanding of and respect for who you are now, so you can be the person you want to be.

28. Trust your gut. When you get an internal message of advice such as ‘Slow down’ or ‘Wait – where are my keys?’ Or ‘Stop NOW!’ Or ‘Don't go out with someone’ who does not feel right. Be courageous and listen to your own wise advice.

29. Treat yourself to a massage, manicure, pedicure, or facial.

30. Let go of the need to be seen as being right. You can be stubborn. You can be argumentative. You can insist on getting your way, or proving your point, or being acknowledged as the one who is right. Or you can love yourself and overrule your self-centered ego and actually have a peaceful life.

31. Say “Yes I can” instead of “No I can't,” or “It's easier said than done,” or “I've tried before and failed.” If you truly want to accomplish a goal then do not allow yourself to sabotage yourself. Yes, it

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may be difficult and take hard work. But YES YOU CAN succeed, when you believe in yourself and you take the actions necessary to achieve your goals.

32. Be patient. Deal with provocation, annoyance, misfortune, delay, hardship, pain, etc., with fortitude and calm and without complaint or anger.

33. Define success for yourself. Is it really to attain wealth, position, and honors? Or is it to have a peaceful and fulfilled life. Or both?

34. Be okay with saying no. Your energy, time, money, and other personal resources are limited. Make sure you spend what is necessary of your resources on you and your primary obligations first. Then you can give to others without resentment.

35. Let go of the notion you can change anyone other than yourself. You cannot control the behavior of or change anyone except you. For your own contentment and peace, remember people change for the better only when they really want to.

36. Be your own superhero. Choose to master yourself through developing a positive sense of purpose for each day, for life, and for how you personally make the world a better place.

37. Stand up straight. Have good posture. Let the world know you respect yourself and you are proud to be YOU.

38. Create a sacred space in your home that serves as a daily reminder of who and what is most important to you. In that space put photos of your loved ones, your pets, and items that hold pleasant, loving, and positive feelings.

39. Throughout the day stop and intentionally take a few deep breaths. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe through your nose. Place your right hand on your chest and your left hand on your abdomen, and take a deep breath. As you inhale, allow your breath to fill your belly. Feel your left hand rise in response to the life-force energy filling your belly. Concentrate on filling your belly so deeply that your left hand, resting on your stomach, moves significantly. When you exhale, release as much air as possible, contracting your abdominal muscles toward your spine. Your left hand moves

inward as you exhale. Repeat three times and several times a day.

40. Each day spend time in the natural world. There is great joy and peace that comes from appreciating your connection to all forms of life. It's healthy to regularly spend time in the natural world, to grow appreciation for your outdoor home.

41. Give yourself a bouquet of flowers.

42. Enjoy a warm bath by candlelight. Dry off, treat your skin to a luxurious body lotion, wrap yourself in a robe and curl up in a cozy chair with a cup of tea.

43. Accept that being afraid at difficult times is different than living in fear. Honestly look at what you are afraid of - dying, loss of a relationship, financial ruin, illness, etc. Love yourself by doing what you can to prevent what you can. Accept there are things that happen in life you cannot prevent.

44. Say what you mean and mean what you say.

45. Clean out and organize your desk, closet, food pantry, garage, etc. Through the effort of cleaning up your home, office, and car, you can dramatically lessen distractions and improve your sense of well-being, balance, and inner peace.

46. Hug yourself. Yes, go ahead. Give yourself a big squeeze.

47. Teach someone to do something that you know how to do but he or she does not. Maybe how to use technology, plant a tree, bake cookies, or check the air in a tire. Helping someone learn something fills you with a sense of satisfaction.

48. Refuse to compare yourself to others. You are a one-of-a-kind miracle, distinctive among all other human beings on earth. Be proud of your uniqueness. Encourage others to be proud of their uniqueness too.

49. Schedule an unplugged day. No cell phone, texting, television, internet. Read a book. Go to a beach or a national forest. Spend the entire day and night without technology to reset your brain and heart.

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50. Practice random acts of kindness. Feed a parking meter that is about to expire, write a cheerful note and leave it on the windshield of a stranger's car, pick up litter from your neighborhood, return a found item to its owner.

51. Express yourself creatively. Paint, draw, play a musical instrument, sing, write, develop a new recipe, knit, sew, plant a flower garden.

52. Focus on the solution to the challenge you face rather than the problem.

53. Shine or clean your shoes so your feet feel happy.

54. Forgive those who hurt you. Regardless of what happened in your past, even if that is yesterday, releasing resentment and what you think should have been is the key that unlocks the door to your freedom. Bitterness and judgment are emotions that hurt you, not the people who inflicted their unconsciousness onto you. For your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, let go of what happened so you can create today on your terms.

55. Question what you were taught to believe about yourself, other people and the world. Question your exposure to news media, television, movies, the internet, and the opinions of others. Examine your beliefs about a supreme consciousness. Challenge ancient religious texts and any rule that dictates fearful, derogatory, limiting, or oppressive behavior. Just because you were taught to believe something does not necessarily make it true. Likewise, just because you were taught not to believe something does not necessarily make it false.

56. Be polite. Say "thank you" and "excuse me." Open the door for someone. Wait until passengers get off the elevator before you get on. Being courteous to others is one way you love and care for yourself.

57. Make a list of positive affirmations of new behaviors you want to adopt and carry them with you. I am a patient person. I am a peaceful person. I treat myself and all life with kindness. I am a non-smoker. Read them several times each day and envision yourself living as the new behavior.

Concentrate on changing your behavior for the better and soon you will have made the new actions part of your everyday life.

58. Make time to play. Research suggests play is an important part of life, whether we are children or adults. According to the National Institute for Play, "Play can dramatically transform your personal health and relationships, generate optimism, give your immune system a boost, relieve depression, foster empathy, and lessen stress."

59. Seek to establish win-wins in your relationships. That is, instead of someone having to compromise, look for a way that both of you benefit equally.

60. Remember, the homeless people you encounter are men and women just like you. Treat all people with the respect and kindness with which you want to be treated.

61. Listen to yourself speak. Remain connected to and emotionally responsible for your words. They define you to yourself and to others. Make sure you are leaving a self-loving and respectful impression.

62. Make a list of things you'd like to do and see while you are alive. Begin doing and seeing, then cross them off.

63. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.

64. Get regular health and dental check-ups. Without your health you cannot have the best quality of life. Invest the time, effort, and money necessary to ensure you are doing everything possible to keep yourself healthy.

65. Make a list of the biggest mistakes you made in life and congratulate yourself on what you learned from each.

66. Keep good thoughts. Be a positivity junkie. Find the silver lining, the light at the end of the tunnel.

67. Get term life insurance to protect your loved ones financially if you should die unexpectedly. Have a Will, medical directive and Power of Attorney in place. Let someone you trust know where the documents are. Self-love is being

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prepared for the unexpected, and it lets those people you care for know how much you love them.

68. Listen to classical music or recordings of your favorite Broadway shows or movies. Music feeds your soul.

69. Walk barefoot on freshly mowed grass or in the sand at the beach. Feel your connection to the earth.

70. Speak to yourself as you want other people to speak to you. With respect and kindness.

71. Think about what you are thinking while you think it. Your thoughts create your behavior. Your behavior creates your life. Remaining aware of what you are thinking and the motivations behind your thoughts allows you to create your behavior with purpose and that creates a life of purpose. If your thoughts are negative remember you have the power to change them to positive.

72. Remain loyal to yourself. Love supports, encourages, stands up for, defends, and lifts up.

73. Be persistent. Don't give up or talk yourself out of achieving the dreams you have. Concede there is no easy button to life but where there is a will there is always a way. Stay focused on finding the way.

74. Stretch every day. Forward bends, side twists, calf stretches, and others increase blood circulation, range of motion, reduce stress, relieve lower back pain and increase flexibility.

75. Ask for help. Seeking assistance is a sign of strength and a willingness to surrender control, both of which are self-loving actions.

76. Offer to help others.

77. Talk about your feelings and experiences and express your needs, so you can create emotionally intimate relationships.

78. Refuse to get pulled into an argument while you are, or someone else is, upset.

79. Get at least one hour of physical activity every day. Walk in your neighborhood. Take a yoga class,

go to the gym. And look for ways to stay active throughout the day. Pass up the elevator in favor of the stairs. Park your car far from the store entrance.

80. Stay focused on the big picture. Remember an 80 year long life is made up of 29,200 days. If today is not going well, take heart. Learn what you can from the challenge or situation to help you make a better tomorrow.

81. Respect your body by being careful what you eat. Limit sugar, fake sugar, and processed foods. Read food labels. Pass up fast food restaurants. Attempt to eat as much fresh and locally grown food as possible.

82. Schedule a stay-at-home day and just enjoy your living space.

83. Meditate. Learn a meditation technique such as Transcendental Meditation or Insight Meditation or teach yourself to sit quietly for 20 minutes twice a day. It's okay to have thoughts. Allow the thoughts to come up then allow your thoughts to leave just as quickly, returning your focus to the peaceful, purposeful presence that is the soul you are.

84. Keep a diary or journal. Record highlights of your day. Make observations of yourself and the world. Make notes of things you want to experience and the ways you want to grow. Journaling is an excellent way to express your feelings and document your journey through life.

85. Have a strategic life plan. Where do you see yourself in a year, five years, ten years, and twenty years? Just as an architect draws up a plan that the builder follows to construct a home, you need a basic outline for how you want to build your life. Once your goals are on paper it's easier to plan how you achieve them.

86. Be flexible. Life is not a calm river that always flows peacefully in one direction. When you encounter an unwelcome change (loss of relationship, job, death of a loved one, illness) accept that fighting against the current (trying to control the uncontrollable, change the unchangeable, know the unknowable or prevent the unpreventable) will only result in stress, disappointment and frustration. Accept the reality

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of what is happening is how you get back to calmer waters.

87. Remember that often reward requires risk.

88. Stop trying and start doing, to make lasting change. For example, I smoked cigarettes for twenty-two years. I attempted to change my negative habits for a long, long time, until I realized I could continue "trying" for the rest of my life. Quitting smoking-or any other destructive habit-is accomplished not by trying harder, but by doing. Which means you make a new positive habit by doing the new behavior.

89. Sing, whistle or hum. Doing any of these instantly brings joy to your heart.

90. Let go of people who are consistently negative. Each of us will have a bad day and attitude once in a while. Those people whose glass is always empty and whose life is miserable only bring others down. Love yourself by choosing not to join them. Refuse to host pity parties for yourself and others.

91. Have a hobby and share your enthusiasm with others. Become a member of an organization of people who like to do what you like to do. Biking, reading, chess, crafts, tennis, cooking, quilting, sewing, gardening, blogging, flower arranging, the list is endless.

92. Time is your greatest personal resource. Manage your precious time with the same attention to detail that you manage your finances. Which often means saying no to requests for your time.

93. Fix your favorite meal and eat by candlelight.

94. Snuggle with a pet. If you do not have a dog or cat ask a friend if you can get some pet loving from their furry friend. Consider fostering. There is nothing like the sweet feeling you get from loving a pet.

95. Remember you are likeable even if someone does not like you. Not everyone is meant to be friends with everyone else. Just because someone chooses not to be your friend does not mean you are not good friend material.

96. Let yourself grieve because life is going to hurt at times. Be extra gentle with yourself. Take care of your emotional needs. Talk about the pain. Grief is a process that is different for everyone. By embracing the pain you are allowing yourself to move through it to find the joy in life again when you are ready.

97. Spread a blanket on the grass and watch clouds. See how many different animals, faces and other shapes you can find.

98. Wear a broad spectrum SPF 50+ sunscreen.

99. Listen to your body. Eat when you are hungry. Sleep when you are tired. Rest when you are injured. Drink lots of water. Lay low when you are sick. Acknowledge times when you don't feel like yourself. Trust that your body is telling you exactly what you need to do.

100. Spend less money than you make. Save as much money as you can, for emergencies, retirement, a special vacation, new car, a home. The goal is to have money in reserve so you have financial security.

101. Care about the living legacy you are creating. At the end of each day, as the last thoughts filter through before sleep, you want to honestly say you did your best. You want to remember you made the world a better place for your being alive. Leaving a living legacy you are proud of is what loving yourself is about.

Regina