



# How Deep is Your Love?

## Love of Self

By Larisa Sharipova

**Do you believe that if you put others first, they will love and value you and you will feel loved?** Has this worked for you? Do you believe that if you love yourself first you are being selfish? Is it selfish to attend to your own feelings and needs so that you are not needy of others' attention? If you believe or feel that way, you are not alone.

Self-love has been seen as a moral flaw, related to narcissism and selfishness. In 1956, however, German psychologist and social philosopher Erich Fromm suggested that loving oneself is different from being arrogant or egocentric. He reevaluated self-love in a positive sense, arguing that in order to be able to truly love another person, a person needs first to love herself, in the way of respecting and knowing oneself.

There are four aspects of self-love. The first is self-acceptance. It means that we learn to be happy with who we are, with our personality and physical appearance. It means accepting our strengths and weaknesses without feeling guilty. With self-acceptance comes self-respect, which requires us to have positive attitudes toward our right to live with dignity and happiness. It means having a real relationship with ourselves: that we live by our truths and do not fear social pressure, nor do we live in denial or make sacrifices that will compromise our integrity. Self-esteem develops naturally when we love, accept, and respect ourselves. It is essential to viewing ourselves as being worthy of happiness, love, and consideration. Self-responsibility is a natural progression of all the other facets of self-love. It is an important aspect of loving ourselves since it means taking responsibility for the choices we make in our life, for the quality of our life, and thus for our existence.

Loving ourselves is a part of well-being. We need to learn how to love and accept ourselves in order to be able to love others and to live a happy and healthy life.

From my own experience, I believe that if I had loved myself enough in the past I would have made different decisions and choices in my life: walk away from unhealthy relationships, follow my passion, stand my ground, and escape abuse. I would have loved the person who looked back at me in the mirror. After learning self-awareness and self-love and trusting my intuition, my life transformed, and I became a different person. It does not happen overnight, and it does require some work. But it is worth every effort for your own well-being and for the well-being of the people around you.

Love yourself first, and everything else falls into line." Consider changing your intent from getting love to being loving—to yourself first, so that you can then share your love with others and enjoy happy and joyful life.

Let yourself feel and express the joy of life!

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*I can honestly say that I understand women very well. If you understand yourself, you understand women, because, in the end, all women are the same. ~ Diane von Furstenberg, Fashion Designer, Born 1946*