



The #1 Secret to Living an Abundantly Well Life

Greetings! It's that time of year where we start thinking spring and develop a renewed interest in our wellness and promises of things to come. Having endured many cold days recently, if I was to be completely snarky I would say the #1 secret to wellness in February (if you live in the Midwest) is to travel south! But sarcasm aside, this issue is something I have seen people struggle with time and again, but when they finally "get it" a huge transformation happens in their lives. And I want you to experience that powerful shift too!

The secret is to love yourself.

Loving all parts of you – even the imperfect, the dark, and damaged parts and knowing you still have worth and value.

I'll be honest and admit that this is something I have struggled with myself and perhaps had misconceived notions about what loving oneself means. Being a perpetual people pleaser, I tended to put other people's needs above my own and often thought loving myself was equated with selfishness. But here is where I have realized the error in my thinking, and I want to make this very clear so you don't make the same mistake. **Loving yourself is not the same as being selfish.**

Selfishness stems from a desire to gratify and benefit only oneself. In contrast, loving yourself stems from a desire to be the healthiest, best human being you can possibly be to better serve the world. Selfishness crosses boundaries, whereas self-love honors them.

When you love yourself, you make wellness a priority (and for you people pleasers out there, that's making it a priority without guilt). **When you act from a place of self-love, you attract and bring into your life things, people, and practices that nourish your body, mind, and spirit.** You create a powerful energy that allows you to enjoy life more, contribute more to the world at large, and fulfill your purpose.

Where Does Self-Love Come From?

Love of self stems from the all perfect love from above. It comes from loving and honoring the divine within you. It comes from acknowledging that you are worthy of love simply because you exist. You don't have to earn love with perfection, accomplishments, or certain material acquisitions. Marianne Williamson eloquently speaks to this when she writes, "...spiritual perfection and physical, material imperfection exist simultaneously." (Thank God for that!)

Love of self comes from valuing who you are and the unique gifts and qualities you have been given.

Love of self comes from stepping away from everyone else's views, our culture's messages, our inner critics, and taking time to be compassionately present without judgment.

How do I Cultivate Love of Self?

Try taking action using one of these suggestions.

1. Create a list of what you love and value about yourself.

This can actually be a very powerful exercise. Give yourself 2 minutes and see how many things you can come up with. Keep this list and re-read it whenever you need a little loving boost. Want to take it a step further? Stand in front of a mirror and say "I love myself because..." Some people swear by the power of mirror work. If nothing else, this exercise might get you thinking of the Saturday Night Live skit (I may be dating myself here) and at least you will have laughed today.

2. Schedule self-care activities on a regular basis.

Create a menu of self-care activities or ways you can treat yourself lovingly. Think about some that might take only a minute and could be done daily and others that might require a bigger chunk of time. Be intentional about putting these into your schedule and protect that time. Take it a step further and journal after you do these self-care activities. Record your feelings, thoughts, energy level, and what happened afterwards. You might find some really interesting trends!

3. Think of some challenging situations currently in your life. How can you use these situations as a call to increase the practice of self-love and compassion?

Our comfort zones are usually where we find it easy to love ourselves. The key is to love yourself even when things aren't perfect or going as planned.

4. Practice loving-kindness meditation

Stay tuned to my Facebook page for an example of this.

5. Set boundaries

This may mean respectfully saying "no" to others in order to say "yes" to yourself. This means not allowing certain people into your life who make you feel like you have to earn love or who abuse it.

6. Commit to practices that help you stay connected to the divine within you.

Depending on how spiritual you are this could include studying scripture or other spiritual texts, practicing meditation or yoga, taking a walk in nature, or simply reflecting on what makes you uniquely you.

When you love yourself you take care of yourself, you cultivate wellness, and unlock a whole new positive energy in your life. I'll close with these wildly affirming words from the poet Rumi:

You were born with potential.
You were born with goodness and trust.
You were born with ideals and dreams.
You were born with greatness.
You were born with wings.
You are not meant for crawling, so don't.
You have wings.
Learn to use them and fly.

Remember you possess a radiance within you and are loveable simply because you are you!

Shelly

Live with Intention, Love Yourself, Create Balance, Fulfill Your Purpose & Thrive!

P.S. I want you to experience this positive, transforming energy that love of self can bring. My **Spirited Woman's Retreat: A Guide to Getting Your Groove Back** coming up on Friday March 27th provides the perfect opportunity, environment, and support necessary for you to cultivate love of self. For more information go to www.wellfinity.com/events/retreats. Cost is only \$89 and includes continental breakfast and lunch.