

# 28 Days of Self-Love

*Learn How to Accept Yourself and  
Start Living an Awesome Life*



INEFFABLE LIVING

Copyright © 2022 by Ineffable Living

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

*Note to the reader: This ebook is intended as an informational guide. It does not constitute medical, legal, or other professional advice, and does not replace, therapy or medical treatment. If expert assistance or counseling is needed, the services of a competent professional should be sought.*

**Contents**

Day 1. Defining Self-Love..... 6

Day 2. Cultivate Awareness ..... 11

Day 3. Deal With Painful Emotions ..... 15

Day 4. Manage Your Anger ..... 24

Day 5: Manage Your Anxiety ..... 42

Day 6. Challenge Your Negative Thoughts ..... 52

Day 7. Use Journaling and Expressive Writing ..... 57

Day 8. Set Healthy Emotional Boundaries ..... 60

Day 9. Overcome People Pleasing..... 68

Day 10. Open Up to Receiving Love and Support ..... 78

Day 11. Overcome Toxic Perfectionism ..... 85

Day 12. Stop Imposter Syndrome ..... 95

Day 13. Reduce Your Stress ..... 105

Day 14. Avoid Burnout ..... 112

Day 15. Get Out of Your Own Self-Pity ..... 117

Day 16. Quit Your Addiction ..... 124

Day 17. Break Technology Addiction ..... 132

Day 18. Practice Self-Care and Enjoy Time Alone With Yourself ..... 140

Day 19. Express Gratitude ..... 148

Day 20. Forgive ..... 156

Day 21. Move Toward Compassion ..... 162

Day 22. Affirm Yourself..... 167

Day 23. Increase Your Happiness ..... 170

Day 24. Nourish Your Body ..... 179

Day 25. Physical Movement to Boost Your Mood..... 181

Day 26. Detox Your Body of Pollutants..... 185

Day 27. Get Restful Sleep ..... 188

Day 28. Set Up Your Perfect Morning Routine ..... 193

Final Thoughts ..... 199

Self-love quotes ..... 200

## **What to Expect from This Workbook**

This book will help you face internal barriers to self-love. The ways to self-love are different. Every chapter presents one way to practice self-love or overcome a barrier to self-love.

Over the course of this book, you'll learn tools and techniques that will help you practice self-love and cultivate an attitude of compassion toward yourself.

Learning a new skill takes a lot of time and practice. You'll need to practice the new thoughts and behaviors outlined in this book long enough for them to become part of your belief system.

If you're reading this workbook on a touch-screen device, you can add notes and highlight text just like you would in a physical workbook.

You may also find it helpful to use a journal or notebook to write down your thoughts, feelings, plan of action, etc.



## Day 1. Defining Self-Love

### What Is Self-Love?

To define self-love, we need to first explore what self-love is not.

*Self-love is not self-absorption or narcissism.*

People who love themselves take care of themselves while being attentive to the feelings and needs of those around them.

If anything, being loving with ourselves helps us take *better* care of other people.

Self-absorption, on the other hand, keeps us stuck in our own world and makes no room for anything else.

In this sense, self-love can mean “me first,” but usually, “me too.”

*Self-love is not self-pity.*

Self-pity is a form of self-absorption. We get caught up in our own problems and we become oblivious to the world around us.

Self-love, on the other hand, allows us to see our suffering as a shared human experience. Unlike self-pity, self-love affords a sense of proportion to our situation so that we can accept and deal with our pain in more constructive ways.

*Self-love is not self-gratification or self-indulgence.*

Self-gratification is an impulse to “treat ourselves,” even when it’s not in our best interest.

Oftentimes, the most loving thing we can do for ourselves may be to *not* buy something we don’t need, or eat something that’s not healthy.

*Self-love is not self-esteem.*

Self-esteem is based on self-evaluation. It's our way to relate to ourselves with understanding and acceptance.

However, self-love is a gentle and caring attitude toward our own pain and needs. It may contribute to increased self-esteem, but it does not depend on it.

**What Self-Love Sound Like?**

- I try to be understanding and patient toward the aspects of my personality that I don't like.
- I give myself the caring and tenderness I need in hard times.
- I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are a shared human experience.
- I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
- I try to approach my feelings with an attitude of curiosity and openness.
- When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.

What does self-love mean to you?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **Are You Struggling With Lack of Self-Love?**

Lack of self-love comes from being unable to accept or forgive our imperfect selves. The following are some signs you might lack self-love. Check the ones you identify with:

- Staying in dysfunctional or abusive relationships because you don't believe you deserve better or you believe that being abused is better than being alone;
- Feeling uncomfortable in your own body;
- Starving yourself, binge eating, or hurting yourself to distract yourself from your real pain;
- Neglecting your basic needs for sleep, nutrition, and exercise;
- Overworking yourself because you don't know how else to find validation;
- Lashing out or shutting down when feeling criticized because you are ready to believe anything bad about yourself.

Using the list above, identify what you specifically need to work on.

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Where did your lack of self-love come from?**

1. Did your parents often criticize you? Were you often shamed as a child?

---

---

---

---



2. How did your parents typically speak to you? What about your siblings?

---

---

---

---

---

3. Did any of your experiences at school or with your peers affect the way you feel about yourself? If so, which?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. Thinking about how your parents treated you as a child, what do you think their intention was? Try putting yourself in their shoes. Do you really think they intended to make you unhappy? How loving were they toward themselves?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Why is it important for you to work on self-love? The following is a list of benefits you gain from increasing self-love. Check the ones you can relate to:

- Self-care
- Belonging
- Career success
- Relationship quality
- Better parenting skills
- Physical health
- Confidence
- Happiness
- Empowerment
- Enthusiasm
- Inspiration
- Motivation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have to love yourself before you can love another?**

Many people who are hard on themselves love their family and friends deeply.

But although they are usually loved in return, they might have difficulty in receiving that love.

It is also hard to sustain love for another over the long haul unless we cultivate a sense of inner abundance and sufficiency.

Feeling incomplete inside ourselves, love for another can become a search for others to complete us and give us reassurance, affirmation of our worth, and approval.

However, we can't receive from others what we are unable to give to ourselves.

## Day 2. Cultivate Awareness

*Mindfulness* is the practice of cultivating awareness in the present moment.

Put simply, mindfulness consists of being fully aware of whatever is happening in the present moment.

Mindfulness isn't just a practice related to ancient Buddhist meditative disciplines, it's also a universal practice that anyone can benefit from.

Mindfulness helps you enhance your psychological and physical well-being through recognizing your habitual thinking patterns and other ingrained behaviors.

Once you become aware of your inner state—your thoughts, emotions, sensations — you'll be more able to cope with stressful situations, renew your enthusiasm for life and work, and generally feel so much better.

Mindfulness helps you recognize that there are choices in how you respond to stressful situations. The key here is awareness.

Viktor Frankl, psychiatrist and holocaust survivor, states “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

### ***Why Be Mindful?***

A growing body of evidence shows that mindfulness has many benefits including:

Increases our ability to regulate and manage emotions,

- Decreases stress, anxiety, and depression,
- Decreases the lure of instant gratification,
- Reduces your fearful thoughts and panic attacks,

- Increases your focus and make work and other tasks less stressful and smoother,
- Reduces physical burnout.

As we become more present in our lives and in relation to others, we become better at making decisions and managing our emotions, and we become more engaged in life in general.

## **Mindfulness Skills**

These are five main mindfulness skills:

### **Mindfully attend to your experiences**

Mindfully attend to something you're experiencing in the moment without judgment. Pay attention to physical sensations, thoughts, or emotions.

### **Objectively label your experiences**

Simply describe the facts of your experience without judging something as good or bad or right or wrong.

Don't assume anything and stick to the facts.

### **Immersing yourself in the present activity**

Fully immerse yourself into whatever you're doing in the present moment and pay close attention to what you're experiencing.

### **Do one thing at a time**

Avoid multitasking and focus all of your attention on one activity at a time.

### **Do what works**

Instead of wasting your time and energy feeling bad about your experience, learn from the past and do the things that help you reach your goals before.

## ***How to Practice Mindfulness?***

Mindfulness can be practiced in two ways: formally and informally.

*Formal practice* means taking the time to intentionally sit, or lie down and focusing on your breath, bodily sensations, or thoughts, and emotions.

*Informal practice* means bringing mindful awareness to daily activities, such as doing chores, eating, exercising, relating to others, and any other action at your workplace, home, or anywhere else.

### **Exercise – Body Scan**

Sit in a comfortable position.

Notice how your body connects to the seat or the ground.

Now, bring your awareness to your breath. Notice the flow of your breath as you inhale and slowly exhale.

Continue to breathe as you bring your awareness to your feet. Notice any tension that you may have and on a slow exhale try to relax your feet.

Move your awareness up to your knees, then legs and notice any tension that you may have in your knees, shins, calves, thighs, or pelvis. Take a deep inhale, and with your next exhale try to release this tension.

Bring your attention up to your midsection, then up to your chest and shoulders. Recognize the tension that may be in any of these areas and release that tension with your exhale.

Finally, notice any tension in your neck or your head and release that tension with your exhale.

On the next inhale squeeze every inch of your body: Curl your toes, make fists, and tighten your face. As you exhale, release this tension, allowing your body to relax.

## Exercise – Informal Mindfulness Practice

You can practice mindfulness from the moment you wake up to the moment you lay your head on the pillow at the end of your day.

This will help you stay present, appreciate whatever situation you find yourself in, and feel calmer and at peace:

1. As you open your eyes in the morning, stop yourself from checking your phone or jumping out of bed, and instead take a few moments to do a mindful check-in. Notice your thoughts, emotions, and body sensations.
2. As you shower, notice the smell of soap, feel the sensation of the water on your body, and listen to its sound.
3. If you live with other people, take a few moments to listen and connect with them mindfully.
4. As you head for your car, walk more slowly, check in with your body sensations, and notice any tension. Try to release any tension before you start your drive.
5. On your way to work, find opportunities to notice your breathing and body sensations.
6. Throughout your day at work, do mindful check-ins from time to time. If you can, turn off your email and social messaging as you focus on the task at hand.
7. If possible, have a meal by yourself in silence, try eating slower than you usually do and tune in to the taste and texture of the food in your mouth.
8. When you get home, do a mindful check-in and notice if your body is tense. Soften those muscles by breathing deeply and bringing awareness to your muscles.

## Day 3. Deal With Painful Emotions

*Why do we need to face our painful emotions?*

Avoidance is a common reaction when people are faced with painful emotions, memories, or situations.

Although avoidance does offer momentary relief, it doesn't fix anything, and usually, the very things we do to avoid pain, create their own set of problems, such as eating disorders, substance abuse and other addictions, withdrawal from people, etc.

The best way to deal with difficult emotions is through acknowledging the pain and actively moving toward it.

By practicing mindfulness, you begin to face your painful emotions of shame, anger, hurt, anxiety, etc.

The following techniques will help you soothe yourself as you face these difficult emotions.

For traumatic events, consider seeing a trauma specialist. For moderately intense emotions, you might experiment with the following techniques on your own.

## FEELINGS WORD LIST

### Happiness

Adored  
Alive  
Appreciated  
Cheerful  
Ecstatic  
Excited  
Glad  
Grateful  
Hopeful  
Joyful  
Loved  
Merry  
Optimistic  
Playful  
Pleased  
Satisfied  
Tender  
Thankful  
Uplifted  
Warm

### Anger

Amazed  
Accused  
Aggravated  
Agitated  
Angry  
Annoyed  
Bitter  
Contemptuous  
Cross  
Defensive  
Exacerbated  
Frustrated  
Furious  
Hostile  
Impatient  
Infuriated  
Insulted  
Jealous  
Offended  
Outraged  
Rebellious  
Resistant  
Scorned  
Spiteful

### Sadness

Alone  
Blue  
Burdened  
Defeated  
Depressed  
Devastated  
Disappointed  
Discouraged  
Dismayed  
Grief-stricken  
Gloomy  
Heartbroken  
Hopeless  
Hurt  
Let-down  
Lonely  
Melancholy  
Miserable  
Neglected  
Pessimistic  
Remorseful  
Resentful  
Sympathetic  
Unhappy



**Fear**

Afraid  
Alarmed  
Anxious  
Cautious  
Dreadful  
Fearful  
Frightened  
Haunted  
Helpless  
Hesitant  
Horrified  
Insecure  
Lost  
Mortified  
Nervous  
Petrified  
Puzzled  
Reserved  
Sheepish  
Tearful  
Tense  
Threatened  
Uneasy  
Uncomfortable

**Surprise**

Amazed  
Astonished  
Curious  
Delighted  
Enchanted  
Exhilarated  
Impressed  
Incredulous  
Inquisitive  
Playful  
Replenished  
Shocked  
Startled  
Stunned  
Surprised

**Disgust**

Ashamed  
Embarrassed  
Exposed  
Guilty  
Ignored  
Inadequate  
Incompetent  
Inept  
Inferior  
Inhibited  
Insignificant  
Sick  
Squashed  
Stupid  
Ugly  
Unaccepted

## **Name The Feeling**

Research shows that labeling our feelings, also known as “affect labeling,” is highly effective at helping us respond more rationally, even in the midst of stressful life experiences.

A study conducted by Dr. Matthew Lieberman, a social psychologist at UCLA, and his colleagues shows that when people are able to label an emotion, such as anger to describe an angry face, activity in the amygdala, a part of the brain that is associated with fear, panic decreased significantly.

Dr. Lieberman concludes that the ability to label our feelings “seems to dampen down the response in these basic emotional circuits of the brain. What lights up instead is the right ventrolateral prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that controls impulses.”

Take a look at the “Feelings Word List” and ask yourself: What emotion am I experiencing?

---

---

---

When reflecting on your emotions, you may notice that you can experience a combination of emotions at once. That is perfectly fine. Recognizing those feelings will help you broaden your awareness in a given situation.

## **Identify the Cause Behind Your Emotions**

Not knowing what triggered your intense emotions will add confusion and may even lead to panic or depression.

Examining the cause behind your emotions will help you manage them more effectively.

For instance, if you figure out that the reason why you're feeling anxious is because of the upcoming snowstorm, you can then stock up on food and put snow tires on your car.

These are constructive steps to take to reduce your anxiety.

If you realize you're feeling anxious because you're waiting for the exams' results, there's nothing you can do to change the situation. But knowing that the reason for your anxiety is time-limited and that you'll only have to cope with it temporarily, will help you find ways to distract yourself.

Reflect on the feeling you just named and answer the following questions:

- What event triggered the emotion (be specific)?

---

---

---

- Can I solve or lessen the problem? Is there any action to take?

---

---

---

- If there is nothing I can do but the problem is time-limited, how can I comfort or distract myself?

---

---

---

### **Abandon Emotional Reasoning**

Emotional reasoning is when you believe the thoughts that accompany your intense emotions.

Emotional reasoning is different from intuition.

When you use your intuition, you experience a calm sense of knowing (Linehan 1993). Despite not being able to tell how you knew something is true, there's little emotion associated with that knowledge.

However, when you're using emotional reasoning, you often experience intense emotions.

For instance, when you experience intense anxiety, you may begin to believe that something awful must be happening or is about to happen despite having no evidence to prove that.

Believing these emotionally generated "facts" adds to your painful emotions.

### **Exercise – Dealing With Emotional Reasoning**

If your thoughts are accompanied by intense emotions, then you're probably using *emotional reasoning*.

Once you bring your awareness back to the present moment and become aware of your negative, irrational beliefs, you begin to replace them with more positive, accurate thoughts.

For instance, if you find yourself thinking "What's wrong with me," or "I'm worthless," replace these negative thoughts with more positive ones, such as "It's okay to be nervous," "Mistakes are proof that I'm trying."

Identify and challenge your distorted thoughts by asking yourself the following questions:

Negative Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- What evidence do I have that what I believe is actually true?

---

---

---

---

- Do I know for certain that the worst will happen?

---

---

---

- Am I condemning myself as a total person on the basis of a single event?

---

---

---

- Am I concentrating on my weakness and forgetting my strengths?

---

---

---

- Am I blaming myself for something which is not really my fault?

---

---

---

- Is there another possible explanation for that person's behavior that isn't about me?

---

---

---

---

- What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same thought?

---

---

---

---

---

## Create a Different Emotion

When a painful emotion is taking a long time to dissipate - despite having no reason for the intensity of your feelings - consider creating a more pleasant emotion.

Engage in an activity that will create the opposite emotion to what you're feeling:

***If you feel depressed***, watch a show that makes you laugh, or do something to keep yourself active, such as going out for a walk, or even doing house chores.

Change your body posture – walk tall and maintain eye contact, with a steady and clear voice.

***If you feel angry***, take a few deep calming breaths, or try to feel empathy for the other person – consider the reasons that might push him to act the way he did.

***If you feel guilty or ashamed***, accept the consequences of your actions and learn from them for the future. If there is something you can do about it, like apologizing or fixing your mistake, do it. If not, remind yourself that it's okay to make mistakes.

***If you feel afraid***, do something to increase your sense of control. Facing your fear can help you desensitize yourself and build mastery over your fear.

***If you're afraid of failure***, make a list of all the reasons that you truly are competent and capable of success.

Remind yourself that the goal is not perfection, but the willingness to perform and engage.

Separate your behavior (e.g., studying for an exam) from your emotion of fear, and remind yourself that you are capable of working and tolerating the fear.

Remind yourself that emotions will pass and that they have no more power over you than you are willing to give it. Rather than fighting it, simply acknowledge it and let it go.

My emotion \_\_\_\_\_

The opposite emotion I want to create \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of activities that will create the opposite emotion:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Let Yourself Cry

You may see crying as a sign of weakness. But crying is actually an effective way of coping with strong emotions.

There are good reasons to cry.

- Crying is a cooperative behavior— it signals to others that you don't want to fight.
- Crying signals a willingness to be vulnerable in relationships, which helps build emotional intimacy.
- Crying is an effective way to allow the other person to offer help or comfort.
- Crying is a great way to calm yourself. Chemicals released in your brain as you cry, helps you feel better after crying (Frey 1985).

This makes crying a healthy coping mechanism.