

Self-Love

Interview with Mirabai Devi

May / June 2019

Would you describe what it means in a spiritual sense to have Self Love?

Self Love is the nurturing of and love for oneself that encompasses all areas of one's life, including emotional, mental, physical and spiritual well-being. It is self acceptance at the deepest spiritual level that carries no negative thoughts or words towards ourselves. When we make mistakes it is about forgiving ourselves, having no judgment towards ourselves and having compassion for ourselves.

True self-love is not an expression by the ego.

It is a radical change in consciousness to move from taking care of everyone else's needs and putting ourselves last to always taking care of our own needs first as well as simultaneously balancing taking care of other's needs.

We are so trained, especially women in our culture, to put our needs last. Women especially manifest thyroid deficiencies, breast cancer and other forms of physical illnesses. Our bodies cannot take the strain of not being nurtured.

When we serve others without serving ourselves, we end up, a) resentful, b) undernourished, c) unable to cope with the endless demands of other's needs, and d) out-of-balance.

If who we are is love, then love must be directed towards the self and one's cup must overflow before there is enough life-force energy to share with another. We are grateful to our ancestors, our fore-fathers and those who came before us, because they taught us what not to do in the sense of working themselves into the grave, or as women put their children and spouses before themselves. This often caused the individuals to exile themselves within because they couldn't cope with the demands and needs at the same time figure out how to balance their own life. People

experience a shut-down, mental illness or insanity when they feel overly burdened and unable to cope.

Human beings are very sensitive creatures, and don't always have the tools or life skills to know how to balance their own needs and the needs of their relations. It takes a certain level of mastery to balance one's own needs and the needs of others. Learning how to speak up, communicate, and set boundaries in a healthy loving way takes both practice and an ability to know, understand and comprehend that we deserve to have our needs met, to love ourselves and nurture ourselves. This doesn't make us a selfish or unloving person.

We are more stable both mentally and emotionally when the inner child needs are met, and when we are more in balance with ourselves and others. We are able to have a greater sense of wellbeing because we are not being imbalanced by taking on too much. We have a greater sense of ease and peace with ourselves. We can show up in our duties and in our lives when we are in greater harmony with ourselves. We are coming from a Love model instead of a fear model. When we come from a fear model we always are going to hurt ourselves and cause self-injury.

Excessive amounts of fear, hopelessness, anger and feeling out of control cause depression, anxiety, and lack of consciousness. All of this breeds mental illness. Whereas when our needs are met, we are grateful, compassionate for others and able to meet life's demands and challenges with greater vigor and joy. We are feeling a sense of balance, harmony and ease within the self. Whether it is meditating each day, taking a walk in nature, eating organic food, spending time in prayer and visualization, doing sadana or whatever it is that we need to take care of ourselves, everything is blessed from all this. The sense of overflowing bliss that comes from within us that gives everything meaning and purpose. We are coming from Love and expansion and not from fear and limitation. We are coming from joy, gratitude and compassion, not from the deficiency attitude of fear, criticism, doubt and lack. It all comes down to a lack of Love.

People consider doing good things for oneself as selfish. When in fact that's an old paradigm model. What is prescribed here is radical self-care and the allowance of extreme putting attention to listening to the needs of the body when it comes to our health, our diet, and our lifestyle. This is

imperative for longevity. When we focus on our health then everything comes right in our life, and we can truly ascend in our spiritual nature and our body is happy and in balance. It's very hard to meditate and have our mind be at peace when we are in physical or emotional pain. The body is our foundation that carries the building blocks upon which we build the house of our spiritual longevity. When the needs of the body are taken care of and the needs of our inner child are delivered and met, we can reach for the stars and prosper.

How does forgiveness, both of Self and others, help us with Self Love?

We are human beings and we are learning and growing, so we are bound to make mistakes. When we are hard on ourselves about our mistakes we cause ourselves greater suffering and harm, sometimes even greater harm than the original mistake we made. But when we forgive ourselves and expect ourselves and others to make mistakes, then we learn to love unconditionally. This trains us to love like God loves. Like a mother would love a child, no matter what that child does, the mother is always there for the child. So when we learn to love ourselves unconditionally through forgiving ourselves of the mistakes that we've made, we learn to be at peace with ourselves. When we are at peace with ourselves we are likely to be at peace with others, since others are the outer extension of oneself.

Others are a holographic image of our greater self that we project onto the Universe. We project our belief systems and perceptions. Most of what we perceive are our perceptions, like tinted glasses. In truth there is no one outside of ourselves because we are truly the great cosmic self who's nature is the great cosmic love. So when we forgive and love ourselves it is the God Self loving the Ego Self, or the separate individuality. The God Self is like water or the infinite ocean. The ego self is like ice: dense self of individuality that believes it is in separation.

When we are in fear we are misaligned with our Self, our own hearts, and with life itself. Fear breeds judgment, condemnation and doubt. Love encourages forgiveness, reconciliation and healing, with both individuals and groups. Bridges get burned in our relationship with others when we lose trust and faith in them or in ourselves. When we love ourselves and give to ourselves, and when we love others and give to others, there's a

cycle of giving and receiving in Love. So when we are always giving to others and not to ourselves, there becomes an imbalance within. We must give to ourselves as much or more than others so that balance may occur. When we give to ourselves it is the Divine Self giving to us. We are receiving from the Divine Self.

Self Love is about a cycle of giving. It's about the Divine Self giving to the small Self. It's about the small Self learning how to receive, and about the balance between input and output. When the small self receives through meditation, yoga, pranayama and whatever practices it takes to be connected to the Divine and Mother Nature, it is just like a rechargeable battery that continues to get recharged. And when the small self continues to output without receiving, its functioning in limitation. On its own it is disconnected from the Source of itself.

Judgment causes separation. Forgiveness is the bridge that ends separation. When we judge another or are in conflict with another, the space is mended through forgiveness. Ultimately we are only responsible for ourselves, even if we make commitments to others. By loving and forgiving ourselves and releasing our self from our own self-judgment and condemnation, we become more accessible to show-up for others, to be more reliable, to be kinder to others, and to be more loving.

What blocks me from feeling more love for myself?

Separation is the original wound when we incarnate into a lifetime, physical or non-physical. With separation there is an illusion of unworthiness, unlovability, and feeling undeserving. This causes us take on incarnations, physical and non-physical to play out these belief systems of separation so that we can go from What We Are Not to What We Truly Are. As we experience lifetime upon lifetime, we find ourselves heaping on more suffering and trauma as we move toward our life lessons. The veil of separation can be so dense that we forget who we are, resulting in replaying old programs and belief systems that keep us stuck in suffering.

Some individuals learn their lessons more quickly, some more slowly. We go at the pace that we need. And often we play it out over and over again

until we get the lesson. We will play out these old programs and belief systems until we reach a certain level of enlightenment and then graduate to higher dimensions that are more based in service than in learning lessons.

How can I practice Self Love?

We heal it by going to the level of forgiveness, releasing and letting go of ourselves, others and our life lessons. It's also about learning to see on the soul level that we're all just actors on each other's stages playing out parts and roles for each other's evolution.

How do I let go of unlovability?

Through the process of self-awareness, one becomes aware of the patterns and samskaras that lock us into our versions of false reality. By becoming aware of these patterns we are able to disperse the false illusions and wake up to the truth of our nature, which is Love. It is about recognizing the truth of reality of all Life instead of buying in the illusion that our belief systems are creating models of suffering. All of our lifetimes are opportunities to play out the models of separation, which only causes pain and suffering in the attempt to burn off the illusion and get back to what is real.

When we are in awareness of the truth then our only test is to stay awake and not get tripped or tricked back into delusion. We really don't owe anyone anything. We have to let go of everything and focus on awakening with ourselves. All life comes into right order. We need to maintain living in the truth and staying in that perspective. This allows us to be in pure joy.

For example, if an individual finds themselves in a pattern of unhealthy relationships, repeating the same pattern over and over with different partners, the first step is to become aware that they are playing out a pattern. Becoming aware of the pattern will allow them to open into more freeing decisions about who they are, do they want to stay in this relationship, have they outgrown this relationship, and so on. Through the process of awareness, they can unlock the version of the false reality that has kept them in this cycle.