

30 DAYS to Loving Yourself More

by Janice Lynne Lundy

"You can love others, care for them, encourage them, support them, listen to them, comfort them, joke and argue and cry with them - and I hope you do - but all the gifts of joy and consideration and nurturing that you give to others, you also deserve from yourself. You need the love that only you can give you."

- Daphne Rose Kingma, *Loving Yourself: Four Steps to a Happier You*

Visit www.awakenedliving.com to learn more about Jan, her writing and her events.



I adore this philosophy held by author Daphne Kingma in her marvelous book on self-love. No one has ever said it better. This "truth" seems glaringly obvious, yet, for many of us, but oh so difficult to embrace.

We know we should be kinder and gentler with ourselves - as tender and loving to ourselves as we are toward others. But we're not. We continue to push ourselves beyond all limits, strive for perfection, work too hard, play too little, and expect more from ourselves than we would ever

expect from anyone else. As a result, women continue to exhaust, overwhelm and burn themselves out at a dramatic rate. What can we do?

We may begin by setting new, healthy intentions for ourselves. But, truthfully, intentions may not be enough. To make the shift from self-loathing, criticism, judgment or stinginess, actual baby steps are required - small acts of loving-kindness that jumpstart our self-worth. We deserve our own love, and here are 30 things any of us can do to love ourselves more, one day at a time.

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Eliminate the word "should" from your vocabulary.

Take deep, relaxing breaths when you feel overwhelmed.

Stop when you're tired.

Take a nap when you're really tired.

Make a list of the activities that help you relax and do them more often.

End your day 30 minutes before you retire, so you can detox from the day and get restful sleep.

Take up a new hobby.

Take that class you've been putting off.

Grant yourself permission to play.

Say "no" when you need to, especially to free yourself from obligations that drain your energy.

Say "yes" to going out with female friends.

Eat something truly decadent without guilt.

When you walk past a mirror, smile at yourself.

Get a facial, pedicure or massage - regularly!

Go away all by yourself.

Go on a weekend retreat with other women.

Do nothing that you don't absolutely want to do and stay in your pajamas all day.

Take the biggest, fattest, juiciest piece of chicken on the plate.

Stop saying bad things to yourself about yourself.

Sit in the quiet and enjoy your own company.

Listen to your intuition; honor it and follow it.

Let other people do for themselves; delegate.

Let it all out. Cry. Give yourself permission to feel your feelings.

Accept yourself as you are now.

Compliment yourself.

Listen to music; whirl, twirl and dance by yourself.

Daydream.

Hug yourself.

Buy yourself flowers.

Say "I love you," to yourself once a day - and if you don't really believe - fake it 'til you make it!

And you will make it, I'm sure. If you chip away at this list, in time you will have fallen in love with yourself all over again - or, perhaps, for the very first time. Doesn't that sound grand?

Self-love is not about being selfish or self-absorbed, despite what others might say. Self-love is about being *self-aware*, cognizant of what you need to be happy and well. It is about making choices with *you* in mind, choices that honor the person you are and the woman you hope to be.