



**Madly in Love with Me, the Daring Adventure to Becoming Your Own Best Friend
Question & Answer
with Self-Love Author and Transformational Teacher Christine Arylo**

Isn't loving yourself selfish or narcissistic?

Self-love is so misunderstood. If you looked self-love up in the dictionary, yes, it is defined as conceit, vanity and narcissism but whoever came up that definition has it all wrong. People who do suffer from narcissism or excess vanity actually *lack* love for themselves. Their extreme self-centeredness and unawareness of their impact on others is really a cover for a deep sense of inferiority, a fear of connection and a low self-worth. Thankfully, narcissism isn't contagious and most people don't need to worry about being too selfish. If anything, they need to give to themselves more.

Loving yourself is the same as loving another person, the energy of love is just pointed in a different direction. Think of it this way, you'd never say loving your parents or friends was selfish, and neither is giving love to yourself. Imagine giving love to someone in your life that you deeply care about. Notice how good it feels to give love to that person – in all kinds of ways including affection, caring, acknowledgement, honor, compassion, etc. Now imagine taking that same energy and directing the love at yourself – giving yourself affection, care, acknowledgement, honor, compassion, etc. Same energy. Love is never selfish.

What is self-love? What does it really mean to love yourself?

Some day I will petition the dictionary people to change the definition for self-love, but for now to set the record straight, here's a truthful definition for self-love: Self-love is the unconditional love and respect you have for yourself that is so deep, so solid, so unwavering that you choose only situations and relationships – including the one you have with yourself – that reflect that same unconditional love and respect.

In our culture, there are a lot of words other than self-love that people are much more comfortable using – self-esteem, self-awareness, self-care, self-worth, self-compassion – words that many people mistakenly believe are the same as self-love. While all the ideas expressed by these words are components of self-love, none alone is a synonym for self-love. Love is a specific, un-paralleled, and all-powerful vibration, and none of these aspects of self-love has that power on their own – but put them together and WOW! You've got a tree of self-love!

Okay, so say I do believe that loving myself is a good idea, how do I actually do it?

Once a person gets that loving themselves is a good idea, and they get past all that fear around it being selfish or vain, they always ask, "How do I love myself?" Self-love can feel so vast and esoteric and it can get thrown around casually, "Oh, sure I love myself," when if you were to look at that person's life you would see the areas where they do choose love and where they don't act lovingly towards themselves. Loving yourself isn't black and white, as in either you are a person who does or



**Madly in Love with Me, the Daring Adventure to Becoming Your Own Best Friend
Question & Answer
with Self-Love Author and Transformational Teacher Christine Arylo**

doesn't. It isn't some nirvana state you master and achieve and then can just forget about. Loving yourself is a choice you make, or don't, in every moment of every day for the rest of your life.

The first step is to become aware of the ways in which you are a rock star at being a best friend to yourself and the ways that you have a hard time making choices and taking actions that align with love. To make this accessible and tangible for people, I teach the 10 Branches of Self-Love and guide people how to identify where they are weak so they can GROW their self-love in this place, and also how to identify where they are strong, so they can make KEEP the love flowing, and also make sure they don't over-rely on any one branch, which will throw you out of balance.

You say that it's possible to have too much self-esteem. What do you mean?

Self-esteem is the strong belief in and regard for yourself. It is a strong confidence in your ability to do and be anything. And while we definitely want to foster self-esteem (it wasn't that long ago that self-esteem wasn't a common culturally acceptable ideal), self-esteem on it's own is not enough – it's only 1/10th of the self-love equation.

Without self-compassion, you can have tons of self-esteem, but you will be extremely hard on yourself. We are creating a culture of hardened high achievers failing to use the power of the tools of the heart – equating confidence to strength and compassion to weakness, which just isn't true. Today, women and children are extremely emotionally hard on themselves, driven by the unrealistic expectations to do, be and have it all. And with little training and understanding of self-compassion, they silently beat themselves up, all the while appearing like they have it all together to the outside world.

You need all 10 branches of self-love – self awareness & honesty, self-acceptance, self-care, self-compassion & forgiveness, self-trust, self-esteem, self-empowerment, self-respect & self-honor, self-pleasure, and self-expression cared for, nurtured and fully blooming.

How do you cultivate a strong and independent sense of self-worth?

The first stage of cultivating a really strong and independent self-worth is making sure that all 10 of your self-love branches are in a healthy state. They may not all be fully blooming, but they are headed in the right direction, which means that you need to be aware of how your life is supporting these aspects of yourself – or not – each being essential to your happiness and health.

So as not to activate the over-achiever gene or send anyone into overwhelm, I recommend choosing one branch of self-love to focus on for a given time frame, and creating a 40-day self-love practice around it. 40-days is the minimum amount of time – as the yogi's, brain scientists, and



**Madly in Love with Me, the Daring Adventure to Becoming Your Own Best Friend
Question & Answer
with Self-Love Author and Transformational Teacher Christine Arylo**

metaphysicians agree that is the amount of time it takes to identify and release a self-sabotaging habit. And then, if you want to replace that with a new self-loving habit, 120 days is even better.

As you heal and grow the branches of your tree, the entire tree as well as the roots will flourish. Increasing your self-compassion will have a positive affect on your self-care and ability to value what is really important to you. Growing your self-empowerment will increase your self-expression, you will feel more seen and as a result more valued or who you truly are.

The second stage is all about Knowing Your Worth. This doesn't happen overnight – coming back to your true self-worth is a profound spiritual journey but there are some powerful and accessible places to start including:

- Removing the toxins of judgment and unrealistic expectations – they gotta go!
- Giving up Comparison and Embracing your unique divine imprint – and how valuable that is.
- Embracing the truth of who you are, why you are here and how valuable that really is
- Redefining success and happiness on your terms
- Taking bold and courageous acts to get your life into alignment with your heart and soul
- Believing the truth you were born knowing – you are enough, just as you are. There is only one you, and that too is enough.

Why do so many smart women end up in bad relationships? And how can women stop this pattern, or keep their daughters or friends from making those mistakes?

Unfortunately, smart women of all ages end up in bad relationships a lot because they have low self-respect and self-honor and because they don't know how to give love to themselves. Not knowing how to give love to themselves, they'd rather be with anyone than be alone, they'd rather avoid or plug up their emotional wounds with an unhealthy relationship than have to feel to heal.

Additionally, without a strong self-respect and self-honor, a woman will put herself into situations that are verbally, emotionally even physically abusive. She will settle for less than what her heart and soul desires, honoring another's desires over her own, and as a result selling out her own happiness to keep the love of another.

The best cure for ourselves and for our daughters and friends is to teach them at least these two things: 1. Respect is not optional in relationships. It's mandatory. Require it, without apology. 2. "You are sacred. Your body, your spirit, your heart, your life are like a sacred temple. Adore them. Honor



**Madly in Love with Me, the Daring Adventure to Becoming Your Own Best Friend
Question & Answer
with Self-Love Author and Transformational Teacher Christine Arylo**

them. And protect them without apology.” And then support her to know, feel and embody respect and sacredness. And then do the same for yourself – reclaim your sacredness.

When a person sees themselves as sacred, they gain the power to demand that sacredness be honored, by everyone, including themselves. There is something magical and deeply spiritual about treating yourself as sacred and requiring that same energy in all of your romantic relationships.

With all the information out there about taking care of yourself and being healthy why do women especially have such a hard time giving themselves permission to actually do the things they know they should do to take care of themselves?

Most women know what they need to do to take good care of – replenish, nourish, nurture – themselves, they just literally cannot give themselves *permission* to do so. It’s not the information they’re missing, it’s the permission to do what a best friend would do in an instant, tell us “Honey, take a break, take care of yourself, the rest will wait. I insist!”

The reason most of have such a hard time following through on what we know we need, is because even though we *want* it, we don’t *value* it. We value giving over receiving. Doing over being. Why? Because we’ve been reading from the wrong handbooks -- the Self Sacrifice Handbook and the Self Esteem Handbook instead of the Self-Love Handbook. The former ascribes that we must give, and give and give to others, and then give some more, until there is nothing left. Only when we have given all we have, have we given enough. This Self-Sacrifice Handbook works from the mantra “It’s better to give *than* receive” rather than “It’s better to give *and* receive.” Hence why we have little problem *giving* care, nourishment, nurturing to others, but the thought of giving this love to ourselves comes with a big guilt sandwich. Driven by the belief that it’s good and honorable to give to others, and selfish to give to ourselves, it’s no wonder it’s so hard to give ourselves the care we need.

The Self-Esteem Handbook makes matters worse by equating our value with how much we do, the more we do the better and more valuable we are. There is no chapter in this handbook about valuing ourselves based on “being,” no lessons on relaxing or how to have more impact by doing less. So when we find ourselves not doing, we start questioning our value and worth. Our value has become equated to how much we can get done in a day or a week or achieve in a lifetime legacy. So if we aren’t actively pursuing something or being busy, we feel bad, like we should be doing something.

Next time you find yourself having trouble giving yourself permission to take care of yourself, take a b.f.f. daring act of love and ask and answer this question, “What do you need to take care of yourself today?” And then make sure that you receive it – no matter what!



**Madly in Love with Me, the Daring Adventure to Becoming Your Own Best Friend
Question & Answer
with Self-Love Author and Transformational Teacher Christine Arylo**

Is it true that you actually got the day before Valentines Day - February 13th – officially dedicated to be the international day of self-love? What’s this all about?

With SO much attention given to Feb 14th and Valentines Day, and frankly a day that currently causes more suffering than happiness, I knew we needed the day before to be a day when people could take their love power back – to get that they are loved even without a romantic partner – and a day when people could fill themselves up first with love so they had extra to give.

On Feb 13th, I invite people to choose one branch of self-love and make a promise to themselves that will help them grow that branch all year long. These promises give people an anchor point to come back to during their day to day life, to choose love. For example, if your branch is self-pleasure, your promise might be “I choose to have fun and do what brings me joy no matter how much work there is to do.” Or if your branch is self-care your promise could be “I promise to ask myself what I need and then take action to give that care to myself.”

Every February, our team, Team Love goes on the road and holds self-love-a-poolza’s, and our Love Ambassadors around the world throw self-love parties of their own. Last year 500 people threw parties in 31 countries and 41 states. Which makes for a lot of people taking and keeping the promise to love themselves all year long.

What advice would you give to a mother raising her child, to teach them how to love themselves?

Love yourself, she will watch you and follow your actions. Tell her how sacred she is. Encourage her to follow her heart. Teach her to source love from within. Talk to her about comparison and why it’s crazy – there is no one else like her and that’s a good thing! Show her where her value comes from by valuing being as much as you do doing. Listen to her, and teach her to trust her inner wisdom, even over your own opinions. See her, really see her for who she is, not a reflection of you, but a unique imprint of divine love. Empower her to follow her heart, even when it makes no sense to anyone else. Make her feel loved, no matter what.

Madly in Love with Me by Christine Arylo

November 12, 2012 • Women’s Interest/Self-Help • 352 pages • Trade Paperback Price: \$16.95 • ISBN 978-1-60868-065-8