

## A PRAYER FOR SELF-LOVE

*"No matter what the problem, the main issue to work on is LOVING THE SELF. This is the "magic wand" that dissolves problems. ...LOVING YOURSELF MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD. It is impossible to really love yourself unless you have self-approval and self-acceptance. This means no criticism whatsoever."*

--From *You can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay

*"To practice Extreme Self-Care, you must learn to love yourself unconditionally, accept your imperfections, and embrace your vulnerabilities. From a spiritual perspective, it's about recognizing that you're a soul in a physical body who's here to learn to be more of who you really are. When you treat and view yourself with the respect you deserve, you experience the peace that comes from being present to yourself."*

-- Adapted from *The Art of Extreme Self-Care* by Cheryl Richardson

It's no wonder that Louise Hay and Cheryl Richardson collaborated recently on a book called *You Can Create An Exceptional Life*. A major theme in both of their work is how important it is to love ourselves. That is easier said than done. Many of us don't know how to be loving and kind to ourselves. We grew up in homes where criticism and the withholding of love and approval was the norm. We modeled this behavior and criticize and withhold love and approval from ourselves and others.

I have spent decades learning about self-help and transformation but it was all in a quest to improve and fix myself. It is only recently that I have realized that self-love is the key to lasting transformation. My body was the gateway to this realization. For years, I have dealt with an auto-immune condition and been angry and upset at my body and how it was "not" functioning. One day my body started to talk to me. Or more accurately, one day I began to hear my body and as I listened it began to teach me about the possibility of creating an entirely new relationship with my body and myself.

In *You Can Create an Exceptional Life*, Cheryl Richardson discovers what Louise Hay's daily practice and philosophy is that has allowed her to create the extraordinary life she has. Louise and Cheryl give numerous suggestions about how to practice self-love. At the core of them is the practice of awareness. Monitor your thoughts and self-talk, stop criticizing and judging yourself and love yourself.

Louise is a firm believer in affirmations. Affirmations are placed around her house, said when she wakes up, goes to the bathroom, in the kitchen, in the car, and at every moment of her life. Oprah, during an interview with Cheryl and Louise, said she found some of them silly. And I did too. At the same time, Louise is someone I admire and she has created such an exceptional life that I figured it was worth doing first a day, then a week in the life of Louise Hay and see what the experience was like.

I use affirmations but intermittently or so I thought. Louise points out that we are actually making affirmations all the time. "Too many people think you need to go somewhere to quietly focus on affirmations," Louise explains, "but we're doing affirmations all the time. Everything we think and say to ourselves is an affirmation. We need to be conscious of what we're saying and thinking all the time so that life can get better."

The book emphasizes how important how we start our day is. “How you start your day is how you live your day” and encourages us to make conscious choices in terms of what we say and think all the time so we can improve our lives. It teaches us that we can “program what we want to have happen rather than leave it to chance.” Louise shows us how we can use affirmations all day to create the experiences *we want to have* and change a negative experience into a positive one in the moment it is happening rather than simply accept the negative experience.

Another practice that Louise encourages is mirror work. Apparently she has mirrors placed all around her house, including in her office at her desk. I decided that this was a habit I would copy since I spend a lot of time at my desk talking to myself as my day unfolds! Talking to yourself in the mirror and sending loving messages to yourself is a way of developing a deeper and more enjoyable relationship with yourself. According to Louise, “The mirror needs to become a companion, a friend instead of an enemy.”

There are so many suggestions in the book it can seem overwhelming but I decided to use Louise’s suggestions of “focus(ing) on making small, positive changes that make us feel better along the way.” I discovered that doing a day “the Louise Hay” way, does help to shift your thinking and makes the day more enjoyable. Doing a week “the Louise Hay way” begins to lay down new neural pathways in the brain as you develop new habits.

I found that after a week, I was more comfortable with mirror work and even had fun talking to myself in the mirror and acting as my own cheerleader. I did feel good about myself and it made me kinder and more loving to myself. And, as spiritual law dictates, I continue to attract even more love into my life.

I am now beginning a month living the Louise Hay way? Will you join me?

## **A PRAYER FOR SELF LOVE**

*Right where I am, just as I am,  
I am whole, complete and perfect.  
I am One with the Source of All Life  
The Universe loves me and provides for all of my needs.  
I love life and life loves me.  
As I love myself, I am loved.*

*I forgive myself for any mistakes I have made  
I am grateful for this moment  
How wonderful to be able to create life anew.  
I choose to think good thoughts all day long  
I trust my inner guidance to guide me in each and every moment  
Every day in every way, my life gets better and better  
I am safe. I am fully  
supported and provided for.  
As I love myself so I am loved.*

*I am grateful for my amazing body  
I am grateful for harmonious relationships  
I am grateful for so many opportunities  
I am grateful for the abundance and prosperity in my life  
I am grateful for EVERYTHING.  
My life is so blessed  
Only good lies before me.  
I am safe and I am loved.  
As I love myself, so I am loved*