

THE POWER OF SELF-LOVE

Why the relationship you have with yourself is the cornerstone of a happy, successful, and authentic life, and Six Steps you can take to cultivate self-love

*By Dr. Monica Vermani, C. Psych, Clinical Psychologist &
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As Valentine's Day approaches, and we're flooded with romantic notions of the perfect love, many of us are wondering if we'll ever find it, and, for those of us with a partner, how to keep it alive. We are bombarded with idealized depictions of lonely people finally finding that certain someone who "completes them," someone they "can't live without," and that they will have "nothing to live for" should that miraculous individual ever leave them!

What a healthy romantic partnership is not

Film and television shows are rife with cautionary tales of dangerous, violent pathological liars, serial cheaters, and shady characters in toxic relationships, from The Soprano's Tony and his long-suffering wife, and Sex and the City's Carrie and Mr. Big, to Better Call Saul's Kim and Jimmy, who seem to bring out the worst in one another repeatedly. Mismatched and ill-fated — romances like the terrified wife in hiding from her axe-wielding husband in The Shining, to the miserable couple in Gone Girl abound.

Although less cinematically, all too often, real-life love stories include needless suffering, due to a lack [of self-esteem](#), mutual respect, and healthy [boundary setting](#). The question is, how can we set the stage for finding and sustaining a healthy and loving partnership?

Setting the stage for a loving relationship

In order to love truly someone else, we must first love ourselves. I like to advise my patients that, especially where self-love is concerned, love is a verb. It is all about doing for ourselves what we often do for others. When we consistently tune into our feelings, pay attention to how we talk to ourselves, and prioritize our needs, we cultivate self-love and self-connection.

Self-love involves acting with compassion and caring, just as we would treat someone we love. Self-love involves setting, communicating, and reinforcing healthy [boundaries](#) around our finite resources of time and energy, prioritizing our goals and needs, processing negative emotions as they arise, and challenging our negative [self-talk](#) and self-defeating patterns of behavior.

The ripple effect of self-love

When we're kind and loving to ourselves, we move forth with greater self-awareness and self-confidence, and we create a ripple effect. The kindness we show to ourselves expands and embodies the message that we are present, confident, compassionate, authentic kind... and worthy of and ready to love.

SIX STEPS TO SELF-LOVE

Make time to pause and reflect. Check in with yourself on tough days. Sit with and process your negative emotions.

Resist the urge to compare yourself to others. Self-comparison is a form of negative self-talk that can lead to lowered states of self-esteem and courage. Instead, when you see someone who you admire and has achieved what you wish for yourself, consider them an example of what you can achieve.

Engage in positive self-talk, and challenge negative thoughts and beliefs. Replace negative thoughts and self-limiting beliefs about who you are, with more accurate, adaptive, and supportive ones.

Set healthy boundaries. Healthy boundaries are essential to ensuring you have the time and energy to manage your life tasks, responsibilities, and self-care.

Go outside yourself for support. Seek out the resources you need when you are struggling and overwhelmed. Trusting yourself to find the supports you need deepens your resolve to be there for yourself stronger and deeper.

Take the time to get to know you. Find hobbies, activities, and interests that inspire you and bring you joy. Factor joy into the equation of your life.


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About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker, columnist and advocate in the field of mental health and wellness.

Her book, *A Deeper Wellness*, is currently available for pre-sale on

Amazon, <https://www.book.a deeperwellness.com/> and her in-depth online self-help program,

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