

BE YOUR OWN BIGGEST FAN

Fall in love with yourself and see and feel the benefits

Words Sarah Marinos

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR A HAPPIER, HEALTHIER YOU

- ✦ “Monitor your self-talk, catch yourself being self-critical and change your language,” executive coach Lindsay Tighe says. “If you had a friend who talked to you like you talk to yourself, you wouldn’t have them as a friend for long. I call myself sweetheart, like I call my friends, and I change the tone of voice in my head to be kinder and less critical. It’s amazing what a difference it makes!”
- ✦ Keep a gratitude journal and record your achievements and attributes. Use it to remind yourself of what you are capable of when you face challenging situations, Lindsay adds.
- ✦ Put some self-care practices in place and connect with people who make you feel good. As author and US research professor Brene Brown notes, there are people in life who want to blow out our candle; others put their hands around the candle to protect our light. Debbie advises: “Spend time with people who share your interests and values, make time for a morning swim or study something you’ve put off. Listen to music that makes you happy and have good conversations.”
- ✦ Honour yourself first instead of trying to please everyone else. “Enforce boundaries and be clear about what you want,” Kris says. “How often do you do things that light up your soul?”
- ✦ “When someone pays you a compliment, accept it instead of playing it down or dismissing it,” Lindsay says.
- ✦ “Have a vision of what you want your life to shift to and when you get out of bed and go to bed, picture that vision,” Debbie says. “As you make small changes in that direction, it creates a ripple effect and gives you momentum. As you see changes and people notice those, that gives you more motivation.”
- ✦ “For every negative thought that enters your head, introduce two positive ideas to counteract it. If that negative voice says ‘you look terrible today’ respond with ‘but my eyes are bright and I really like the outfit I’m wearing,’” Kris suggests.

When you look in the mirror, how do you feel about the person staring back at you?

Do you look at your reflection and feel comfortable, or do you automatically notice a shopping list of perceived flaws and imperfections?

If you don’t love who you are, the repercussions affect your self-esteem, personal relationships, work performance, dreams and goals, and how much enjoyment you get from life day to day.

Showing yourself love and kindness is powerful.

US scientists at Stanford University say showing ourselves the understanding that we often show friends and loved ones builds resilience, makes us more productive, reduces stress and brings greater happiness.

What does loving yourself mean?

“Loving yourself is being OK with your uniqueness and being comfortable with who you are and how you show up in your life,” The Self-Worth Coach Debbie Hogg says. “It’s being comfortable with how you are in

your personal relationships and at work,” Debbie says.

“When you love yourself, it creates ripples that give you the confidence to step into new situations and to feel comfortable. It helps you put up your hand and say ‘pick me,’ and it gives you the strength to say enough is enough when something doesn’t sit right.

“The more we love ourselves, the more we believe in ourselves and the more we get out of life.”

What destroys self-love?

Throughout life, unsatisfying and disappointing experiences eat away at how much love we have for who we are.

Self-love can be perceived as being “big headed” or selfish and might be criticised. And unhappy relationships and rejection can leave us feeling judged, ashamed and never good enough.

These feelings become ingrained and we overlook our positive qualities and magnify what we see as our deficiencies.

“Our unconscious mind tells us we don’t deserve what we

want. So, people may feel they aren’t worthy of being loved by someone else,” life coach Kris Byrnes explains.

“These feelings also impact our health — because we don’t love ourselves enough we might not bother to exercise, eat the most nutritious foods and take care of ourselves.”

Signs your self-love needs a boost

If you go from one unhealthy relationship to another, your self-love level may be running low, Debbie notes.

“You stay in a toxic relationship because you feel there’s nothing else out there for you,” she says.

“Self-sabotage and procrastination are also warning signs — you put off making decisions because you feel powerless to make changes.

“You may take excessive risks because you don’t care and you may not be able to take compliments — you brush them off because you don’t deserve them.”

Negative chatter in your head and berating yourself for not doing and being better are also enemies of self-love.