

## The Higher Meaning of Self-love



Each creature is endowed with the love for itself, which lies at the base of its survival instinct. But are we terrified of death because we love living, or because we cherish our own existence? Or is it a combination of both of these? Either way, the question still remains: Why would people cherish their own existence and love living if the majority of their lives is suffering? Do they just choose to ignore their suffering and focus on what is pleasant, positive, and fulfilling? Well, we are not really choosing anything, because our desire to keep living is an entirely unconscious and instinctive compulsion.

People have developed many strategies to deal with the negative sides of life so that they can bear their suffering, while at the same time striving to experience and enjoy what is positive as much as this limited dimension allows them to. But deep down, all beings love to exist because their sense of me is in love with its own continuance. Self-love is imprinted in the very fabric of existence, and each individual is the vessel and vehicle of that love.

Each human being has a sense of me (just enough to know that they exist), but that sense of me is ordinarily in a completely fragmented state. It is because of this fragmentation that we are not actually conscious of our self-love, never mind the true meaning of it. We love ourselves enough in an unconscious way to strive to keep living, but our self-love is misdirected into seeking gratification through external fulfillment. People almost always equate their degree of happiness with the amount of satisfaction they obtain from the external world. In short, the impulse of their unconscious self-love is a continual striving to improve their level of physical and psychological contentment, which is then reflected back to their sense of me. They love their me enough to make all of the sacrifices required to provide it with as many of the rewards that the world can give them, while desperately trying to minimize, ignore, or repress the suffering which is an inescapable part of human life.



But does such behavior really express self-love? It is a mere shadow of real self-love, a faint echo of it at best, experienced only subconsciously and limited to being exclusively identified with personality.

## Psychological Self-love

While personality is only our superficial expression in the relative plane, it is still important to learn how to love ourselves on the psychological level, including forgiving ourselves and dissolving any self-destructive tendencies we may have. It is common for seekers who fail to progress or who find themselves still stuck in the subconscious mind at times to judge and blame themselves for not being good enough. They waste an enormous amount of time processing feelings of guilt instead of devoting themselves to their practice. They take their relationship with the path too personally, and their ego keeps disturbing their inner work.

It is only natural for us to want to follow our higher intention, including developing the qualities of a true seeker, but human beings are complex, and we carry numerous tendencies with us from the past when we enter the spiritual path. The inevitable confrontation between our spiritual aspirations and our mental and emotional hang-ups creates an inner conflict that usually leads to excessive self-criticism. But the constant judging of ourselves will not manifest inner transformation. It only adds more layers of negativity to the psyche, disrupting and delaying our progress. Human psychology is so complicated that even when we cannot love ourselves, the mind will use this failure to justify even more self-judgment. It is strange, but it is a reality for many meditators.

Ego is like a child who constantly needs to be externally and internally reassured that it is good enough. It is filled with doubts about its self-worth, and it is continually compensating in all kinds of ways. Some seekers carry such strong feelings of unworthiness from their childhood that they actually believe they are not worthy of awakening and attaining peace.

Another trick the ego plays is that as soon as it notices these negative patterns, it decides that some special healing is necessary. This is often no more than a delay tactic, another justification for indulging in self-negativity. The ego is incapable of healing itself, and the absence of self-love cannot be healed. While some psychological work can occasionally be beneficial, it can only serve to make us more conscious of some of the emotional patterns in our psyche. It cannot result in self-love. Self-love is a choice that has to be made deep down in the structure of our psychological self. To make this choice, one has to renounce the part of the psyche that is sabotaging our emotional health and integrity. An ego that lives in self-denial is like a parasite feeding on our inner self, and it has to be removed from the healthy body of the soul.

Ego is generally either feeling sorry for itself or blaming itself. It will use any means to stay in control. Weak and insincere seekers will keep feeding this ego in spite of all the suffering it causes them. This is nothing but ignorance. To create a positive relationship with oneself is a prerequisite for psychological sanity, and this is achieved by constantly reinforcing self-love. The mind has to be deconditioned of its negativity and reconditioned through self-affirmation. Real self-affirmation is not about the mind talking to itself, trying to convince the ego how wonderful and successful it is, like in those New Age 'affirmations'. True self-affirmation is about a gentle and loving energy-emotion directed to our existence, accompanied by the immediate letting go of any negativity arising in the mind. It is not done by the mind, but rather points to a radical



surrender of the mind-based sense of self to our real me. However, because the mind's deep-seated negativity is compulsive and automatic, a certain amount discipline is called for to catch it when it arises and to let it dissolve back into the nothingness where it belongs.

Of course, when walking the path, one must also be both critical and discriminative. One must assess one's progress honestly and recognize areas that still need to be transformed. For instance, when one fails to stabilize pure consciousness, even though one may have been working with it for years, one must acknowledge that one has let oneself be overly distracted with worldly matters or that one has simply been lazy. Or when one is unable to meet the light of me within oneself, one must look inside, confront the issue, and attempt to discover what is blocking it.

Self-criticism arising from such self-honesty must not be in conflict with self-love. To keep criticizing oneself is masochistic and spiritually damaging. To put it bluntly, it is just foolish. Self-criticism must always be balanced with self-forgiveness, but not the kind of self-forgiveness that allows one to continue being lazy or justifies indulging in past negative tendencies. The role of self-forgiveness is to let the past go and open a loving and intelligent relationship with the now. Who we are becoming is a direct manifestation of the higher choices that we are making in each new now. Self-forgiveness is necessary to empower the potential of the intelligence of the now.

Then, when one comes to identify a lack of progress or having become lost in one's lower nature, self-criticism must again be activated and simultaneously balanced with self-forgiveness. Here, self-love follows any objective assessment of our shortcomings with letting them go through self-forgiveness, rather than becoming stuck in dwelling on them mentally. This empowers the capacity of our now. As for self-forgiveness, it is not a psychological game where the mind forgives itself by talking to itself. Self-forgiveness means that after recognizing our flaws, we immediately move on by returning to our non-psychological identity and state. Self-love is a natural manifestation of our basic goodness. It gives rise to constructive and healthy action, while freeing us from dwelling on the past (including the immediate past).

It must be kept in mind that although it is possible to experience self-love on the level of personality, it is a very low level of self-love. Without having access to the light of me (through a state of subjectivity beyond the mind), the inherent negativity of the mind can never be fully uprooted.

## Spiritual Self-love

While it is healthy to love oneself on the human level, true self-love is about something infinitely more profound. It penetrates into the mystery of the relationship of me with its own light. In order for such love to be possible, the dimension of me, the dimension of pure subjectivity, has to first be awakened and entered. The instinct to be reunited with me is the source of our spiritual longing, the ancient call of self-remembrance. To genuinely be on the path, one must recognize the tremendous value of me as the essence of our very existence. To awaken spiritually, it is imperative that we seek and find the living reality of our higher individuality beyond personality. The level of our spiritual maturity is measured by our ability to meet the light of me and by embodying our true subjectivity.

Many seekers are in pursuit of peace and fulfillment, but their search is not rooted in self-remembrance. They want to realize god, emptiness, or nirvana, but not their own self. They think



they are nothing, and all they want is to disappear into, or be replaced by, the universal self. This is self-negation, the opposite of self-love. It is the absence of self-love that causes most seekers to fail on the path, having been motivated by the wrong intention. There are also those who experience spontaneous shifts into various states beyond the mind, but without meeting their own self, their experiences are only impersonal ones which, as such, also fail in actualizing self-love.

Unless we honor who we are and seek to merge with our own existence, we are still not on a real path of self-realization. There is no such thing as realization of the universal self without realization of the individual self, since it is the individual self that experiences the universal reality. Even to recognize the light of me, we must be spiritually mature and possess the capacity for intimacy with our pure subjectivity. When a seeker remains identified with the observer, whatever he experiences is still only registered by his relative and superficial sense of me. An essential aspect of awakening is surrendering to our pure nature. It is not enough just to recognize it, because our relative self has to be merged with our higher self for it be embodied and become our living reality.

It is an astounding and tragic omission that most teachings on the subject of enlightenment fail to speak about the importance of awakening our me, our soul. Because seekers are uneducated about the true purpose of the path, their intelligence cannot be directed towards the realization of their pure subjectivity. How can they realize self-love if they never discover who they are and do not even know that they are meant to love their own existence?

## Multidimensional Self-love

Because we are multidimensional, self-love is also multidimensional. Our true self is evolving and expanding into a complete soul. The energy of self-love flows to our pure subjectivity and the source through the light of pure attention. It is also through pure attention that conscious me awakens, and it then flows into all of the centers of pure me through their surrender to universal subjectivity. Pure attention is the dynamic aspect of self-love that allows all of the dimensions of me to be unified and illuminated with love. Our spiritual effort to evolve into our light is itself an act of self-love based on our instinctive wisdom and discriminative intelligence, and this very light uses pure attention as its vehicle.

While the culmination of self-love is the merging with our individual light, to be truly actualized it must be realized in our unity with the universal subjectivity as well. In higher self-love, there is no distinction between the self-love realized as our individual self and the self-love realized as the universal self with which we have merged with through our surrender. To love I am and to love me are two sides of the same love. They cannot be separated, even though there are times when one needs to be emphasized more than the other. Before we can evolve into samadhi in the beyond, we must embody the light of me, or else surrender on its own will dissolve our soul and lead to negative absorption. And yet it is always our individual me that is our very foundation. Our ability to meet this me as the most cherished substance of our identity is the flowering of becoming real, which itself is a direct manifestation of true sincerity.



## Self-love and Sincerity

Arriving at self-love ends the long cycle of self-negation, a habitual activity inherent in ignorance. Not living a life based in self-love is nothing less than insincerity and self-betrayal caused by a failure to acknowledge the relationship of me with its own identity. Unless we honor who we are and strengthen our resolve to serve our highest good, we will keep sabotaging our own soul and worshipping the false self in spite of all the pain it creates. This false self, our ego, constantly doubts its own self-worth, and it lives through continual and desperate struggles in the mind for self-justification through an acceptable self-image.

The seemingly interminable reign of the ego as our false identity must be put to an end through the radical surrender into our pure subjectivity. Everything that is linked to such energies of hypocrisy and insincerity must be renounced through a choice from the depth of our being to live from now on in the complete and unconditional love of who we are. From this love comes a natural surrender to universal reality, which is the true foundation of our divine nature.

By entering samadhi in universal subjectivity, we become one with the self-love of the transcendental self, and in that exalted union, the love of the soul merges with the love of the creator. From the beginning of the path to its very end, it is self-love that is our constant companion and the gateway to our real freedom.

Blessings,  
Anadi

*For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website [www.anaditeaching.com/glossary](http://www.anaditeaching.com/glossary)*