

Steps to Self Acceptance

By Gayle North

Individuals who come in to do coaching with me are generally very functional successful people who want to make a positive change in one or two areas of their lives that are not meeting their own personal standards. The specific situations vary, but there is a common pattern among all of us when we are not experiencing the success we want. The common pattern usually is represented by varying levels of criticism and anger toward self and/or others.

The first step in creating positive change is to begin to uncover hidden beliefs – which are often limiting beliefs about our selves or about "how life is" - and replace those faulty beliefs with beliefs that are closer to our true potentiality. As the self criticism and the self doubt from the old belief pattern decreases, the positive change seems to be the new natural way of experiencing things. It is my observation that all of this happens through developing a deeper level of self acceptance.

Until recently the idea of accepting and appreciating yourself was thought to be conceited or sinful. This old puritanical approach has created suffering and unhappiness in the form of addictions, dysfunctional relationships, and failure we have all experienced as we have reached for our true potential in life.

Self criticism and force as an approach to self-improvement, simply does not work. In my work as a Positive Change Coach, I notice that only self-acceptance provides the energetic foundation and the clarity needed for positive change to occur.

Learning to accept our self deeply and completely is a process. Our higher potential can be reached through gradually letting go of limiting beliefs and initiating the practice of a kinder approach to self development. Be patient with yourself as you practice the following tips from Louise Hay. (A few comments of my own are in brackets.)

STOP ALL CRITICISM. Criticism never changes a thing. Refuse to criticize yourself. Accept yourself exactly the way you are. Everybody changes. When you criticize yourself, your changes are negative. When you approve of yourself, your changes are positive. *(As you let up on yourself you will also notice that you criticize others less also and your relationships will magically improve.)*

DON'T SCARE YOURSELF. Stop terrorizing yourself with your thoughts. It's a dreadful way to live. Find a mental image that gives you pleasure and immediately switch your scary thought to a more pleasant thought. *(Practice focusing on thoughts that make you feel good for longer and longer periods of time to gently guide yourself into a sustained joyful state.)*

BE GENTLE AND KIND AND PATIENT. Be gentle with yourself. Be kind to yourself as you learn new ways of thinking. Treat yourself as you would someone you really loved. *(Be your own best friend.)*

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND. Self-hatred is the result of hating your own thoughts. Don't hate yourself for having the thoughts. Gently change your thoughts. *(Just notice the thought and say "Even though I have chosen negative thoughts in the past, I love and accept myself deeply and completely.")*

PRAISE YOURSELF. Criticism breaks down the inner spirit. Praise builds it up. Praise yourself as much as you can. Tell yourself how well you are doing with even little things. *(Make a list of 10 things you like about yourself.)*

FIND WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF. Reach out to friends and allow them to help you. It is being strong to ask for help when you need it. *(If old unwanted patterns persist, consider positive change coaching to clear them.)*

BE LOVING TO YOUR NEGATIVES. Acknowledge that you created them to fulfill a need. Now you are finding new, positive ways to fulfill those needs. So lovingly release the old negative patterns. *(And replace them with new healthy patterns by focusing on what you prefer.)*

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. Learn about nutrition. What kind of fuel does your body need to have optimum energy and vitality? Learn about exercise. What kind of exercise can you enjoy? Cherish and revere the temple you live in. *(Your relationship with your own body is your primary relationship and sets the tone for relationships with others.)*

MIRROR WORK. Look into your eyes often. Express the growing sense of love you have for yourself. Forgive yourself. Forgive yourself looking into the mirror. *(If you cannot do this, look deep within yourself for the beliefs that are blocking you.)*

LOVE YOURSELF...DO IT NOW. Don't wait until you get well, or lose the weight, or get the new job, or get out of debt, or find the new relationship. Begin now...and do the best you can.

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