

40 Day LoveFest for You

40 Day
LoveFest

Tina Nies

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ISBN-13: 978-1475228830

ISBN-10: 147522883X

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my always loving and supportive parents, Bob and Kathy. In memory of my father, who as he strived to be average became exceptional, a portion of the proceeds of this book will be donated to the Abraham Low Institute.

This book is also dedicated in memory of the “love house” of my Aunt Maryann, who died just days after I began my first 40 Day LoveFest, and her husband, my Uncle Bill, who died just days before the completion of this book. Thank you for helping me learn to Love Myself through grief and sadness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'm grateful for ALL of my amazing friends and family! My coaches: Cynthia Hatcher, Khama Anku, and Jack Helmuth.

My third grade teacher, Annette Marcinkoski, whose intervention changed my life. Wonderful friends and “editors” Drew Shourd, Christina Hernandez, and Susan Perna. And my dear friend, Kimberly Call for her support and sharing her poem you'll read in Chapter 6.

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PREFACE

This is the 40 Day LoveFest Journal for healing for everyone. Our first book in the LoveFest series was the bestseller 40 Day LoveFest for Christians and included additional spiritual inspiration. But the LoveFest practice itself is just for you – regardless of your spiritual practices.

This is the pure LoveFest practice to help you deepen your relationship with your Self.

What is more important to me than any religious or spiritual teachings is developing the connection between all parts of me: my heart, mind and body... connecting the total me.

Please understand, what I write is from my heart and from my experiences. The 40 Day LoveFest was developed through my personal search to learn to be happier today, regardless of my circumstance, regardless of my past, and not wait for an uncertain future.

It's up to you how you read and use this book.

There are six reading chapters, with optional Deepen the Love Activities to enhance your 40 Day LoveFest. Your personal 40 Day LoveFest journal with optional reflections follows in Chapter 7. You can read this book all the way through in one sitting, and then begin your daily practice of self-love and reflection. You can read Chapter 1, and then jump ahead to the journal to begin. Then each week, go back and read another chapter. Or you can skip around as you desire.

There is no right or wrong way to practice loving yourself!

Sending you love and healing,

Tina

40 Day LoveFest for You
a daily practice of self-love and reflection

1
DO YOU LOVE YOURSELF?

Life is a flower of which love is the honey. Victor Hugo

Love asks me no questions, and gives me endless support.
William Shakespeare

*All, everything that I understand, I understand only because
I love.* Leo Tolstoy

Do you love yourself?

Think about it... do you really love yourself? Do you make decisions based on that love? Do you share your love? Do you accept yourself as you are? Do you forgive yourself when you need to?

Or are you like me... have you forgotten how to love yourself unconditionally? Have you become consumed with getting everything done and with taking care of everyone else? Are you overwhelmed? Do you feel you just can't do all the things you'd love to do?

Do you give and give of yourself, yet feel like you don't get where you'd like to go? Do you feel like you're doing all the right things, yet you don't seem to be reaping what you sow?

If you are like me, before I began my practice of self-love, the next 40 days could be some of the most significant of your life.

What is Love?

I could list many definitions of love, of self-love, of the related self-esteem... but what does self-love mean to you?

For me, loving myself is loving what is, loving myself as I am right now... not when I make more money, become a best-selling author, find my soul mate, have more time, get a new home, travel more, or any other reason I might make up about why I'm not my happiest right now.

Practicing self-love means to me making choices coming from a place of love; to think about consequences before acting impulsively; to think before reacting to hostile situations; to accept and acknowledge me as I am now while I make better choices for my future.

In his book "*Love*" Leo Buscaglia shared:

"Loving oneself does not imply an ego-centered reality like the old witch in *Snow White* who reveled in the process of gazing into her mirror and asking, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all." Loving oneself does mean a genuine interest, caring, concern and respect for oneself. To care about oneself is basic to love. Man loves himself when he sees himself with accuracy, genuinely appreciates what he sees, but is especially excited and challenged with the prospect of what he can become."

That is also the message about self-love you'll find in this book and throughout the inspirations shared here.

It's important to make the distinction between genuine self-love and ego based attitudes that are pervasive in today's society, such as narcissistic personalities, obsessive love, and attitudes of entitlement. People acting in those ways do not love themselves in a healthy, positive, unconditional way. They are not interested in their personal well-being, their success, and their happiness.

If every individual practiced self-love, the world would be different. I believe there would be more peace, people would work together better, and people would love and respect each other more. So why doesn't everyone love themselves?

Many believe that it's too hard. I used to believe that too. I thought, "how can I love myself when I just messed everything up, when I made a bad choice, when I hurt someone I love, when I incurred too much debt, when I got sick, when I didn't keep my word, when I..." The excuses were endless.

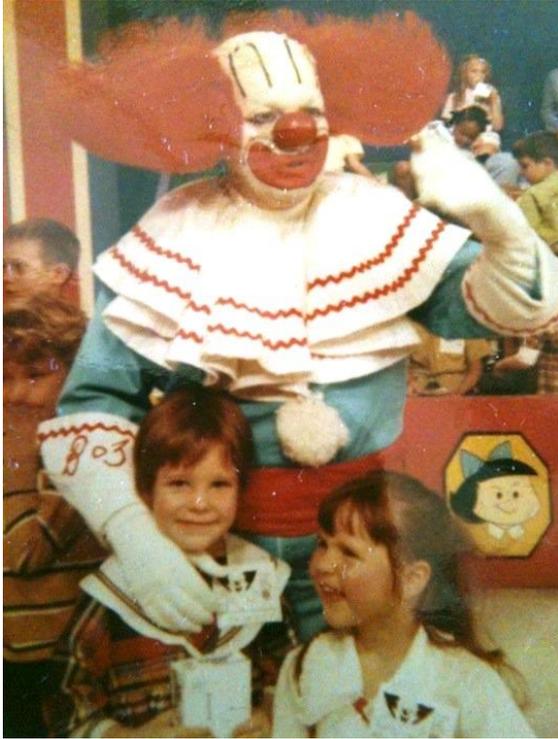
Boy, did I have excuses... good ones too! I haven't always loved myself and I haven't always made good choices.

For a long time, I didn't even believe I could be happy. Happiness and love weren't in my thoughts. I sometimes desperately wanted to feel better, but I didn't know what that would mean or feel like or look like.

There were times when I didn't even care if I ever felt better. Those low levels of depression caused me (and I've seen it true for others) to make destructive choices. While I never intentionally set out to hurt anyone, I have. While I never intentionally set out to lie or to steal, I did.

How did I finally get to the place I am now?
How did I learn to LOVE myself unconditionally?

Before I share the LoveFest practice that can change your life, I want to tell you a little more about my story...



While this picture is more than 40 years old and not the best printed quality here, I love this picture of me (on the right) and my aunt and best friend, Christina Hernandez, with Bozo the clown; I was 3 or 4. We were adorable and in the picture, I have a wonderful smile on my face. Friends today have commented it is the perfect picture of me – just as they would imagine me as a child: happy, carefree, just being love... not even envious of the prize Christina won!

That is not the picture that continued as I grew older. In fact, there are many years with either zero pictures because I didn't like myself or the way I looked, or pictures of an unhappy child. One that comes to mind instantly is a picture of me at Halloween, probably about 8 or 9 years old. I was wearing a witch costume and I had the hat pulled down over my face, the pointed end sticking out like a long nose, a frown can be seen below the hat, and my shoulders were slightly hunched over. I did not practice love of any kind. I was mean, I was unhappy and I was on a path to juvenile delinquency. Seriously.

In third grade, I was a terror to my teacher, Miss Marcinkoski at Civic Park Elementary School in a working class neighborhood in Flint, Michigan. I got into fights; I talked back; I even stole from the neighborhood market, the Double D. I stole often, it didn't matter to me. I never thought about it as right or wrong, I didn't think about it at all. I think that is what happens when a person has SO little self-love that they hate themselves. How could I possibly even consider right and wrong when I hated myself!

It wasn't until I got caught stealing one day, that I stopped stealing. I didn't stop because it was wrong to steal; I stopped because I was embarrassed I was caught. Again, I didn't love myself, even in third grade, so how could I care about other people or their property?

In third grade, I was also sent to the assistant principal's office – a lot. He would ask “what are you here for this time?” and I would rattle off how someone had annoyed me or bugged me or touched me and I had yelled or punched them in return. I did not love myself.

I remember sitting in reading group, my book upside down just for fun. Miss Marcinkoski asked me to turn my book right-

side up. I replied “no, I’m reading.” She asked me again, at least 2-3 times, each time I declined. Fed up, she finally asked me to begin reading aloud. I did, perfectly.

At some point during my third grade year, maybe after an incident where I hit Miss Marcinkoski, she and the school had enough and my new educational journey began. I was sent to psychologists; I was tested. I remember one day being in a room with wires on my head; I think they were checking to see if I had some mental deficiencies. I didn’t, instead, they acknowledged that I was smart, bored in class, and needed to be challenged, not just disciplined. So, I was sent off to “gifted school.” That experience that changed my life forever.

At gifted school, I wasn’t the smartest kid in the school; everyone was smart. I knew no one, so I couldn’t be the bully. I didn’t have anyone to fight or argue with. I was a new kid with a clean slate! No one knew me. I made friends, became what was later written on my report card as “a social butterfly,” but I still wasn’t happy. I’ll never forget one time, a teacher complimented my dress and I said something negative in reply – she scolded me and told me to always accept a compliment with “thank you.” How could I accept a compliment when I didn’t think anything nice about myself?

Gifted school was a blessing in many ways – of course my parents must have been ecstatic because I had been a quite a handful to live with up to that time. My mom still has a few letters I wrote home from Girl Scout camp in third and fourth grades... letters begging them to come get me early because I hated it there. Of course they didn’t come get me – I wouldn’t have either! Who wants to bring home a bratty, smart-mouthed kid that is miserable?

Not that my parents didn’t try to help me – but they didn’t know how to teach me to love myself... no one had taught them. They did the best they could and were amazing parents,

very loving, always providing for me and supporting my ideas and adventures. They took me to counselors, but those counselors never taught me to love myself either – self-love was never brought up. But again, no one had probably taught them much about self-love either. How could they help me?

My teachers at gifted school taught me how to make everything look good. They taught me how to find out anything I might want to know, they taught me research methods, they taught me how to solve problems, how to think critically... but they didn't teach me to ask questions about me or about love or about feeling happy. They began at an early age, to instill ideas about going to college, about graduate school, but not about how to be happy, how to love, how to live. So I did what I was taught. I did well in school, played the flute, played varsity tennis, was recognized as "employee of the week" dozens of times at my part-time job, and volunteered... my life looked good from the outside.

What no one knew is that on the inside, I hated myself. I cried myself to sleep a lot, I was afraid – of just about everything. When I was 12 and unhappy, a young adult, 19, in the neighborhood took notice. He befriended me, he took advantage of my unhappiness, of my fear, of my self-doubt and he raped me.

The abuse continued over a period of years. No one knew, not even my parents. When they did find out, some time after it had ended, they attempted again to take me to a counselor; they attempted to find out who it was. But I wouldn't tell and I wouldn't talk... I couldn't, so I didn't and no one asked me about it again. I continued to live a life that looked good on the outside, but I was vulnerable. I was date raped by more than one man. I never learned about loving myself nor did I ever learn about falling in love with someone. I had been taught to do good things and to respect and accept other people just as

fellow human beings... but I didn't love and respect myself and just didn't really know how to love.

After high school, I went to the university and even went to law school! My life looked great – I had been social chairperson in my sorority, I was on the Moot Court Board of Directors in law school... but I had been in a severe downward spiral after being raped before my senior year in college, raped by someone whom I had trusted.

So, there I was living in an amazing apartment on the Detroit River, with celebrity neighbors, going to a great law school, looking great on the outside... but completely miserable on the inside. So miserable that I again cared so little about myself that it just didn't matter what I did. It didn't matter who or what type of people I hung out with, didn't matter if I stole, didn't matter if I couldn't pay my rent, it just didn't matter. I made choices from a place of not caring about myself, from a place where I didn't listen to my own instincts. I made choices that led to my own life being in danger. Near the end of my first year in law school, those dangerous choices led to another life changing experience. And I began to think about my life and had it ended at 21 years old, what would have been the point of my life, why did I even exist? Right then, there was no happiness, no joy. I was just going through the motions, so I left law school.

I knew I needed to leave law school, but had no idea what to do or how to fix my life. I hit "bottom." I ended up in therapy and was blessed to find a group for survivors of sexual abuse and it changed my life. I was able to let go of so much pain, so much baggage, so much anger, and so much stuff. I learned to not blame myself, but I still didn't learn *how* to love myself. I was in the program for about 2 years. During that time, I became an adjunct faculty at private college system where I taught part-time in some capacity for over 16 years!

I was just 24 when I began as a college instructor and this time my life not only looked good on the outside, but was feeling a little better on the inside too. I learned more about having loving relationships, I grew. But even into my thirties, I still didn't really love myself and I struggled with sustained happiness and success. I didn't recognize it, but I was still subconsciously protecting myself *and* punishing myself.

I continued teaching, working as a consultant, traveling, helping and giving back to my family and community. Again life looked pretty good and was pretty good. In my mid to late thirties, I began doing more research about happiness, about spirituality, about finding myself, and about finding peace. I read the books, did the programs, listened to the cds, went to the retreats, wrote the journals, did the exercises; I felt better... sometimes. I could see that I could make choices to be happier and I tried to make those choices. I got pretty good at it. I liked myself, I liked my life, I began having more fun... then my dad got sick again... I moved back to my hometown, and he died 10 days later.

I was back in my hometown, thinking it was temporary. I resisted being there, even resented it. I didn't know why at the time, but I felt compelled to be there, no matter how much I wanted to escape back to my other life thousands of miles away. I stayed.

I had had a good relationship with my dad. I had no regrets about doing things differently. I knew he had always done the best he could and I knew I had always done the best I could – we were very close and I miss him today.

At first, being back home was okay, but as my resistance grew, I become overwhelmed. And for a few years, I again had my ups and downs with money, work, and happiness. I let things get away from me; I didn't always keep my word. I still knew how to make things look good on the outside. I was

happy sometimes, but I wasn't consistent and I began to get depressed thinking the cycle would never end. I didn't know how to fix something I couldn't even figure out. I had done so much work on myself and read so much, yet there I was back in my cycle of up and down success and happiness.

This time though, I continued to give back, work with others, share ideas and tools about happiness, and even continued to practice those tools. It is good stuff. But I just kept feeling like something was missing. I had learned about allowing and accepting good things in my life, but something wasn't right.

Finally, at the beginning of 2011, I decided I had to and wanted to break the up and down cycle I'd been experiencing for years in my quest for happiness and meaning in my life. Most people never knew about my struggle; they saw only my successes. They saw me with a smile on my face, but didn't know that throughout the day I had to keep changing the negative thoughts that came to me into positive thoughts. They didn't know I desperately wanted freedom and even though it looked like I had it, I didn't.

I desperately wanted to know why.

The answer came to me in February, 2011 as I listened to Khama Anku talk about the top obstacles people have to success. Now I'm sure I'd probably heard most of what she said before. I'd read them, I'd listened to others say these things; but that day was different. I was ready to hear the answer.

As Khama shared the obstacles, one by one, I easily checked them off, thinking, "okay, I'm good with that, I don't hold grudges, I let things go, I'm pretty happy most of the time..." I was about to really be befuddled by my own obstacle – I knew I had one (or more). I started to think "maybe I'm just lazy or

maybe I'm not as smart as I think I am..." then it was like I was "hit by a ton of bricks" by the next obstacle she named:

Self Sabotage

Instantly, I knew and felt that was it. My eyes swelled and filled with tears till they began streaming down my cheeks. Later I wondered, "how easy, how did I not see it, how did I not figure it out sooner in my years of searching." I also knew then why I was in my hometown. I had to open myself to the deepest part of me that hadn't been truly care-free and happy since I was three years old.

I was still self-sabotaging – just not as much as when I was younger and regularly said things like "I hate myself" and "you are so stupid." BUT I was still beating myself up when I messed up; I was still criticizing myself when I didn't keep my word. The self-sabotage just wasn't as obvious as my past self-hate and self-loathing, because I really wanted to be happy and successful consistently. I just didn't love myself enough to let it happen.

Subconsciously I was keeping myself in the up and down cycle, not letting myself fully bloom the way a flower will when it is loved by nature, watered, sunned, and given nutrients from the soil. I was like that flower, but each time, as I was just about to have a peak bloom, I'd sabotage my growth, cut the stem, block the sun, or turn off the water.

I was excited – I found the problem! But I still didn't know how to fix it. Everyone had great programs, tools and resources, but none clicked completely with me. I wondered...

HOW does one learn to stop sabotaging themselves?

A couple of weeks passed and it was nearing time for Lent, a time many religions recognize and a time that I had always

been encouraged to use as a personal journey, a time for reflection, a time for real change, and for transformation. I thought about how I could use that time to stop sabotaging myself. It came to me...

A 40 Day LoveFest

So I began a new cycle, a never-ending 40 Day LoveFest with myself!

I started by simply looking in the mirror and saying the words, "I love you, Tina."

Before I share the rest of the practice that changed my life and I believe can change yours as well, I'd like you to think about and answer the questions on the following page.

Please answer the following questions honestly. Record them here or in another journal.

How happy are you in your life right now?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Unhappy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Unhappy |

How often do you criticize yourself/or a choice you make?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All the Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

What challenges are you struggling with at this moment?

What's working well for you at this moment?

2

THE 40 DAY LOVEFEST PRACTICE

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

Lucky for me, I had not given up. I kept on asking, kept on opening doors, maybe even too many doors because for so long, I wasn't sure exactly what I was looking for. But now I was ready to receive at this open door, ready to let go of everything and embark on this new journey.

When I began the 40 Day LoveFest, I was working hard on a variety of projects, including sharing the idea that happiness can be a choice. I had a weekly radio show on BlogTalk radio and had developed a Be Happier in 2 Minutes a Day journal. I also already knew about dozens of great tools to be more successful, happier, more productive, efficient, and a list of other positive traits that could be practiced and learned.

And finally it was beginning to make sense. The 40 Day LoveFest and the practice of self-love were concepts I had never considered in the past. Now, I just had to decide which pieces of the puzzle fit and how exactly I would use those 40

days to learn to love myself more and let go of the subconscious need to protect and punish myself through self sabotage.

I loved the radio show and decided to do a daily 15 minute show for the LoveFest. It was for me more than my listeners; it was to keep me accountable to myself. To be sure I loved myself every day – I shared it live!

I also used another tool I had developed, the Be Happier in 2 Minutes a Day Journal.

I said, “I love you” to myself in the mirror. I practiced saying nice things when I looked in the mirror. I raised my conscious awareness of loving my Self!

I decided too, that I’d make my choices based on love – so if I were having a tough time choosing something, I’d ask, “if I loved myself more, which would I choose?”

All these things weren’t entirely new to me, I had been doing many of them before, but I hadn’t put them together into something simple to follow every day.

It worked!

The first time I knew this was truly the answer was on day 39 of my first 40 Day LoveFest. I went shopping, tried on at least 20 items and bought 5 or 6. I took them to my friend’s home, a top image consultant and stylist, and tried them on with her. We picked out just a couple items to keep. One sweater looked great, but the sleeves were too long; another blouse didn’t hang properly. Those I kept were perfect.

A couple days after that shopping trip and multiple try-ons, I suddenly realized that NOT once through all that did I ever criticize myself or my body!

WOW!

It was a startling realization. I hadn't liked all the items I tried on at the store, but it was only because the item was not right for me... not that I wasn't right for the item. Even in the private dressing room, removing my clothes in front of multiple mirrors in very bright light, I never even looked for faults. I didn't walk up to the mirror to check my make-up or fix my hair. I just tried on clothes, bought some, and then took some back that weren't right for me. NO judgment, NO criticism, NO complaints!

The 40 Day LoveFest worked!

Even at times in my life when I was happy, I had used the mirror as a fault finder. I'd habitually find faults: grey hairs, blemishes, pants too tight, hair too flat, etc. Like most of us, I criticized myself... now instead, I can say I love myself!

After those first 40 days, I also become aware of other subtle and not so subtle changes. I noticed I didn't have to constantly work so hard to change my negative thoughts to positive... because I DIDN'T get many negative thoughts anymore!

I didn't snap back or react impulsively as often; I rarely got bothered by anything anyone did!

I shared with you a lot about my past, but not for sympathy or for you to compare and contrast with your life. I shared because I want you to know and believe that no matter what your past experiences and feelings, you can choose to love your Self now. You can choose to learn how to be happier today. You can have a different life now and in the future. It is a choice.

You may have also experienced things beyond your control; you may have been affected by other people's choices. We all are – but we can choose our responses to those things. When I was young, I didn't know I could choose differently. For so long I didn't know I could really love myself, but I'm grateful I do now.

I want to give you a shortcut to greater self-love, happiness, and success. I want you to experience fewer struggles than I did in my desperate search for meaning in my life. I want you to share this. I want today's children to know they DO have a choice; I want everyone to know they can choose to love themselves anyway, no matter what!

It's simple, but not easy. It takes every day practice to achieve a deeper, more loving relationship with your Self.

In just a few minutes each day, practicing the 40 Day LoveFest, you will have personal transformation, growth, more self-confidence, and easier and sustained success in any personal or professional goals.

Every day, advertising promotions and society send us messages that we're not okay as we are, that we need whatever they are selling to make us better before we can be happy, before we can love ourselves, before we can fully live our happiest lives... but that is a lie!

You can love yourself just as you are right now! There is no need to fix anything before you love yourself. Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't improve whatever you want to improve – you should! But you don't have to do that first. Plus, whatever you want to improve in your life, what ever goal you have, will be easier to achieve if you love yourself!

“The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.” Mother Teresa

Right now, find a mirror and look yourself in the eye.

Say aloud, the words... “I love you” or...

“You are beautiful” or “You are handsome”

Give yourself another compliment... anything you like!

When you say these things every day, you will dramatically change how you feel and think about yourself. You can also say other affirmations: I forgive you, I am happy, I am healthy, I am abundant, I am... whatever you need. When you repeat these statements, in the mirror, aloud, every day... it will get in there deep – it will transform you.

I had no excuse not to do this. I am in front of a mirror several times every day: while brushing my teeth, brushing my hair, washing my hands, sitting in the car, even my cell phone has a reflective face! I can do this anywhere, anytime, without it interfering with anything I’m “too busy” with.

And most of you have no excuse not to do this either. If you can’t look in a mirror, you can still do this exercise, just close your eyes and say it aloud to yourself.

I also had no excuse not to do the Be Happier in 2 Minutes a Day journal exercises – they only takes 2 minutes!!

So, every morning I wrote in my journal 3 things I was grateful for.

Easy? Sure, for the first few days, but it gets repetitive to be grateful every morning for the sunshine, or for waking up or for my family, or for my health. After a few days, you begin to consciously raise your awareness of the good in your life. You begin to jot things down that you had taken for granted, or

things that you didn't think you liked, but deep down, you appreciate.

Right now, what are three things you are grateful for?

1.

2.

3.

You have no excuse not to take just a moment or two to think about gratitude. Even if right now you rush out of the house every morning without even stopping for a drink of water, wake up 5 minutes earlier to do so. Make it part of your morning routine. And while drinking your water, think about what you are grateful for.

If you have morning meditations, include a moment for gratitude. If you commute to work, instead of listening to the news or music, think about what you appreciate in your life right now.

Gratitude is just half of the Be Happier in 2 Minutes a Day formula; the other is recognizing what went well every day: your daily successes or triumphs.

Again, I had no excuse for not taking a moment or two every evening to acknowledge what went well in my day. I was already thinking about what went wrong, what did not get checked off the to-do list... so why not also, or instead of, think about what I did get done!

Right now, what are three of your triumphs today?

1.

2.

3.

You too, have no excuse for not recognizing your triumphs... that is *if* you want to love yourself more, *if* you want to be happier today, *if* you want real change in your life.

You can make this part of your family dinner conversation – everyone can share what went well during their day. You can think about it on the commute home, you can acknowledge your successes in your evening meditation. Instead of ending the day listening to negative news of the world, turn off the TV and spend those last moments in quiet reflection for what went well in your own life!

Daily triumphs do not need to be big ones like getting the promotion, or making a sale, or getting a high test score. Triumphs can be anything that went well - getting to work on time, calling a friend who has been on your mind, even writing down your morning gratitude!

Here are some real examples from my daily gratitude and triumphs over the last year.

Gratitude:

Hot cocoa on a cold day

Snow Day!

Re-connecting with an old friend

A warm bed

I'm alive!

Whatever you can think of to be grateful for, jot it down. One day “baby love” was on my list because my great niece, 2 years old, knocked on my door early that morning – she is very chipper and happy in the morning, laughing and smiling – I was so grateful for that!

Forget about “I should or need to be grateful for...” don’t do that.

Just recognize what you are glad for in your life or in that exact moment, maybe the sun is shining and coming in the window. Taking just one minute for gratitude in the morning can set the mood for the rest of the day. You don’t have to wake up worried about all the to-dos, all the what-ifs, and all the stuff – instead wake up with an attitude of gratitude!

Triumphs:

- Cleared and filed papers from my desk
- Went to the gym
- Took a bath
- Had dinner with family
- Dropped off items for a client

One day, my triumph was not being mean when I kind of wanted to be! I was not happy about something that happened. My first response was to snap back and be a little mean, but I didn’t.

Recognize your triumphs! When you’re having a tough time thinking of something that went well, look back in your journal at another day’s triumphs and think about the good feelings you had then. It will remind you why you are practicing self-love. You’ll be encouraged to complete your to-do lists, to stay on task with goals you’ve set. You’ll start to see some major changes in your overall attitude and ability to recognize the good and you’ll spend less time looking at the negative.

Of course, there will be days you forget about these three simple steps and that's OK! Don't think that you can't do it, don't worry that it's something else you have a hard time sticking with. Just look in the mirror at that moment, and...

Love yourself anyway; say "I love you" or "I like you."

If you can't even say "I like you," that's okay! Just say something nice to yourself, anything. It doesn't even have to be personal. For example, you could say "nice sweater" or "maybe tomorrow I'll like you a little more" OR as suggested by Sister Rita Berby, a fabulous nun sharing love and hope at the St. Luke's N.E.W. Life Center in Flint, Michigan...

you could say to yourself, "You have possibilities."

I believe lack of self-love, lack of unconditional love, lack of neighborly love, basically an overall lack of love is the underlying cause of the majority of our personal problems.

You may not agree, and I may be wrong. But even issues such as food related illness and weight loss goals can be helped by asking ourselves: "if I loved myself more, would I choose to eat a bowl of veggies or a bowl of ice cream or greasy popcorn?" "If I loved myself more, would I wake up 15 minutes earlier to make myself a healthy breakfast instead of going through the drive-thru or grabbing a donut or bagel at work?"

Stress and anxiety issues can be addressed with questions like: "if I loved myself more, would I get up and take a walk around the block to clear my mind instead of watching TV?" "If I loved myself more, would I spend 15 minutes of quiet meditation instead of playing games on the computer?" "If I loved myself more, would I talk about what's bugging me instead of holding it in?"

Think about what keeps you from being as happy as you would like to be. How can you turn around some of your issues into simple choices you can make now?

In the past, self-love was often assumed. We've heard the saying "love our neighbors as we love ourselves." In the old, old days, we didn't need a reminder to love ourselves. But today, we are bombarded with messages that tell us we will not be happy, fulfilled, stress-free, etc. until we fix something - that something being whatever they are selling. We are not often encouraged to just love ourselves as we are.

The 40 Day LoveFest can be your reminder.

Practicing self-love is a commitment. After you do this for a week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, you will naturally start to have a happier attitude, because you recognize more of the positives and give less power to the negatives. Negatives may still be there, you just won't give them power!

Use your time to create powerful habits of love and your worries, unhappiness, and self-sabotage will begin to melt away!



Okay, I know you've just done this, but please humor me...
Love yourself again!

**Begin today to practice the three simple steps of the
40 Day LoveFest:**

Say something nice or "I love/like you" to yourself in the
mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

3

BE AN EXAMPLE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret. It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye. From *The Little Prince*

by Antoine De Saint-Exupery

We are all worthy of being loved and respected. We are all born with that divine right. Unknown

Life usually begins with unconditional love. I was born without fear, without judgment, without stress. I was born to love. I just needed basic items like food, water, milk, clean diapers, and love from my parents. They loved me unconditionally, right? When I puked on them, they loved me anyway. When I dumped my spaghetti all over the floor, they loved me anyway. When I cried, they comforted and loved me anyway. When I constantly asked “Why” they loved me and patiently (at least most of the time) answered my questions to the best of their abilities.

If life and love are so easy when we’re born, why do we forget about unconditional love? What happens?

Society happens, years of conditioning happen, fear happens, experiences happen, family lessons happen... life happens!

We listen to many people talk about love and doing good. YET we still have so much hatred and so little tolerance for our differences. But, if we forgive ourselves, if we do not judge or condemn ourselves, that is how we will also treat others.

So how do we do all that?

The answer again: Love.

If you choose, your 40 Day LoveFest can help you feel better about you, help you forgive you, and in turn, you will feel better about accepting and loving others.

You'll also be a better example to those around you – your kids will learn they can love themselves no matter what. It's what you've probably already told them... BUT have you shown them?

We all know the saying “practice what you preach.” It's important and relevant. You can tell your kids all day long that you want them to have a better life, you can tell them they can do anything they set their mind to, you can tell them they are beautiful just the way they are.

BUT if you then show them every day that you are “stuck” in a job you hate, if you are cranky because you don't feel happy, if you obsess over beauty, if you SHOW them something opposite of what you tell them... well, then they grow up thinking, like most of us do, that happiness is something you can wish for, but probably won't happen, so better not get your hopes up. And your children may follow in your footsteps... even if you want better for them!

It's not your fault, it's what you were taught and it's what society reinforces every day.

Some of the worst examples I've seen include the commercials for what I'm sure is a great acne product. But it perpetuates the idea that "I shouldn't go out of the house because I'm too embarrassed by my skin."

So another teen, already feeling self-conscious, feels even worse. I know it helps sell products and I think it's great to clear our skin, heal our bodies, and feel good about how we look. But the underlying message it clearly delivers to teens at a vulnerable age, in a vulnerable state of mind, scares me.

If we, as parents, mentors, friends, families, and neighbors, can share the message of self-LOVE maybe it can overcome some of the messages we receive from society. Maybe we can make a difference, but it takes all of us being an example of LOVE.

Please begin your 40 day LoveFest today if you haven't yet. Share it with your family – let them know you are going to try something out and you need their support. Ask them to remind you to identify gratitude and triumphs and include them!



Deepen the Love Activity:

No complaining for 7 days... or try 24 hours!

The challenge: No Complaining or at least change up any complaints into compliments! You can do this on your own, but it's a great opportunity to share with friends, co-workers, family, anyone!

Complaining is a common and easy habit to pick up. We complain at long traffic lights, when our internet isn't fast enough, when it rains, when it's too hot, when we wake up late, when someone does something we don't like, when our pen runs out of ink... many of us complain all day long!!

Think about it.

How many times have you complained today?

Now consider this... most of those complaints were over insignificant annoyances, right?

But every single one of them reinforced whatever you use as your excuse(s) about why you are not as happy as you'd like to be. Assuming of course, that you'd like to be happier than you are now and that is why you are still reading this book.

You can use the No Complaining challenge anywhere – home, work, school, etc. You can also challenge others to join you. You can create a better environment anywhere you are.

This is especially important at work – a place where many people spend the majority of their waking hours. Work stress and unhappiness often follows people home and affects their relationships there. Try this at work: don't let a meeting turn into a complaint fest, change the water cooler gossip into something more positive, and turn complaints into compliments. It'll improve relations with customers, vendors, co-workers, everyone.

For example, if you're waiting for a shipment you expected today and it doesn't arrive, you could get annoyed and you might need to call the company to complain it didn't arrive. But if you change the complaint into a compliment before you make the call, you have the power to create a positive exchange about the shipment.

Maybe when you order from that company it's usually on time, that's why you counted on it arriving today. When you make the call you can say "usually your shipments are always on time and I really appreciate that, but I haven't received the package yet. What is different this time and when can we expect it?"

Now the person on the other end is not put on the defense (had you called and demanded the package now and yelled at them). They may even go out of their way to help you get the shipment as soon as possible, because you complimented them;

you were calm, polite, professional and you did not accuse them.

You can do something similar in the reverse situation when a customer calls to complain about your product or service. When the other person starts in with a lot of negativity and complaining about the shipment you didn't get out to them, you can say "thank you for calling this to our attention, we appreciate your business and I know you rely on us to get your order to you on time, every time. Let me look up your tracking number and find out where that package is." Or tell them the reason it wasn't sent yet if you know the answer.

By immediately acknowledging and getting in the reminder to them that usually you are on time, you can diffuse some of their frustration and you can then handle the situation without being defensive.

In your personal life, when you catch yourself complaining, try changing it into a compliment.

For example, "oh my gosh I'm so cold" can become a compliment by adding "I'm really looking forward to spring" or "oh let me grab my favorite sweater" or "I'll make a cup of tea and warm up"

There are endless ways to turn complaints into compliments and it's much more loving!

Love Idea: Choices at work

Did you know that every year, April 3 is “Don’t go to work unless it’s Fun day.” There are hundreds of specially designated days each year, but this sticks out to me because it’s a good reminder to enjoy what you do, no matter what you do. A lot of people don’t really like what they are doing at work, but they have to have a job. So, if you are doing something right now that you don’t want to do in the future, you can still love yourself – you can still choose to enjoy where you are now, no matter if you’d rather be somewhere else in the future.

How do you do it? A simple way is to apply the 40 Day LoveFest practice to anything you don’t like so much, like your work day!

When you begin your day at work, think of 3 things you are grateful for about your job. Do it every single day on the way to or when you first arrive at work.

Maybe you’re grateful for simple things like the paycheck, providing for your family, friends you’ve made, or the opportunity to serve your customers. Even if you don’t like your job and it has affected your self-love, by changing your thoughts about work, you’ll begin to feel better about going to that job.

At the end of the workday or on your way home, think of three things that went well at work! Even simple things, like you made it through the day without complaining, or you helped a co-worker with a problem, or you turned around a customer complaint.

As you consciously make a choice to take just 2 minutes a day to recognize positive things in your workday, you will begin to be happier in your job and love yourself no matter what!

From the Prayer Foundation, this is a version of “The Paradoxical Commandments” by Dr. Kent Keith, written on the wall in Mother Teresa’s room at her Missionaries of Charity home in Calcutta, India.

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

my addition...

When you love yourself first, others may not understand. Love your Self anyway.



4 YOU HAVE A CHOICE!

It is difficult for some people to accept that love is a choice. This seems to run counter to the generally accepted theory of romantic love which expounds that love is inborn and as such requires no more than to accept it. Leo Buscaglia

The first step on your path to making the best decisions you can make, to making life the best it can be for you, to just live life so you have no regrets at the end is to LOVE YOURSELF.

Everything else gets easier after that.

You'll let go of ego, let go of control, let go of all the stuff that consumes us, yet, doesn't make us happy.

When you love yourself first, you naturally give yourself better options to choose from! You naturally put yourself in situations where there are more healthy and positive options than options that aren't. You naturally think about the consequences or results of the options available and make choices based on that rather than on impulse. It's easier to make loving choices!

Choices...

One day last year, I heard about the death of a successful businessman who impacted the businesses and lives of thousands of people... his death was by suicide. This man, who was a father, grandfather, teacher, mentor, and friend to many, took his own life.

Soon after, I heard about another person, someone who had openly struggled, who also ended his own life.

Then I saw friends hosting a memorial for their friend whose daughter had committed suicide.

We hear all these stories and most of our first thoughts are WHY? They had so many good things in their life. Why didn't they see those good things? Why would they choose suicide or drugs or danger?

I have been in a place where I was so depressed that I didn't give my life value, even considered just leaving and just living somewhere, anywhere, away from everything, but I never wanted to end my life. Suicide was never an option for me even in my darkest times. Why is suicide seen as an option for so many who don't love themselves?

I had a strong fear from a very early age – fear of my own death, fear of that unknown about what happens after the death of the body. After hearing about so many suicides in my community, I thought about that fear in a new way. Suicide was never an option for me even in my darkest times because...my fear saved my life.

So, what happens when people get to that point, where there is nothing, like a fear of death, to stop them from taking such drastic and final action?

I don't know, I don't think most of us can really understand or comprehend their last second of life, that ultimate and desperate and final choice that some make. Maybe in their mind there were no other options left... so maybe it wasn't even really a choice, but an action, a next step in their sadness, their anger, and their despair.

I don't know what happens – but I do know they were not practicing self-love.

Maybe they were like me back in law school, having such little care about myself that nothing mattered. Maybe there was no personal awareness that there could be something more, something better than where they were in that moment.

A cousin once scolded me, a couple of years before the 40 Day LoveFest, that my promotion of the idea that we can choose happiness, that we can choose something different than what we have, was something potentially harmful. He said not everyone has a choice. I didn't agree with him and we didn't delve into the topic deeper.

Now, I see things a bit differently.

It's not that people don't have a choice – because they do. It's that they see no options or very limited options to choose from! If they don't see happiness as a choice, how can they choose it? If they don't see love as a choice, they can't choose love. If they don't see success in their future, they certainly can't make a plan to go after it!

The 40 Day LoveFest can help anyone, at any stage of their life. Its simple practice raises awareness of possibilities. It opens minds to acknowledging and receiving options. It opens eyes to seeing choices. It opens hearts to feeling the power of choice.

Of course there will be heartache, struggle, sorrow, sadness, loneliness, and an endless list of unpleasant experiences, feelings, and things that will happen around us that we can't control.

Making life the best it can be doesn't mean I don't experience those things. It means making the best decisions I can make no matter what situation I am in, with whatever feelings I feel at that moment AND accepting that others are making their own choices.

Because you are reading this book, you know you have the option to love yourself anyway, regardless of your pain, your anger, your hurt, your depression, your addictions, your everything. I hope you will also not just know you have the option, but believe that you have the option to love yourself... and that it can begin with a simple, daily practice of self-love: the 40 Day LoveFest.

Deepen the Love Activity:

What does love mean to you?

What does self-love mean to you?

What would loving yourself more look like?

What are three things you could do beginning today to love yourself more?

5
OPEN YOUR MIND TO *BE* LOVE

The supreme happiness of life is the conviction of being loved for yourself, or more correctly being loved in spite of yourself.

Victor Hugo

When you have a LoveFest with yourself, you will experience feelings of freedom.

What if it just takes practice to change our mindset from one of self-doubt and lack, to one of unconditional love for our SELF?

Right now, in this moment, what is some of your stuff?

What consumes you?

What could you let go of and feel relief, feel freedom?

The 40 Day LoveFest practice can bring freedom, happiness, and success. Freedom to embrace, accept, forgive, and love yourself.

When you develop that level and intensity of self-love, you will naturally let go of judgments, resentments, regrets, sadness, loneliness, anger, hate.

Then, even in those moments of passion, rage, witnessing things you can not bear and can not control, you will find yourself looking for how love can help. You will look for the good you can create; you can harness your passion and angry reactions and use them instead for sending healing love and prayers to the situation.

You will find a way to love anyway.



Last summer, I was sitting on the grass near the edge of a lake, contemplating, preparing to meditate, and began admiring the large white fluffy clouds, then noticed smaller darker clouds moving in front of the white ones.

I let my mind wander and saw 2 bears eating popcorn in a movie theater, then as the clouds continued to slowly move, they morphed into a man with a Mohawk hair cut riding a

motorcycle, then Santa and his sleigh, then a group of chipmunks, then Christmas carolers.

I had opened my mind, cleared it of all the day's activities: meetings, bag stuffing for a charity event, phone calls, e-mails, and just let myself be grounded. At peace and admiring nature, listening to the water roll against the rocks, feeling the cool breeze contrast to the earlier warm summer sun... I just was.

And I began thinking about love and how it means different things to different people. Many imagine love as something given to or received from others – that it is outside of our self. Many imagine love as meaning they must put up with or endure trials and tribulations in order to keep love. Some believe love just isn't worth the perceived hassle. Some believe love is something only other people experience.

I believe love is the pure experience of being. It's what I felt sitting and looking at those clouds waiting to watch the sunset create a vibrant colorful sky across the lake. I believe love is the feeling I have when I am at peace with who I am and accept my Self just as I am – that I am who I am meant to be.

I also believe that in order for me to feel that deep level of love for myself, I must make it a priority in my life. I must practice loving myself. I must practice letting go of distractions, resentments, drama, negativity, and just be love.

I want to help you love yourself more – because no matter how happy, fulfilled, and content you might be at this moment, practicing self-love can take you to deeper relationship with your Self.



Deepen the Love Activity: Your Perfect Day

I'd like you to take 15-20 minutes of quiet, alone time, leave the phone in another room or turn it off, and go some place comfortable. Sit in bed, go for a walk, find a bench to sit in nature, swing in a hammock, wrap up in a blanket, sit by a fire; find some place where you can daydream without interruption.

Clear your mind and then think about what a perfect day would look like to you – this is not a perfect vacation day, but a perfect, ordinary day. This is also not what you think your perfect day “should” look like, not what your family or friends think you “should” do – ONLY what you would do if you could do anything. Bills are paid; there are no worries or concerns in your perfect day.

Begin your daydream with waking up in the morning – where are you? Is there anyone with you? What do you do when you open your eyes? Then just go from there, do you eat

breakfast at home, go to a meeting, exercise, read the paper, etc.

What are you doing throughout the morning? Who are you spending time with? Where do you go? What do you do at lunch time, in the afternoon, etc? Dream about what you'd do all day in your perfect day – you can have any job, spend time with those you love, or hang out at the beach, whatever your desires are!

Keep going through the day and continue your daydream until you are back in bed at the end of your perfect day!

After relishing the dream of your perfect day, get a notebook out or using the next page, write down the details of your perfect day!

Did you enjoy daydreaming about your perfect day? Were there any surprises? Did you notice things in your perfect day that you could implement fairly easily into your life now? Are you already living your perfect day?

6
BEYOND 40 DAYS:
YOU CAN BE HAPPIER & MORE SUCCESSFUL!

I accept myself and create peace in my mind and heart. I now choose to free myself from all destructive fears and doubts. I am loved and I am safe. Louise Hay

Once you learn to love yourself – KEEP practicing!

Every skill you wish to develop takes practice. Professional athletes, musicians, doctors – they all PRACTICE their skill. They keep their skills sharp. It looks like it's natural to them, but they practice and practice and practice to stay on top of their game.

Self-love takes practice too.

After 40 days, the practice will become be a more natural way of being, of loving your Self. Your increased self esteem, success and happiness will make some people think you won the lottery... and they'd be right - you have!

But just like a lottery winner who loses it all by not taking care of his winnings or practicing money management; you too can lose your new found happiness, success, and LOVE.

You have to continue the practice of self-love.

After 40 days, you'll begin to live as you were born, with love and acceptance and joy. You'll begin to seek out pleasant activities and the negative ones just won't be there as much.

It's not magic and some things are still right there where they were on day one – BUT you'll look at them differently after the 40 Day LoveFest.

You will see solutions more than problems; you'll see the good in those around you rather than focusing on how they are different than you... you'll just feel better.

Self-Love builds your openness to receive.

As I continued to practice self-love, I realized that while I was loving myself and attracting more happiness and prosperity and success, and while I was making better choices from love, I was still cleaning up a few messes I had made during so many years of not loving myself.

Open your heart and mind and forgive yourself for anything you need to forgive yourself for.

Clean up whatever you feel the need to clean up.

Be grateful for now, for possibilities, for your future.

So, I forgave myself for years of punishment; I began to clean up some of my messes; and I was grateful, even more, that my prior fear of death had saved my life.

The past doesn't have to matter as much in our future as we sometimes let it. You don't have to continue to make mistakes just because that is what you did before. You don't have to continue to feel bad about what you can't change now.

You can forgive yourself and let it all go... and it might take a little extra practice if you are like me and your stuff has been around for a while.

Try this for the FULL 40 days – make it a deliberate choice. Put it on your daily calendar. Set alarms on your phone to remind you to love yourself. Put up notes on your mirror as reminders to say something nice. Do these things consciously for 40 days.

You will be amazed at the results.

Some of you will begin the 40 Day LoveFest and have an easy time with it, and some of you will find it very difficult to get started because you've never practiced self-love.

The toughest part of the 40 Day LoveFest is remembering to practice the simple steps. It gets easier; but it does take an effort in the beginning to make it a habit. It takes consistent awareness and daily practice of making choices based in love.

I'd like to share a poem written by Kimberly Call, author of *Morning Rituals: How We Awaken*

each moment is like a small bell
chiming
awakening
are we listening?

Each moment in the now is all we have. There are no promises of tomorrow. We can live each moment of our life in

love, in peace, in happiness, and in a deeper more loving relationship with our Self.

If right now, we listen, we can hear our inner Self; we can hear what's inside of us, and we can focus on loving that moment, we can focus on being happy in that moment... it awakens us.

And if we're listening, the next moment can be even better.

Sometimes in our busyness, we miss moments. During my first 40 Day LoveFest, I also hosted a daily radio show. I had to cancel a couple of shows because of an aunt's death, but there were also 2 days where I just got busy and totally missed the show! When I realized it, I exclaimed, "AHHH I missed the LoveFest show!" I got a little dramatic, and then I let it go.

If I had spent half an hour berating myself, saying things like "That was so dumb, how did you do that, how did you miss that?" What good would that have done? Because in my overall life, it's just a tiny second and in the moment I can feel the remorse, I can feel sad for a moment that I missed my connection with my audience, but after that I let it go because...

each moment is like a small bell
chiming
awakening
are we listening?

Kimberly's words are strong. When you look in the mirror and say "I love you," that moment is an awakening. Are you listening? Are you paying attention?

In the morning, when you're thinking of three things you're grateful for, that moment is an awakening. It's raising your awareness of the power of the good that you have in your life.

And at the end of the day, when you recognize your accomplishments and honor your triumphs, the moment is awakening you.

each moment is like a small bell
chiming
awakening
are we listening?

**Deepen the Love Activity:
Choices from Heart**

Identify three things that are part of your life now that are not serving you. These can be negative people, unloving habits, things we say yes to that we really want to say no to, etc.

How can you begin to change or remove those things from your everyday life?

7 YOUR 40 DAY LOVEFEST JOURNAL

Use this journal every day for 40 days. You can begin anytime!

I suggest you record your gratitude in the morning, but do it whenever you can. I also recommended your triumphs be recorded at the end of the day so you end on a positive note rather than thinking about all the things you didn't get done.

In addition to the 3 simple steps of the 40 Day LoveFest, I've shared an inspirational quote and reflection topic for each day. These reflections are optional and not a specific or required part of the 40 Day LoveFest practice. If you choose, the reflections can take you to a deeper level of forgiving and accepting yourself.

The aim of the 40 Day LoveFest practice is simplicity.

It's not easy to *be* grateful every day.

It's not easy to recognize three triumphs every day.

It's not easy to say "I love you" every day.

But... it is simple.

Begin your practice of Self-Love today.

Practice with your family if possible; it can benefit everyone.

And... don't stop after 40 days, go back to chapter 6 for inspiration and visit www.40DayLoveFest.com/book.html for additional resources and bonuses including your free daily inspirational LoveFest reminder!

“How can I believe there’s a butterfly inside you or me when all I see is a fuzzy worm?” “How does one become a butterfly?” she asked pensively.

“You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar.”

Conversation with Yellow from *Hope for the Flowers*
by Trina Paulus



“I believe talent is like electricity. We don’t understand electricity. We use it.” Maya Angelou

Day 1: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: What values/gifts/talents do you possess?

Additional Reflection

“Hide not your talents, they for use were made. What’s a sun-dial in the shade?” Benjamin Franklin

Day 2: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How are you using your talents and gifts?

Additional Reflection

“When people believe in themselves they have the first secret of success.” Norman Vincent Peale

Day 3: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: Before the 40 Day LoveFest, had you ever said “I love you” to yourself?

Additional Reflection

“I am so beautiful, sometimes people weep when they see me. And it has nothing to do with what I look like really, it is just that I gave myself power to say that I am beautiful, and if I could do that, maybe there is hope for them too.”

Margaret Cho

Day 4: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How can you show love for yourself more and in doing so be an example to your family and friends?

Additional Reflection

“He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.” George Herbert

Day 5: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: What grudges do you hold against yourself?

Additional Reflection

“Forgiveness is the release of all hope for a better past.”
Alexa Young

Day 6: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How can you finally let go of your self-grudges?

Additional Reflection

“Forgive all who have offended you, not for them, but for yourself.” Harriet Nelson

Day 7: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How have you insulted yourself in the past?

Additional Reflection

“We all have someone or something to forgive... and when we learn how we become free to increase success in every area of our life.” Azim Khamisa

Day 8: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: What can you say to yourself to forgive your past self-insults and avoid future ones?

Additional Reflection

“When you forgive, you in no way change the past – but you sure do change the future.” Bernard Meltzer

Day 9: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: In the past, have you been sincere in your forgiveness of yourself or others?

Additional Reflection

“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.” Martin Luther King Jr.

Day 10: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: Who can you choose to now love? How will you do that?

Additional Reflection

**“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”
Martin Luther King Jr.**

Day 11: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: When you have “paid back” someone, how did you feel? What were the results?

Additional Reflection

“You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well.” Lewis B. Smedes

Day 12: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: How might a past experience have been different if you had done good instead of “paying someone back”?

Additional Reflection

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.” Eleanor Roosevelt

Day 13: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: Who or what are you afraid of?

Additional Reflection

**“You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.”
Eleanor Roosevelt**

Day 14: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: How can you love those you are afraid of? Please love yourself to safety if needed, then think about this question.

Additional Reflection

“When a woman becomes her own best friend life is easier.” Diane Von Furstenberg

Day 15: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: Does love guide your choices and decisions?

Additional Reflection

“The only person who can pull me down is myself, and I’m not going to let myself pull me down anymore.”
C. JoyBell C.

Day 16: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: As you face upcoming choices, think about making them from love. Ask “if I loved myself more, which would I choose?”

Additional Reflection

“Your treasure – your perfection – is within you already. But to claim it, you must leave the busy commotion of the mind and abandon the desires of the ego and enter into the silence of the heart.” Elizabeth Gilbert

Day 17: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: How has the language you use with yourself affected your success?

Additional Reflection

“As you become more clear about who you really are, you’ll be able to decide what is best for you – the first time around.” Oprah Winfrey

Day 18: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: What are 5 things you can say to yourself next time you begin to think or speak negatively?

Additional Reflection

“... you can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another.” Ernest Hemingway

Day 19: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: How strong is your faith in yourself?

Additional Reflection

“Each man had only one genuine vocation – to find the way to himself.” Hermann Hesse

Day 20: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: How can you be more open to experiencing the passion and love within you?

Additional Reflection

“Did your mom ever tell you, ‘If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything’? She was right – and talking nicely also applies when you’re talking to yourself, even inside your head.” Victoria Moran

Day 21: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: How would your week have been different if you did everything with love and kindness?

Additional Reflection

**“No one can truly love you, if you are not truly loving you!
Fall in love with you and you will discover what being
loved is all about.” unknown**

Day 22: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: How will you attempt to do everything with love during your 40 Day LoveFest?

Additional Reflection

**“We are all full of weakness and errors; let us mutually
pardon each other our follies.” Voltaire**

Day 23: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: How have your self-criticisms limited your happiness?

Additional Reflection

“We may not know how to forgive, and we may not want to forgive; but the very fact we say we are willing to forgive begins the healing practice.” Louise Hay

Day 24: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: Have you been critical of your loved ones? How can and are you willing to react differently from now on?

Additional Reflection

**“The purpose of life is the expansion of happiness.”
Deepak Chopra**

Day 25: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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3.

Today, my triumphs included...

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Reflection: Do you believe you have freedom?

Additional Reflection

“If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.”

Marcus Aurelius

Day 26: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How can you love and serve yourself more?

Additional Reflection

“We come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.” Sam Keen

Day 27: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: Are you gentle with yourself?

Additional Reflection

“There is something simply beautiful and simply innocent, in being human.” C. JoyBell C.

Day 28: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

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3.

Reflection: For the next three days, be intentionally gentle and accepting of yourself and others. Imagine how that will look.

Additional Reflection

“Try giving up all the thoughts that make you feel bad, or even just some of them, and see how doing that changes your life. You don’t need negative thoughts.” Gina Lake

Day 29: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: What are 10 kind words you can say about yourself?

Additional Reflection

“Life is so much bigger, grander, higher, and wider than we allow ourselves to think. We’re capable of so much more than we allow ourselves to believe.” Queen Latifah

Day 30: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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Today, my triumphs included...

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3.

Reflection: What are 10 kind words you can say about someone close to you, someone you tend to be critical of?

Additional Reflection

“It’s probably unfair to expect the world at large, or even most people, to see us for all we are. It is essential, however, that we see ourselves for all we are.”

Victoria Moran

Day 31: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: Do you think your self-love has grown or shrunk over the last year?

Additional Reflection

**“Every day offers us simple gifts when we are willing to search our hearts for the place that’s right for each of us.”
Sarah Breathnach**

Day 32: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: What have you asked for? Have you been really open to receiving it... even if what you receive is different than what you thought it would be?

Additional Reflection

“If you would be loved, love and be lovable.”
Benjamin Franklin

Day 33: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How have you pretended to love yourself?

Additional Reflection

“Fears are educated into us, and can, if we wish, be educated out.” Karl Augustus Menninger

Day 34: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: What fears can you let go of today? How will you speak out for yourself?

Additional Reflection

“One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself.”

Day 35: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: ahh, the “golden rule” – but do you practice it?

Additional Reflection

**“I am not afraid of tomorrow, for I have seen yesterday
and I love today.” William Allen White**

Day 36: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

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3.

Reflection: Here’s another thought about the “golden rule”:
Treat yourSELF the way you’d like others to treat you.

Additional Reflection

“My friend... care for your psyche...know thyself, for once we know ourselves, we may learn how to care for ourselves.” Socrates

Day 37: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

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3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How do you nag yourself, what is the most common complaint you make to yourself?

Additional Reflection

“Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future.” Lewis B. Smedes

Day 38: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: Who can you forgive today? What can you forgive yourself for today?

Additional Reflection

“Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead. The consciousness of loving and being loved brings a warmth and richness to life that nothing else can bring.” Oscar Wilde

Day 39: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

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2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

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3.

Reflection: How has your self-love improved over the last 40 days?

Additional Reflection

**“Love is like a violin. The music may stop now and then,
but the strings remain forever.” unknown**

Day 40: Say something nice or “I like/love you” to yourself in the mirror.

I am grateful for...

1.

2.

3.

Today, my triumphs included...

1.

2.

3.

Reflection: How has the 40 Day LoveFest affected other areas of your life: your job, family, friends?

Additional Reflection



“And there’s something else! Once you are a butterfly, you can really love – the kind of love that makes new life. It’s better than all the hugging caterpillars can do.” From *Hope for the Flowers* by Trina Paulus

Now that you’ve completed your 40 Day LoveFest, answer the following questions. After answering, compare today’s answers with those of 40 days ago. Do you feel a difference today?

Exercise: Answer the following questions honestly. Record them here or in another journal.

How happy are you in your life right now?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Unhappy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Unhappy |

How often do you criticize yourself/or a choice you make?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All the Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

What challenges are you struggling with at this moment?

What’s working well for you at this moment?

REFERENCES & RESOURCES THAT INSPIRE ME

Love by Leo Buscaglia

Hope for the Flowers by Trina Paulus

Joyce Schwarz

www.VisionBoardInstitute.com

Cynthia Hatcher

www.DreamItLiveItNow.com

Kimberly Call

Author of *Morning Rituals: How we Awaken*

www.morningritualsbook.com

Khama Anku

www.SpiritualPhysique.com

Teri Williams

www.TheBlissNetwork.com

Debbie LaChusa

www.BreakingTheSpellBook.com

www.DrWayneDyer.com

The Moses Code, the movie

The Secret, the movie

Find your FREE bonuses & additional resources at
www.40DayLoveFest.com/book.html

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tina Nies is a Certified Life Coach and Vision Board Coach. Tina began her coaching as a natural extension of working for nearly 20 years as a Marketing and Event Consultant, Speaker, College Instructor, and Community Trainer. Tina earned her B.B.A at University of Michigan and her M.B.A. at Windsor University. Her passion is now focused on building and strengthening self-love as a foundation for success. Tina empowers entrepreneurs and individuals to develop their vision and create action strategies for success as they grow and explore their happiness in business and life.

Tina is a lifelong active volunteer and philanthropist and especially enjoys sharing ideas about Love, Hope, and the Power of Choice with youth and communities most in need of that message.

Stay in touch with Tina and learn about upcoming events and new books in the LoveFest series by visiting www.40DayLoveFest.com/book.html

Author's Websites

www.40DayLoveFest.com

Tina is the bestselling author of *40 Day LoveFest for Christians: a daily practice of self-love and reflection*

and a co-author or contributing author of

Heart of Success

with Joyce Schwarz, Marie Diamond, Marsh Engle, and others

Anyone Can! Live a Happier Life

By Marion Licchiello

Celebrating 365 Days of Gratitude, 2013 and 2014 editions

By Donna Kozik & The Gratitude Book Project Team

Ready, Aim, Inspire!

With Joe Vitale, Morgana Rae, Viki Winterton, and others

What's Your Vision?

By Marion Licchiello

Student Guide to Successful Online Learning

By Ken White and Jason Baker

SheEO's Rock Women in Business Series: 99 Tips to Transform Your Business Today

By Saideh Browne

