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The Open Birdcage

Self-Love Toolkit

S U Z A N N E G I L L
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WELCOME

At the minute, we could all use a little reminder of how incredible we are, especially when we feel like the pandemic is heavily weighing us down, or our jobs are getting the better of us.

We're feeling like we're not doing enough for the kids or our houses are looking like the local tip having to home-school, in some cases while trying to work at the same time.

Practising self-love and self-care can seem a bit over the top, but it's amazing when you have it!

It's like a superpower.

“You need to know that you’re enough. You are complete with or without a partner. You are enough just as you are.”

- MEGHAN MARKLE



SUZANNE GILL
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IMAGINE

Imagine sailing through life,
focusing on the good bits and
using a shield to protect you from
haters and negative Nancys!

When you don't have complete
love for yourself, life can seem
impossible, unachievable and
often frightening.

As self-love is my area of
expertise (as in I have lots of it
and I've taught loads of people
how to have it) this is a subject
on which I feel I have something
to offer.

Loving yourself is a big act, but
life really is much much easier if
you do.

**"All that we are is the result of what
we have thought. The mind is
everything. What we think we
become."**

- THE BUDDHA



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So what's your problem?

Are you feeling sad, low and withdrawn?

Overthinking everything and thoughts are repetitive?

Thinking about past events, then feeling consumed and guilty?

Unable to focus on tasks and feeling unmotivated?

Drinking more booze and eating unhealthily?

Feeling generally lost and not knowing which way to turn next?

I know that many are really feeling the pressure of the current social distancing restrictions, and the lack of connection that has been enforced. And here we go again, another lock-down meaning we can only leave the house to exercise locally, or visit the shops for essential items. During these challenging times, it's increasingly difficult for most people to remain positive.

I know that personally this is affecting me hugely. I've not seen my daughters, family and friends for what feels like forever, so my poor partner is bearing the brunt of my low mood, as my need for touch, connection and conversation is through the roof.

Sound familiar?

If you're experiencing some kind of breakdown remember we are living in a time that is completely abnormal. Try to think of this time as an opportunity to reflect & heal emotional wounds. Write to those who you have had conflict with in the past (and apologise if needed), or even detox your life and start over!

This is your time! You can be whoever you want to be, without any explanation, whatsoever.



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Self-Love Tip #1

Today, make a list of everything you like about yourself and your life, then read it as often as you can. It has to be things about YOU and YOUR life. For example, don't write 'I have really nice friends', instead maybe write 'I am the kind of person who attracts really good people into my life'. The point of the list is to remind yourself of all the good things about you. It's simple and effective.



Self-Love Tip #2

Where possible, only wear clothes that make you feel great. If they don't make you feel comfortable or amazing, give them away! When I began to only wear clothes that made me feel sexy, it made a HUGE difference in my life.

My Nanna always said to me "you never know who you're about to meet, so always be ready"

Get your game face, hair and outfit on every day.



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Self-Love Tip #3

Forgive yourself

All of us have behaved badly at some point and have said & done things we deeply regret. If you can make amends or apologise then do so, this includes apologising to yourself. I recently apologised for something that had been weighing me down for such a long time. It turned out the person involved didn't even think about the incident but I felt so much lighter for finally saying how sorry I was for my actions. If it is impossible to make any amends then start the work of self-forgiveness.

Get a good therapist to help you if you need to, or speak to a close friend. Make sure it's someone you trust. Self-forgiveness is really important to being able to love yourself. If you believe that you have done bad things or are a bad person, it will be very hard to love yourself. Working on yourself is really worth it. It takes time and effort and a willingness to let go of the ego that wants to protect you from change. It's not easy but it is rewarding.

Remember: You can be whoever you want to be!

Self-Love Tip #4

If you feel comfortable to do this, ask your friends/family if they will tell you what they like about you. (Don't do this if your family or friends are mean spirited as it will have the opposite effect intended!)

Write down the things other people have said about you and read it to yourself, often.



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Self-Love Tip #5

Know that you did not deserve the bad things that have happened to you!

You are inherently good, you did not cause bad things to happen to you, you are not responsible for other people's awful actions.

Seek professional support to help you process any trauma you have suffered. If you don't bring it out into the light of consciousness, look hard at it and work through it, then it will keep coming back to fuck you over in your life. It will dictate aspects of your life.

Trauma needs to be felt, validated, processed and healed, not hidden away and buried.

Find a safe space and person to bring it out to and start the journey of healing. I am here for you!



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Self-Love Tip #6

Experience one small thing every day that you love, for you!
Give yourself a break! Take the pressure off!

Stop living by rules that you have created in your head.

Here's an example *'I need to eat my dinner quickly so I can sort out the kid's meals'*.

Do you still eat your dinner quickly? Are your kids now 25 yrs old?

Really think about your routines and the rules that you're sub-consciously sticking by. I bet you'll find that many of them were created at a time when you needed to achieve a specific task, or even to keep yourself safe.

What unnecessary pressure are putting yourself under, especially during a pandemic?

Just:

Sit in the garden * walk the dog * light a few candles * kiss your partner * enjoy a few chocolates * dance with the kids * watch the moon * blast your favourite tunes * have sex * do a jigsaw * call a relative * have a bubble bath * start a journal * learn something new * cook something different * be in nature * meditate

We all need these little important pleasures right now, so stop worrying and just do it!



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Self-Love Tip #7

Realise that you cannot please everyone.

No matter how much of a nice or good person you are someone out there will not like you.

The goal here is to like yourself, not to be liked by everyone else.

The upside is the more you like yourself the less of a shit you'll give about anyone who doesn't like you. People will not like you for the craziest of reasons! I'm aware of those who don't like me simply because I love myself and I show a lot of love to others.

The quantity of people in your life may decrease as you begin your self-love work. Many people are uncomfortable with change, and they might not like the new self-loving you that is emerging. Let them go! You really don't need that kind of negativity in your life. New more aligned friends will arrive, friends who like the self-loving you and do not feel threatened by it.

Self-Love Tip #8

Get sexy!

To have true love for self, you have to admire the way you that you see, feel and touch yourself. Self-love is loving and accepting ALL of your life experience, this includes sexuality. The more conscious you become in how you approach sex, the sexier and more attractive you feel. Get your head around this and you'll fall at your own feet. This is a huge topic but maybe make a start by looking into conscious sexuality or tantra, and get exploring your own pleasure-filled gorgeous body.



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Gratitude:

Did you know that people who are truly grateful for everything they have in their lives are less likely to suffer from depression? This is because gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

What are you grateful for, in this moment?

Make a list, starting with the things that we take for granted - the air that we breathe, water and food, a bed to sleep in, etc etc.

[illegible]

What now?

The thing to remember here is that it is a process, often a slow one - so don't expect to go to maximum self-love in a week.

Small changes are usually the most sustainable remembering that a love for self makes a great bedrock foundation, not only for you but for those around you, especially your kids who observe everything you do and copy your actions. Can you imagine how amazing it would be if our kids imitated your self-love actions for themselves, creating an entire generation of confident people who know only how to express love for self and others?

Every parent, aunty, uncle, carer etc can make a difference, so begin the ripple effect today and show the children in our lives how it's done.

Remember - don't allow the world to dictate how we feel about ourselves. We all have a very different view of reality so focus on your own and don't become clouded by other people's opinions.

Constant positive self-encouragement and self-love certainly increases our self-esteem and confidence, so practise this in a way that's right for you.

This can be different things to different people - for you, it could be surrounding yourself with anti-anxiety remedies like lavender and practicing mindfulness, perhaps it's making sure you have time every day to exercise. Obviously, eating healthily will make you feel much better and will even allow you to feel empowered, as this is something you have complete control of. But it can also be as simple as focusing on topics of wisdom for a few minutes each day, such as Meditation, Nature and Gratitude.



"Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another stepping stone to greatness." - **Oprah Winfrey**

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