

A close-up photograph of a lit oil lamp. The lamp is made of a textured, reddish-brown material, possibly terracotta or wood. A bright flame is visible on the left side, casting a warm, orange glow over the entire scene. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the lamp and its light.

HOW TO LOVE YOURSELF

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
1. THE OIL IN THE LAMP.....	9
2. THE FIVE QUALITIES.....	13
3. THE NEEDS MUST BE HEARD.....	20
4. THE ROAD MAP INSIDE.....	25
5. WRITE AND MEMORIZE.....	29
CONCLUSION.....	34
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	38

INTRODUCTION

Many people loath themselves, though others around them may not be aware of this. I suppose that for many individuals this may not seem like a problem as long as they 'fall in line' and perform the function society wants them to. However, self-hatred truly is a problem, and has much further consequences than just having a 'bad day'. The consequences of self-loathing can effect one's view of him or herself, which then determine how they present themselves to the world, how one chooses to raise his or her children, and whether or not a person chooses to become like the very thing which hated them in the first place. Then, the self-hating person, in turn, becomes a domino in a long line of other dominoes, all of which have learned to hate themselves, falling down in an orderly fashion as they pass on the mad scheme of pointless conformity where no one is truly happy and everyone feels lost; all striving to please each other in a mindless, circular, and pointless fashion, much like a dog who is chasing its own tail.

I became aware of the need to write this book when a woman I had been working with asked me the question of 'How do I learn to love myself?' I had heard her heart-wrenching tale, and saw the depth of pain in her life, much of it coming from her long and lengthy quest for find approval in the eyes of others. After fleeing with her autistic son from one abusive relationship, she entered into another with a man who constantly criticized her for everything she did. Originally the new relationship seemed to work for her as she determined to rise up and make all the changes he required. His insistence for her changes flowed into many areas of her life, including her recreation. They played tennis together and he informed her that she held her racket wrong, her swing was inferior, and her serve was inadequate. She determined to improve, and corrected everything he required of her. Soon, she not only improved her game but began beating him on a regular basis. Of course, her play still was never 'good enough'. Soon he quit playing against her. So, she found others to play with, and even began to enter into competitions. She soon excelled at those, and then went on to compete in larger and larger arenas. However, things soon began to change as her husband began to demand that she alter additional things, things which were fundamentally not in her control. He began to say that she stank. He

would spray the couches she sat on with Lysol, and constantly complained about her odor. She took his critiques to heart, which drove her to counseling. She wondered what was wrong with her, and why she could never be 'good enough' for this man who she obeyed to a tee, or for others she had been with throughout her past. As I contemplated all her suffering which she had endured from the time that she was a child, I saw that she sought for evidences of her worth and value through the eyes of those around her. I informed her that she had forgotten how to love herself, which then sent her on an endless journey to gain approval from sources that would never give it to her.

I contemplated her question about how to love herself for quite a while. I began to jot down various ideas on the topic which came to me over the days that followed. This book is the result of the quest to answer her question and to provide her and numerous others like her, both male and female, with solid reasons on why they have to look no further than in the bathroom mirror for their needed love and approval. In the process of putting down many heartfelt ideas to accomplish my accepted task, I was surprised at the things that I learned. In fact, I knew more after writing this book than I did before and much of that knowledge came because of personal experience with the process that I call 'loving yourself'. That process I have outlined in this book. There are things about you that you fundamentally don't know. If you did know the things I am about to share with you, you would have little choice but to love yourself. It is your ignorance about your true self, which denies you the answers you seek, but that shall be remedied shortly.

When I first learned to type in Junior high school, I recalled staring at the keyboard. I thought to myself, that I could not image learning anything that would cause my fingers to know what to do. I imagine that you may feel a bit like that now. 'How can I learn to love myself?' you may ask and the task may seem daunting when despite all your best efforts you have never done so before. Well, I did learn to type and so I know a person can learn things they couldn't comprehend learning mere moments prior.

As I was contemplating what to say to people like the above mentioned woman I wrote a haiku poem. The poem became the outline that later became the contents of this book. Let me share that poem with

you now and by doing so give you a preview of what you will be learning.
Here it goes:

*How to love yourself
When others haven't done so
Or you forgot how*

*First, accept its time
You no longer need others
To oil your own lamp*

*Next, Believe your self
In your fundamental good
With you all along*

*Non-invented spark
That guided your perception
From the first eye blink*

*Then, learn to listen
To the needs you have inside
Which show you a path*

*Path of happiness
Which is final evidence,
Proof of destiny*

*Finally remind
Yourself constantly of light
Till it's loud and clear*

*Write down in a log
Your daily light encounters
Till you start to see*

*Memorize the words
That bring you the greatest light*

Which none can remove

Thus you have lamp oil

Radiating inside you

For the coming night

In the first chapter of my accepted venture, I will present to you why I believe you must look inward for self love. I will use an old and possibly familiar story to help illustrate a truth that I strongly suspect has been trying to find you. The story is over two thousand years old and some of the things in it may not suit our current culture and circumstances; however, I think that you will be able to look beyond those 'hiccups' and be able to see the tale's deeper meaning. The presented story will then be the foundation upon which I build the rest of this book as I later show you three powerful factors, giving you solid evidence as to why your answers are deeply embedded within you. Then, I will also show you what you can do to build upon your knew awareness to promote a deep heartfelt change in your personal valuation.