

Yes, Self-Love is Important

But sometimes I still fail at it



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This week, I celebrate my second anniversary. That's right. I started seeing a therapist for the first time 2 years ago. The most important takeaway from my sessions? The importance of self-love and how I sucked at it when I started.

I have come a long way since I started. At least now, most days I dress reasonably well when I go out. That beard of mine receives a regular trimming. I make my bed every morning. And I succeeded in creating bedtime routines, which I follow on most days. These are all practical expressions of self-love. I do these things, not because someone demands it of me. But because I deserve it. I deserve to look good. To sleep in a clean bed. To not look like a hobo (Not that hobos don't deserve love, also).

But I also need to be honest. There are periods when my self-doubts creep up

on me. At the time of writing, I have such a period. It has lasted a while. Regular readers noticed how no new posts haven't come in. During these periods I revert back to the old ways.

The habits of bingeing, endless gaming, or fueling my sugar addiction.

I feel lonely and I cannot shake the feeling that I deserve it. It is irrational, I know. I understand the lessons from my therapy sessions. Self-love is important. If not the most important aspect of mental health.

I Understand the Importance of Self-Love on an Intellectual Level

Do you know this situation? That good advice, that you just didn't take? Alanis Morissette even sang about it in her hit "Ironic". And voilà, I again found a reason to include a pop song reference in my posts. It's becoming a trademark of mine, I guess.

Ironic is an accurate descriptor when it comes to mental health and personal growth. Like understanding the idea behind a piece of advice. You get, where it's coming from. You even agree on the necessity of following it. But you never actually put it into practice.

I find myself in that spot sometime when it comes to loving myself. But sometimes, it is the hardest thing to do in the world. And I am sure, I am not the only one.

Enough With the Whining. Here Are Some Tips on Dealing With This Situation

Therapy has given me at least a few useful tools. They can help, when these periods of self-doubt wash over me. Self-love can be hard to mobilize, but we can rebuild it, step-by-step.

1. Radical acceptance

This is the most important tool. Accept your situation. If you need to cry, cry. If you binge for a few days, it is okay. One of my therapists described it like this. "When you fall off the wagon, it is not a step back. Things are exactly how they used to be. Work

from there.”

2. Be grateful for whatever kind acts you do for yourself
Did you get out of bed today? Well done! You even put some clothes on, and went outside? That is worth celebrating. I do not mean this sarcastic. I am dead serious. Some days, that is all the self-love you can muster. And that is okay. You will get back on the wagon again.
3. Let it out
Here is where the importance of an outlet comes in. Share those feelings and insecurities. If you have close friends or relatives, that are willing to put up with it, make use of it. Another way can be to let it through a creative process. You know, like writing a blog post such as this one. Or a poem. Or jot it down in your journal.
4. Be wary of the temptation of dopamine
I know, it sounds counterintuitive to #1. But the fact is, that dopamine fixes are easy to come by in our modern world. Never has it been easier to binge, overeat, consume porn, or whatever else can give you a dopamine hit. Sometimes we fall into these dopamine traps. That is human. But from time to time, we should reflect upon the true motivation behind our consumption. Often, it is to drown our negative feelings, instead of giving us an opportunity to be with them. Being with our negative feelings and emotions is an important exercise. It is the precondition for accepting and addressing them.

Self-Love Is Not the Destination. It Is a Continuous Journey

An important life lesson for me is the fact, that loving myself is not a black-and-white matter. It is a journey. It takes hard work to learn to love yourself. I have traveled enough to know, that every journey has unforeseen interruptions. This current interruption on my self-love journey is much longer than I anticipated. But the fact that I managed to write this post is proof, that I can still see the road ahead. If you struggle with loving yourself from time to time, I hope for you that you can also still see your road ahead.