

TRULY LOVING

Session Objective: To understand the inestimable value of accepting oneself in order to properly relate to others.

GET STARTED

Share what aspect of your physical appearance is giving you much discomfort before others.

REFLECT

1. Telltale signs

Can you personally relate with any of the following? Which of these do you often find yourself into?

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Lingering remorse | g. Envy |
| b. Wishing you're somebody else | h. Self-destructive behaviors |
| c. Not taking care of yourself | i. Can't endure being alone |
| d. Frequent self-criticism | j. Self-pity |
| e. Self-demeaning remarks | k. Substance or food abuse |
| f. Disliking your appearance | |

2. "The Greatest Love of All"

*No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity
Because the greatest love of all
Is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all
Inside of me
The greatest love of all
Is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
It is the greatest love of all*

- h. *"No amount of self-improvement can make up for any lack of self-esteem."*
—Robert Holden
- i. *Self-acceptance is the first step to embracing of differences in others.*
—Julie Hanks
- j. *"Of course we need to accept ourselves as we are, but we can't stop there. We also need to value ourselves enough make needed changes."*
— Steve Goodier
- k. Self-acceptance is never selfishness or pride. It is a healthy estimate and acceptance of the person that you are, acknowledging both your strengths and limitations and the things that make you unique as a person. It is being comfortable in your own skin.

OPEN UP

Share your journey towards true self-acceptance. What are the areas of your life that you still need to exercise more acceptance?

WORK OUT

Think of what can you do to help yourself more to accept yourself. Write these things below.

What is it that Whitney Houston called as “the greatest love of all,” and in what sense it can be?

3. Whitney Houston

Whitney Houston went down in history as one of the most powerful yet soulful female voice of her generation. She touched the hearts of millions with her songs, the best, perhaps, is “The Greatest Love of All.”

Her death in 2012 by drowning related to drug abuse came as a shock, but not as a surprise. For year her life had been spiraling downwards. Series of bad decisions, continued bouts with addiction, unhappy relationships, neglected career, all these got her the attention of the media in some regretful ways. Two days before she died, she left a nightclub drenched in sweat, disoriented and alternately waving and cursing.

Whitney Houston had an inner monster to fight, and it defeated her in the end. As a tribute to her, Kevin Costner said, “The Whitney I knew, despite her success and worldwide fame wondered, “Am I good enough?” “Am I pretty enough?” “Will they like me?” It was the burden that made her great and the part that caused her to stumble in the end.”

She sang about the greatest love of all which is “learning to love yourself,” but she never got to live by it.

4. Thoughts on Self-acceptance

a. *“The lack of self-acceptance is the essence of the moral problem. It is also the acid test of one’s whole outlook in life. That I feed the beggar, that I forgive an insult, that I love my enemy in the name of Christ—all these are undoubtedly great virtues... But what if I should discover that the least among them all, the poorest of all the beggars, the most impudent of all offenders, yes the very fiend himself—that these are in me, and I myself stand in need of the alms of my own kindness, that I myself am the enemy who must be loved— what then?”*

— Jung, to a group of ministers, 1932

b. “Love is forgiving, accepting, moving on, embracing, and all “You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.”

— Gautama Buddha

c. *Low self-esteem robs you of the joy and power of being you. Without the proper levels of self-esteem you are unable to enjoy the gifts you have to share with the world no matter how many people tell you they love you and those gifts. Low self-esteem leaves you feeling alone and unsatisfied.* —Kim Kasparian, Success Coach

d. “While we are all in the process of becoming as ever-changing, ever-evolving beings... it's essential to remember that we are also enough, just as we are, right now, in this moment. When we are able to accept ourselves as we are, we are better able to accept others, as they are. Personal growth thrives in an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness.” — Jaeda DeWalt

e. *“One of the best guides to how to be self-loving is to give ourselves the love we are often dreaming about receiving from others. There was a time when I felt lousy about my over-forty body, saw myself as too fat, too this, or too that. Yet I fantasized about finding a lover who would give me the gift of being loved as I am. It is silly, isn't it, that I would dream of someone else offering to me the acceptance and affirmation I was withholding from myself. This was a moment when the maxim “You can never love anybody if you are unable to love yourself” made clear sense. And I add, “Do not expect to receive the love from someone else you do not give yourself.”* — Bell Hooks, All About Love: New Visions

f. *“I’m nothing great. But I’m a rose... I’m a rose whether I’m admired or not, I’m a rose whether anyone’s crazy about me or not... Like I said, nothing great. Just a rose... But, do you know what it means to be a rose, my friend? Being a rose means ‘freedom.’ It means not existing by the praises of others or not ceasing to exist by their disapproval.”* — Serdar Özkan

g. *“Love is forgiving, accepting, moving on, embracing, and all encompassing. And if you’re not doing that for yourself, you cannot do that with anyone else.”* - Steve Maraboli