

Ep #279: Why Self-Love Isn't Fluff — It's the Key to Healing Old Wounds



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With Your Host

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[How to Love Yourself No Matter What](#) with Amanda Hess

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If beating yourself up worked, you'd already feel better. Self-love isn't fluff. Self-love is what is going to make healing from your trauma possible. In today's episode, I'm going to walk you through the self-love process that I use on my clients so that you can use it for yourself. Let's go.

This show is for women who've been labeled, misdiagnosed, or misunderstood. Whether you have a diagnosis or just know deep down that you experience life differently, this is your space to stop fixing yourself and start trusting who you already are. My name is Amanda Hess. Let's go.

Okay, my friend. Welcome to How to Love Yourself No Matter What. If you're new here, I want you to know that this podcast is where I show you how self-love is an underutilized tool that you can use to take your life from surviving to thriving. Self-love is how you can go from overthinking and over-analyzing every problem into feeling mentally and emotionally at peace while also creating the life you have been dreaming about.

It can be tempting to believe that the cure to overthinking and over-analyzing is fixing the problems. But it isn't. It doesn't work. And if you ask me how I know that's true, I'm going to ask you to look at how not utilizing self-love is working for you so far. So when I jump on a discovery call or I begin coaching a new client, she will always come to the call with a mental checklist of the things that have gone wrong and that continue to go wrong with her life.

Now, first of all, of course she does, because we don't hire a life coach when life feels amazing. We hire a life coach when life feels hard. But I really want to get into this with you. So let's talk about what self-love is and what self-love isn't.

First of all, self-love is a feeling. It's a feeling that we can feel in our body. It's an emotion. It's a vibration that is generated by our big old brain. And it's important to know that the emotion of love comes from what we think and comes from what we believe.

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So thoughts are just that. Thoughts are thoughts. Thoughts are not facts. Thoughts are things that our brain comes up with, and we have thousands of them every day. And a belief is simply a thought that we have had and have confirmed many times in a row. So it is one of those what I'll call automatic thoughts. And what that means is that sometimes we can feel love without really identifying the thought that creates it. It can feel automatic. It can feel like love arrives without a thought. So for instance, as an example, I love my kids. It appears in my body when I think of them, when I talk about them, or when I see them. And the belief creates an automatic feeling. So I experience love because I have the belief that I love my kids.

All right? So self-love is a feeling that is created in your body that is generated when you see or when you think about yourself. All right? So that's the definition of self-love. Now, it's important to talk about what self-love is not. Self-love is not an action. We can take an action from a feeling of self-love, but it's not in itself an action. Self-love is not giving up on yourself. Self-love is not being tough on yourself. Self-love is not being nice to yourself. Self-love is not a bubble bath. Self-love is not giving yourself a break. That is what self-love is not.

Instead, self-love is a feeling that we use to fuel our actions. So if we have a bubble bath, for instance, and we are beating ourselves up and we are having this overthinking, awful feeling inside of ourselves, and so we decide that we're going to have a bubble bath, and then we can't shut our brain off, so we pour ourselves a glass of wine and scroll our phone to keep ourselves distracted, does that come from love? And the answer is no. It comes from rejecting an emotion, which will ultimately create more anxiety and it will create more spinning thoughts and more negative emotion.

So it's important to know this because the things that you do are not as important as the things that you think. Now, before we move along, I want you to know that there's no universe where you will be self-loving all the time. You won't be. You're human. You can have self-love and still experience doubt and fear and failure. You can have self-love and still

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experience shame and guilt. And that's because those emotions are a part of the human experience. We are supposed to have them.

However, there is the emotion and then there is the pain. And they don't go hand in hand. Emotions do not always have to be painful. And we want to be careful to not extend the pain. So sometimes the emotion will be painful in the moment. If you think about going through a breakup, if you think about the experience of finding out that someone has just passed away, if you experience walking into your house and your kids have had a huge party and the rush of anger, right? At the beginning there is pain, but we don't have to extend the pain. And this is important.

So let's talk about trauma, because that's what this episode is all about. Let's talk about the hard shit that has happened or potentially is happening to you right now.

The first thing I want you to know is that whenever I'm helping someone, be it a client or myself, I never want to gaslight. So the first thing I want you to know is that feelings are facts. If you are feeling a feeling, if you are feeling an emotion, you are feeling it. And what that means is that if you feel hurt or scared or disgusted or ashamed or guilty, this feeling is the truth in that the vibration of that emotion is happening in your body. And a lot of times, a lot of times when it's coming from trauma or past hurt, it can be instantaneous. It can show up and we don't even realize we're in it until we're in the middle of it. We just find ourselves smack dab in a trauma response. We are in fight, flight, freeze, fawn, and we don't know how we got there. And you might find yourself arguing or yelling or shutting down or being passive aggressive, and that's when the spiral starts, because that's when the thinking starts.

Those thoughts look like, why do you always do this? What the fuck is wrong with you? You know better than to do that. You are constantly freaking out. You are constantly shutting down. You're perpetually sabotaging yourself. And it all feels so true. And in fact, you could probably

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pull a few family members and confirm the story that you tell about yourself. And that makes it seem even more true. But it isn't.

And here's where we want to start looking at self-love. I am not a fan of thought swapping, of trying to think the opposite. No, I'm not always freaking out or I am actually doing a good job. And we do a lot of that. What I find is that a lot of times women will have an awareness of what is going on, and they will see the looping thinking and they will get that it's happening, but they still can't break free. And the reason why is because the judgment about you, about what happened, about how you are now, it is just thoughts. But a lot of those thoughts you might believe are true. You might have had those thoughts confirmed for months or for years or even for decades. And judgment is really tough to step out of.

And a lot of times it's because it's become a habit, and it's a hard habit to break. Because there is a latent belief that it is useful. And I want to make a case for judgment being the killer of healing from trauma. I think that judgment is the death of happiness, and judgment is the death of getting over something. So when we judge ourselves as being not smart enough or not being capable enough to get through this, this creates a problematic vortex. And what I want you to know is it's not about me being right or you being wrong. It's about results. The result of this line of thinking is negative emotions like shame, frustration, overwhelm, and personal dissatisfaction, and maybe even personal disgust. And what this creates is actions that make you show up smaller, show up less confident, show up needy of other people's approval, and ultimately create, create and increase pain.

This creates emotional pain. And that's the piece I really want to cover today. Secondary emotional pain. And what I mean by that is pain that we experience after the initial emotion, okay? After we experience the emotion when it first hits, that additional pain that gets added on by all of that thinking is optional if you learn the skill of self-love. And self-love, my friend, is a skill. It is not something we're born with. It's not something we're taught. It is a skill, and like any skill, you can learn it. So when I'm looking

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at using the skill of self-love in this case, what it looks like is understanding what to do with all that judgment.

I want you to think right now about somebody or something that you love unconditionally. And I want you to consider that this kind of unconditional love, the person or thing that you're thinking of, there is nothing that person or thing could do that would make you not love them. So it could be a kid, it could be a pet.

First, I want to have you just find the feeling that you feel in your body when you think about this person or this pet. I like to think about my kids, but I could also think about my dog. There's actually several people that I could think about. But when I find love in my body, if I just take a deep breath right now, I feel love in my heart and my chest. It's big. It's warm. It's soft. It feels like a gooey cookie. It's like a hug. That's what love feels like to me.

Now, if I take that feeling and then consider if the person or animal or thing you love did something bad, something really bad, maybe destroyed your house, would you still love them? And of course the answer is yes. You might be angry with them, but you would still love them. That feeling of love might not be as strong, but it's still in there, and you use that to decide what to do next if you let love lead.

And you and I both know that you will create more of what you were looking for using love as the leader than you would if you let the anger lead. This is nuanced. It's important to see that anger and love can exist at the same time. Shame and love can exist at the same time. Frustration and love can live at the same time. I want you to see the nuance because when it comes to love or really any other emotion, we tend to be very black and white the way we think about it. And I want you to find the nuance and the shades of gray. And I want you to consider that two things can be true at the same time because this is the key.

Now, I want you to swing back to what we were saying about trauma. How we can be mad at ourselves and think we need to be smarter, stronger, or

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better. Because it still hurts so bad, right? We're mad at ourselves because it shouldn't hurt like this anymore. And that's how the judgment comes in.

And before I move along about this, I want you to know something. This is how our brains are supposed to work. It is our brain's misguided way of trying to protect us. It thinks it will keep you safe if you know that it's important that you be smaller, if you know that you need to take less risks, if you know that you need to be less trusting. But the thing that you might not know is that everyone's brain is risk averse. Our survival brain wants to keep us safe. It wants to keep you from danger. So if you're feeling all that negative emotion, it wants you to stay in the cave where nothing bad can happen. But here is the universal truth. If you stay in that cave, nothing good can happen either. And this is where those of us that struggle with trauma and pain can get stuck. In order for good things to happen, we have to leave the cave. We have to start making strides to trust our ability to create good things in our life. And to do that, we have to tap into self-love.

Because self-love is just aiming that loving feeling that you generate in your body towards yourself. Towards the younger version of you who struggled, towards the younger version of you who was deeply hurt. We tend to her, we love her. But we don't have to keep telling her story. Instead, we can tell a different story. The one where we deeply love that girl that got hurt. But we are also deeply committed to having our own back because we know that is the fuel that will create happiness.

When we get triggered and freak out or shut down, we bring love to the table and we let her have a say. What if that's okay that you snapped? What if it's okay that you weren't perfect there? How can we love ourselves through this? Or even just simply, what would love do here? Notice how I'm not telling you what to do. The questions that I've asked here will define it. Use love and put down judgment as much as you can and repeat as needed. That's the prescription.

When we do this, we build new beliefs. Our core emotional experience can shift. We can experience less pain. And we get more and more practiced at

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desensitizing the additional pain. And the pain and the trauma doesn't disappear, but instead we grow around it. We grow love around it and we watch our experience change. We watch the overthinking slip away. We no longer over-analyze. Life becomes simpler and more clear. And the more we do this, the better we get and the better we feel. And the hold that the trauma had on us lessens.

Self-love isn't fluffy, okay? Self-love is a practice. Self-love is a discipline. If you want to do any discipline in your life, the only one that I always will 100% approve of is the discipline of choosing self-love because it always pays out.

Okay, my friend. This is what I've got for you today. I hope you have a beautiful week. And I will see you here next time. Bye for now.

Thanks so much for listening today. If this podcast is helping you, please follow wherever you listen and consider leaving a review. It truly helps this community grow and allows me to support more women like you. I'm excited to see you back here next week with a brand new episode. Until then, take care, friend.