

# *Passion for Life Coaching*

*Making Deliberate Choices for a Fulfilling Life*

Newsletter by Suzette Langley, Life Coach and MSW

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## **Love Thyself**

As I pondered what to write about in this month's newsletter, I became inspired by Valentine's Day. What picture comes to mind when you think of Valentine's Day? I usually think of couples, romance, flowers and chocolate. Sound familiar? For those of us who have ever spent this holiday of love alone (and we have all been there sometime), it can be very disappointing. This year, I would like propose a new way to celebrate Valentine's Day.

My proposal is that we use Valentine's Day to express love for ourselves. Did you just do a double take or pause to think for a moment? You may be saying, "I love myself, thank you very much!" Or, maybe you are saying, "Love myself? What? Is this some crazy, new-aged idea?" Perhaps you think, "Loving myself is selfish. I am not a selfish person." Regardless of your response, read on and consider my proposal with an open mind.

Creating time to pursue our interests is one way to express to love for ourselves. Often times, we believe we are so busy that we do not have time for the things we enjoy such as reading a good book, playing a video game, or scrap booking. We push ourselves to stay on task with an endless list of chores and end up feeling cheated and angry that we never get to do what we want to do. Taking the time to do activities that we love can energize us. We feel satisfied and send ourselves the message that our personal interests are just as important as washing the dishes, mowing the lawn, or getting groceries.

Now, consider this question, does how you care for your body express how you care about yourself? We often neglect or take for granted how our bodies operate or feel. For example, have you ever used sugar or caffeine for a quick burst of energy? You know that when the sugar and caffeine wear off, you will feel more lethargic than before. Making better food choices will keep your energy at a consistent level and help you stay more alert. Choosing to exercise increases our level of self-care by protecting us against a variety of health-related problems including high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. In addition to these benefits, exercise also produces a sense of accomplishment and creates more energy to use throughout the day. Another way to love ourselves is to maintain our physical appearance. Attention to small details, such as a new outfit or a new hairstyle, can increase confidence. Have you ever observed differences in how you interact with others when you are dressed professionally versus when you are dressed in sweat pants? Feeling and acting confident makes us more attractive to others. Finally, listening to our body's signals is a form of self love. Do you feel tired? Sick? Frustrated? Tense? By listening to what your body is telling you, you may be able to prevent a cold or take time off before you feel you have "gone over the edge."

Another way to love yourself is to give yourself permission to be as you are. If you are sad, be sad. If you are angry, be angry. If you are sick, take time to recover. Don't try to fight where you are emotionally or physically. Unexpressed emotions will remain unresolved and take up energy that you could focus elsewhere. Recognize that if you are sick, the best you can do that day is not the same as your best on a day when you feel 100%. Recently, I had a cold. As frustrating as it was, I had to recognize my limitations and allow myself time to rest even though I wanted to be working more. If I had not recognized my temporary limitations, I would have been critical of myself and felt inadequate and discouraged about my accomplishments. Allowing myself to be where I was let me recover and get back on track faster. Allow yourself the knowledge that your best will change depending on your physical and emotional state each day.

Robert Penn Warren once said, "What is love? One name for it is knowledge." Two ways we can love ourselves is to know our needs and know our values. Needs vary from person to person and can be situational. Some people have a need for stability; others need to be appreciated. When our needs go unmet, they prevent us from being our best. For example, I have a need to be creative. Without a creative outlet, I become unhappy and restless. I have discovered that one way I can meet my need for creativity is through writing. When we know our needs, we can take action to meet them and to express our needs to others. Knowing our values is also an important part of loving ourselves. Values are core beliefs that direct how we act and the choices we make. When we know our values, we can make choices that honor who we are and increase our satisfaction and fulfillment. Some examples of values are beauty, service, and leadership. Individuals express values differently. For instance, one person who values beauty may choose work in an art gallery while another person may participate in community improvement projects. Either way, living in accordance with our values brings a deep sense of contentment. Identifying your needs and values is a process that requires time and thought. However, what you learn and how this knowledge will guide your daily actions will be priceless.

In conclusion, loving yourself is not about being egocentric. It is about creating love so that you have love to give. My wish for you this Valentine's Day is that you may find the time to indulge in self-care and show yourself how much you are loved.

The first great step is to like yourself enough to pick someone who likes you, too. – James Riley

To learn more about coaching, visit my website at [www.passion-for-life-coaching.com](http://www.passion-for-life-coaching.com).

If you found valuable information in this newsletter, please pass it along. I welcome new subscribers! To subscribe/unsubscribe, please send an email to [passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net](mailto:passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net). I also welcome feedback and topic ideas.

Coaching can help you find ways to love yourself on a daily basis by helping you create time for your interests, improving how you care for your body, and identifying your needs and values so that you can make decisions that honor who you are. To find out more, contact me at [passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net](mailto:passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net) or 410-757-7326 to learn more or to schedule a complimentary 30-minute session. Coaching sessions are generally conducted via telephone so they do not require that you reside in the same area as the coach.