



The Importance of Loving Yourself

By [M.J. Clark](#), MA, APR

The other day, my 9-year-old son Connor was not feeling well so I kept him home from school. We were sitting in the living room, talking about random things, when Connor said, "I want to tell you who my five best friends are." I thought to myself, this should be interesting. "Who are your five best friends?" I asked.

"My five best friends are God, me, Josh, Jared, and Caitie," he said, "in that order." I expected the last three to be on his list, because I know these kids well, but I never would have guessed the first two.

"Did I hear you right?" I asked. "Did you say that **you** were on your list, like **you** are one of your best friends?"

"Yes," he said. "I really like myself, and I'm definitely one of my best friends."

"It's really important for you to love yourself in order to share your best self with all the other people in your life," I said. "It's really great that you feel that way. What do you like most about yourself?"

"Well, I'm cute – people always tell me that. I'm funny. I have a lot of friends, so that means that people like me. I'm smart, because I get good grades. I'm nice to other people. I really like who I am."

As he finished up his answer to my question, I realized that Connor was not being arrogant or superior. He was just stating the evidence he saw that proved he was worthy of his own love. And yet it was strange for me to hear another person talk about why he likes himself. I think we often rely on someone else to tell us we're okay or worthy or good enough. And even though we might tell ourselves on the inside that we are good at certain things or nice to others, we don't often speak those words. To say those words out loud, I can say personally, would probably feel selfish and arrogant.

A few years back, I spoke at an [eWomenNetwork](#) luncheon about affirmations. At that meeting, we discussed the exercise of saying certain affirmations in the mirror to boost self-esteem. One woman shared that her therapist had suggested this very exercise, and the affirmation the therapist wanted to her to end with each day was "I love you," said into the mirror. She told us that she could say all of the affirmations into her mirror except that one. When she got to that one, she just froze and couldn't speak and felt like crying.

Why do we find it so hard to love ourselves? Don't we have admirable qualities? Aren't we loving and caring toward others? Why can't we also be loving and caring toward ourselves?

When we manage our stress effectively, I think we are loving ourselves. When we take time to meditate, to play a sport, to exercise, to spend time with good friends or to get a massage, we are demonstrating our love of self. And how many of us won't make room for these important activities in our schedule? We say we "can't", but really we **won't** make the time. We are in charge of how we spend our time.

Will you commit to loving yourself by carving out time to care for yourself? Can you look in the mirror and convincingly say, "I love you?" Try it tonight and let me know how it goes.