

Loving All of Me

(Even Those Parts I Thought I Had to Hate!)



by Aimee Serafini

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About the Author



Aimee Serafini is a women's empowerment coach and an energy psychology practitioner specializing in helping women transform their relationships with themselves and others, specifically through processing and letting go of our negative beliefs and memories and choosing new beliefs that serve us better. She is a strong proponent of women's unique gifts and abilities to change the world into a more loving and harmonious place.

She is the author of *Loving All of Me, Even Those Parts I Thought I Had to Hate!* She also is the creator of the TANGO System for Happier Relationships™, a five step process to help people feel more connected and at peace with their relationships.

HOW CAN I LOVE ALL OF ME?

Believe me there, are parts that aren't so great.

I know, it does seem crazy that I would even suggest that you love ALL OF YOU. I mean there's got to be some parts and character traits that aren't that lovable.

And it would just be a lie to say you love those parts, right?

Or would it???

What I would like to suggest to you in this book, is that it is possible to love ALL OF YOU. Not just the good parts.

Because you are human, not a sum of your parts. Your parts make up ALL OF YOU, and one thing I know FOR SURE, is that YOU deserve love. It is your birthright, just like it is a baby's birthright to the love of its parents, it is your birthright to the love of yourself.

And in order to love yourself, you need to include those parts you think aren't so hot. Because it is those very parts that make ALL OF YOU awesome. You wouldn't be who you are without them.

But I totally get that it's not so simple as just saying Oh, okay, I guess I'll just choose to see myself as awesome.

I too used to judge myself very harshly (and sometimes still do). I used perfection for my standard. If I wasn't perfect, I wasn't good enough. I had to try harder! I had to work harder! Because I wasn't acceptable as I was. Only perfect was acceptable.

So I was never happy with where I was or what I was doing, because it wasn't good enough. And since nobody is ever "perfect" in anything (even Michael Jordan missed half the baskets he attempted), I could never be satisfied. Never be happy.

I couldn't enjoy what I did have, even if other people thought it was great, because I KNEW BETTER. I knew I could have / should have done better.

One time in 8th grade I got a 98% on my science test. But I retook the test because it had to be perfect - I needed 100%!

Whenever I've worked hard to lose weight, I could still name 10 things that I didn't like and that is all I looked at in the mirror. And it's funny because I've been told since I was little that I have nice eyes, but do you think I EVER looked at those in the mirror??? No, they were dismissed - I had nothing to do with them, was just born with them. I couldn't take any credit. And because it seemed much more important that I focus on the imperfections. To remind myself that I wasn't good enough YET.

When I have a spot on my face, I STARE at it, even when I'm washing my hands. Not the 99.9% of my face that is perfectly fine, I stare at the imperfection.

Sound familiar?

Do those same type of thoughts go through your head? Do you beat yourself up for every mistake you make? And for every time you aren't perfect? Do you feel like you let yourself down?

Well it's just not me and you in this club.

So many women - my friends, my clients, and probably your friends as well - we all have this running judgment in our heads. Telling us when we could have done better - which is most of the time it seems.

“That was such an idiot thing to say!” (to the pizza delivery guy?)

“Ugh, I'm so clumsy for tripping!” (everybody trips)

“I have such a terrible memory!” (no remarks about the hundreds of things you remember each day)

Words that we would never say to our children, friends, or loved ones - we give free reign to say to ourselves, as often and as harshly as we can.

We generously give our loved ones leeway to mess up, but we don't allow ourselves.

Maybe your career isn't exactly where a "perfect" woman's career would be, maybe your children have temper tantrums, maybe you have a stomach pooch, maybe your house isn't Martha Stewart perfect. And you focus on all things that your life is not, and judge yourself for that.

I hear this time and again from so many women.

And it really is heartbreaking, because we really are amazing wonderful women who give so much of ourselves, but still feel badly about who we are not. Where we've failed to become perfect.

Over the years in my practice as a women's empowerment coach, I realized that in order to achieve AND maintain any goals, you must have a healthy loving view towards yourself. Not only did I see this for my clients, but I also realized it for myself. I knew I couldn't step up and really help empower women if I didn't feel fully alive and deserving myself.

So I developed and refined a self-esteem practice (which I use daily) for my clients, combining ideas and advice from many different sources (Louise Hay, Debbie Ford, Emotional Freedom Technique, my own), so that my clients (and I!) could start letting go of the harsh voices and negative loop in their head. And THEN start using a positive, encouraging voice so that you cheerlead yourself to be/do/have exactly what you want.

As I started hearing about the results, I realized that this process, helping women to REALLY LOVE THEMSELVES, was the core of my mission. What I am most passionate about. Because all things are possible once we love ourselves.

I truly believe that women can change the world. To help right it again after so many millennia of masculine domination - to balance the feminine and masculine so that the whole world is more balanced. Where not just aggression and reaching goals is valued, but collaboration and kindness and building relationships too. And I think as a group, if we women can support each other in this process, we can totally make it happen.

OK, that just got a little heavy! Really, this practice is about you personally. We can save the world later.

So in this book, I would like to share with you this simple practice that you can easily start implementing today to help take the steps toward loving yourself.

BUT WAIT...DOESN'T MY NEGATIVE TALK ALSO HELP ME?

Maybe you aren't convinced you need this yet. I've had many a client say the negative talk helps them to be better, to strive for more! Really? So if that is truly the best way to motivate someone to do better, is that what you do with your loved ones?

Do you tell your children what losers they are when they don't make a museum worthy painting? Do you tell your best friend she looks fat? Thinking you will inspire them to paint better and lose weight?

No, you tell your children you are proud of them and you actually genuinely appreciate the painting for what it is. You tell your friend that she has amazing skin and encourage her by cheering her on at the 5k walk.

You instinctively know that criticizing and belittling people only deflates them and discourages them. Makes

them want to give up. Feel bad about themselves. Make them depressed.

But it's difficult to apply that logic to ourselves. Somehow WE are different; we DESERVE that kind of language. At least that's what it feels like. But what makes YOU different to everybody else in the world? Why is there an exception just for you???

There isn't!!!

You deserve support and encouragement just like every other person in this world.

Really, this negative talk is just a bad habit we get into and then find it impossible to break. And it's not even your fault. Your mother probably had a similar issue, or you were hurt/betrayed/insulted by others growing up so that you built this habit as a way to protect yourself. Your subconscious mind probably thought, If I tell myself I'm a loser first, it won't hurt when someone else does.

Once you realize it is a habit, then you also know it IS possible to break the habit - but it is crucial that you start a new habit specifically designed to replace it. Which is what The Mirror Technique™ that I will share with you was created for.

And I'm not saying that a bit of constructive feedback is never useful, just that constant criticism does NOT get results. In fact it is the opposite. It drags us down and prevents us from enjoying our lives.

So if it makes feel you bad AND it makes things worse, then it makes sense to reverse that - so that you can both feel good and start getting more of the results that you want, and enjoy them when you get them.

Plus, it feels good and is fun! ALL of my clients have reported they enjoy it.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM STUART SMALLEY?

I love that Saturday Night Live skit too. "I'm good enough. I'm smart enough. And doggone it, people like me." 😊
And affirmations are great, and are incorporated in the technique, but in a different, even more effective way.

See first, and this is the step that is left out of so many self-love building exercises, you have to acknowledge the negative. I find most affirmations try to pretend that the negative doesn't exist. That's like painting over moldy walls, and pretending that now the mold is gone. But the mold is still there, still growing, but you just can't see it. You can still feel its effects though.

So first you need to acknowledge that there is negative. Let it out. And LOVE it. More on that later.

And then, yes, you will be giving yourself affirmations in the second step, meaning positive statements about yourself, but you will be coming at it from a feeling

standpoint. Instead of focusing on what you are to other people (and doggone it, people like me!), you will be focusing on how you want to feel about yourself. Once you can master that, you will find it reflected back to you in your life and relationships.

So give The Mirror Technique™ a try. The basic formula follows. Once you've got the hang of it, I encourage you to sign up for the advanced techniques that can be sent to you via email. If you got this e-book from my website directly, you will automatically receive them in the next few weeks. If you received this ebook elsewhere, please visit www.aimeeserafini.com/beyourownvalentine to sign up to receive the emails.

Have fun!

THE MIRROR TECHNIQUE™ BASIC FORMULA

The mirror technique is pretty simple and easy to do. It can be done anywhere there is a mirror - your house, a car, the bathroom at work, even a handheld mirror works. I recommend at least in the beginning that you practice when you are alone. Here are the first two steps:

STEP 1

Make two lists (the worksheet at the end will help you keep organized, I recommend printing it out):

- a. A list of the THINGS that you DON'T like about yourself. The more specific the better. You can write down "my body", but if there is a specific reason or part you don't like that you find yourself staring at every time you look in the mirror, write that down, "my stomach is fat", "my breasts are too small/big", "I have eczema". Any area of your life is fine. "I don't clean the house as often as I

should“. “I procrastinate.” “I snap at my children”. Write down anything that bothers you about yourself, that you judge yourself for. Stop when you get to 5 on your list. You can change them later, but choose the 5 things you are most critical about at first.

- b. Then you are going to rate how intensely you dislike each thing about yourself on a scale of 0-10, where 0 means you are completely at peace with it and never think about it, and 10 means you worry about it every day and feel intense self-hatred about it. The purpose of the rating is to help you tune into exactly how much it is affecting you and also to give you a baseline to see how much progress you are making.
- c. Your second list is of how you would like to FEEL about yourself, if you could wave a magic wand. These are not task oriented, but emotion oriented. Things like Confident. Happy. Peaceful. Patient. Grateful. Sexy. Organized. Productive.

(not things like a good cook - that's a job, not an emotion)

- d. Then you are also going to rate your intensity on a scale of 0-10 but this time where 0 means you totally already feel that way now, and 10 means you don't feel that way at ALL. So if you choose to feel confident, but you are already feel you are a pretty confident person but could be a little better, maybe that'd be a 3. But if you have no confidence whatsoever and can't even imagine having confidence, then it would be a 10. Eventually you will get the ratings of both lists down to 0.

STEP 2

Stand in front of a mirror and while looking at yourself IN THE EYES, making eye contact with yourself, say the following:

- a. I love you (name) .

b. I love you because ____ (thing you DON'T like about yourself) ____.

WHAT???

You want me to say I love myself because my stomach is fat? Because I procrastinate? Because I am impatient with my children?? WHAT???. I can't love myself for that! It's not true!!!!

Yes, I want you to love yourself BECAUSE of it. That may seem FALSE, but really think about it. Couldn't your "fat stomach" deserve love too?!? Imagine that you are your stomach, always feeling/hearing words of condemnation and ridicule. Never being appreciated for all that it DOES do for you. Because it does do a lot for you. Most of your primary organs are there, that make your life possible. Your abdominal muscles make most of your movement possible. Even the fat is storing energy for you and protecting you from toxins. And if you gave birth, think what that area had to do to carry your child! It is doing the best job it can, and it deserves LOVE.

But procrastinating can't possibly be good! Yes, it can. Procrastination is your body/mind's way of protecting you from doing something that seems like it will be unpleasant or that the results will cause something unpleasant or uncomfortable. Your body and mind is trying to protect you! Doesn't it deserve love for that?

But I can't love myself for snapping at my children!!! Yes you can! You can love yourself for trying so hard to be a good mother. A bad mother wouldn't care if she snapped at her children. You are trying to do so much and your snapping is evidence of that. If you didn't have a care in the world; all the time, help, and money you needed - do you think you would snap at your children? No, but because you are making things work, juggling so much, sometimes it gets to be too much and you snap. Or if you didn't care if they were misbehaving, that they could be turning into bratty kids, would you snap? You wouldn't say a thing. After all you don't snap at strangers' children in the supermarket. You snap BECAUSE you love your children, and that part of you deserves love.

And not only does every part of you deserve love, but if you do want to transform it - you need to let go of the resistance to having it. The longer you resist what is, the more difficult it will be to transform. It's like you want to go through a door and you are pushing and pushing on it and it remains firmly shut. In order to open it, you have to pull it. But you can't pull it open until you stop pushing. Once you let go of the pushing and resenting that this door can't be pushed open, you have the space to pull it open.

So it's just like when you hate something about yourself, you are resisting having it, not accepting it, and you aren't giving yourself any space to transform it.

Give yourself some love and acceptance instead of the judgment and resistance, and see how much space you open up for yourself for real change.

BTW, if you cannot figure out how to love and accept a certain part/trait of you, email me - I will write a blog post about it to give you some ideas (this is one of my

specialties!) - and I'm sure many other women will appreciate it too.

So that's the first part of the technique. Loving yourself because of it. I recommend repeating each statement at least 5 times while looking in the mirror. And saying it with real emotion, looking into your own eyes, focusing on yourself, not reading it off the page. Once you let go of the negative, you give the positive statements room to set up shop.

And yes, the mirror is an important part of the process. You could just say the words to yourself in your head while lying in bed, but saying them out loud, looking in your eyes, is a much deeper connection with yourself. More powerful. You can't just gloss over it like you can in your head. Try it both ways and you will see what I mean.

SUPER IMPORTANT !!!

Expressing love toward yourself can be very emotional the first few times you try it. Some women find it overwhelming to offer themselves love and breakdown crying or feel nauseated. That is perfectly normal. If that happens, be patient with yourself. You can try a couple of different variations: 1) stand across the room from the mirror so that you are looking at yourself from a distance; 2) say *I'm open* to loving myself for _____; and 3) if even that is tough you can say *I'm open to one day* being able to love myself for _____.

As you continue with your practice, you will find you will be able to stand closer to the mirror and eventually be able to say you love yourself, but don't put a rush on it. There is no "perfect" way to do this. You cannot be wrong or slow! Whatever you experience is exactly the right experience you need.

STEP 3

The third step is similar, but you are going to name the EMOTIONS that you want to feel. It's important that the list is not focusing on specific result or behavior, but on a specific feeling. That means you are open to it showing up in whatever form it arrives.

Looking at yourself in the mirror you will say:

I am (name of chosen emotion) . I love that about myself.

Example: "I am a confident woman. I love that about myself."

I also like to mix it up a little like: I love how confident I am. I feel so confident, and it feels great. I love being this confident woman and letting all my natural confidence out. I love feeling confident when I am at work, when I'm with my children. I love how it lifts me up and inspires me. Because I totally deserve to be confident.

Again, I recognize this probably doesn't sound true for you, YET. That's okay, just say it anyway. Because the truth is, those qualities ARE inside you. They either just aren't recognized and appreciated when they are on display, or they are "told" so often that they don't exist that they go in to hiding. Encouraging yourself to recognize your good qualities will bring them out in the light and let you begin to enjoy them in full force.

I like to add in "I love that about myself", because even though it sounds like a no-brainer that you want that for yourself, that you want to feel attractive for example, we still often have unconscious resistance to feeling that way, because it doesn't feel safe. It might feel like bragging, or thoughts of who do you think you are? So I like to wrap it in love so I'm sending the message that it is safe.

THAT'S IT!

That's the mirror technique! I seriously look forward to this every single day, and ALL of my clients enjoy it too.

You might feel a little silly at first, so definitely start in privacy. But once you get going, you will notice how good it feels. How good it feels to be loved and to visually see yourself giving love and acceptance to yourself. And that same love and acceptance will spill over into your other relationships as well. You will start to feel loving and accepting in general.

At first you might feel some resistance to loving and accepting yourself. That it's somehow wrong to do so. That's okay, and that's normal. You could even add that to your list and say something like "I love myself for struggling with this exercise"!

Just be patient with yourself and trust the process. You will be amazed at the change. And also be pretty

impressed with yourself that you have the power to change how you feel and realize you are in control.

TIPS

Here are some tips to get the most out of it:

- Have a routine where you do this each day at a certain time. This is important to get in the habit. Many clients do it in the bathroom when they are getting ready for the day, just after brushing their teeth or putting on their make-up.
- Most clients like to do it in the morning, as do I. It sets you up nicely for each day.
- I recommend at LEAST five minutes each day. Set yourself a timer (on your phone?) so that you commit and don't get distracted. If you can do 10 minutes, that's even better. I do about 15 minutes myself. Split the time evenly between the second and third steps. If you have more time, just keep repeating your sentences.
- I also like to get creative with it. Say out loud why that part of me deserves love. Like I did with the

stomach in the example above. And how I deserve love and acceptance in general. And the people around me deserve a wife/mother/sister/friend that loves herself. That's just fun for me, and you don't need to do that to get the benefit. You can easily stick to the script. But if you want to improvise along that theme, go for it.

- Review your lists every few weeks and at least once a month and re-rate the numbers. Sometimes we let go of the resistance to one thing and another pops up. Or we feel pretty good about one emotion and want to start incorporating something else.
- You will probably be surprised how intense the numbers are to begin with and how much they change with the practice, and it's a very encouraging and motivating statistic to keep track of, so I really recommend you rate them and reassess as time goes by.

- Keep your lists. Sometimes we think we have processed something and it comes back later, so it's good to review where you've been to see if you might need to do some maintenance on something from months ago.

THE MIRROR TECHNIQUE™ ADVANCED

There are also some advanced techniques you can do once you get the hang of this. I will provide those to you in follow up emails as well as encouragement to continue your practice. If you did not receive this e-book via email from me, sign up for the support and advanced techniques at www.aimeeserafini.com/laom.

WORKSHEET

Things I don't like about myself

Rating (0-10)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Emotions I would like to feel about myself

Rating (0-10)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Phrases

Stand in front of a mirror and while looking at yourself IN THE EYES, making eye contact yourself, say the following:

1. I love you (name) .
2. I love you because (thing you DON'T like about yourself) .
3. I am (name of emotion you'd like to feel) . I love that about myself.