

Love Yourself Again



Love Yourself Again

How to Create Standards, Set Healthy
Boundaries & Stop Being a Doormat

KRYSTLE LAUGHTER

**Love Yourself Again: How to Create Standards, Set Healthy Boundaries
& Stop Being a Doormat**

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If you don't learn how to love yourself again, you'll give someone your treasure, and in return, they'll give you their trash.



Introduction

I used to live in fear. Fear of not being good enough, fear of not being accepted, fear of not being loved. Fear of being myself. I let people control me with their words, actions, and emotions. I didn't do what was best for me. I did what was best for others. I couldn't remember who I was. My identity was wrapped up in pleasing people.

I thought I had to tolerate toxic behavior to receive love. No matter how much I gave, it was never enough. I finally realized that trying to earn love wouldn't make people love me. It made it easier for them to take advantage of me. You see, when you don't know your worth, you choose relationships that reinforce your feelings of unworthiness.

Real love comes when you stop seeking approval and start loving yourself. Love yourself despite your mistakes. Love yourself despite who hurt you, left you, or abused you. Love yourself even when you don't feel worthy because you've loved those who were unworthy before. If I could go back and tell myself anything, it would be this: Stop trying to be good enough because you'll never be good enough for the wrong people.

You deserve to receive just as much love as you give others. Don't rush love, and never settle.



I Lost Myself

I lost myself
I don't know where I've been hiding
I lost myself
I've been trying hard to find me
I lost myself
In the mess and the stress
I lost myself
I failed my "getting to know me" test
I lost myself
But somehow, I still believe
I lost myself
That it's not too late to recover me
I lost myself
I once was blind, but now I see
I lost myself
It's time for me to be free
I lost myself
I almost gave up hope
I lost myself
I was trying hard just to cope
I lost myself
It's time to be my own best friend
I found myself
Now...I'll never lose myself again



Stop Being a Doormat

If you don't learn how to love yourself again, people will mistreat you, and you'll blame yourself

After many years, I finally came to this realization: loving people doesn't mean letting them walk all over you. You don't just have to accept whatever people give you. You have the right to ask for more, get your needs met, and walk away if they're unwilling to treat you right. Before, I was too scared to set boundaries. What if they refused to change? I didn't want to be alone, so I tolerated toxic behavior, hoping my patience would give them time to get their act together and make them love me more. It backfired. The more I gave, the more I was taken for granted. I learned the hard way to love myself because I was all I had.

Losing relationships is painful, but losing yourself is worse. You shouldn't have to tolerate disrespect, manipulation, and narcissism from people claiming to "love" you. People who mistreat you, blame you, and then act like it never happened; that's abuse! The people closest to you shouldn't be your greatest offenders; they should be your biggest supporters. You have to stop participating in toxic behavior. Your presence is participation!

Verbally disagreeing with a toxic person's behavior isn't enough! You have to stand your ground by completely removing yourself from the situation. Be okay with being alone if being alone means you have peace. Loving yourself again means letting go of the toxic people you think you can't live without because the only person you really can't live without... is you!

No one benefits when we lose ourselves trying to make them happy, not even the people we think we're doing it for. Every time we shrink to please others, we dishonor ourselves. How you feel is just as important as how they feel. Your needs are just as valid as theirs. When you put their well-being before your own, you reinforce the idea that you aren't worthy of love; that love has to be earned. Stop that! You deserve kindness, empathy, loyalty, and compassion too. You were worthy then, and you're still worthy now. The question is, do you believe it?

When you don't know your worth, you settle for what people give you instead of what you want and need. You desire healthy relationships, but you settle for toxic ones. You want loyal friends, but you tolerate people who gossip about you. You deserve more than what you've been given. It's time to give it to yourself.

Choose People Who Choose You

For you to have better, you have to choose better. You are one hundred percent in control of your adult relationships. You get to choose who you spend your time with. You get to handpick "your" circle. Remember in elementary school when you got to choose your teams? You only wanted the very best players. You choose your best friends, and people you know would help you win.

Adulthood should be the same. Stop picking losing teams. Be honest with yourself about the people you need in your life, and be just as unapologetic about the people you want to keep out. Stop feeling guilty for protecting and prioritizing yourself. If certain people trigger you or turn you off, admit that and honor your feelings. Listening to your intuition will save you time. It will also protect you from dangerous people.

Stop choosing people out of loneliness, fear, and insecurity. The stakes are much higher in adulthood, so you have to be wiser. If you want to stop getting hurt, then you have to stop choosing the same types of people. Take your time getting to know yourself first, learn from your past mistakes, and distance yourself from people who you know aren't right for you. This means being in touch with yourself.

Let go of one-sided relationships and avoid people who blame everyone else for their problems. Run from these types of people! If they're supposed to be in your life, they will treat you right. No exceptions! Have you ever wondered why the people you're trying so hard to please aren't concerned with pleasing you?

You care about their feelings, but they don't mind hurting yours. You go out of your way for them, but they're never there for you. Something's wrong with this. You deserve better!





Pieces of Me
(Part 1)

Baby Momma Drama, Rejection
& Emotional Abuse

Three weeks after we were married, I found out his ex-girlfriend was pregnant, and she thought it was his. It's not what you're thinking. We knew each other for a while, but we were just friends. We began dating in January, and we got married fast, too fast, in March of that same year. She got pregnant in December, right before we started dating. I should have left when I found out, but for some reason leaving never crossed my mind. I thought that this man was the one.

Looking back, I can see how delusional I was. I didn't even like him at first. It was our female apostle who said that this man was my husband. She announced it in the prayer call one morning in front of the whole church. When she announced it, I was embarrassed and disgusted. I had no interest in this man at all. He was seventeen years older than me, had a receding hairline, and struggled with depression.

At the time, he was staying in a shelter for veterans overcoming drug addiction. He had to lie just to stay there. To top it off, he dressed like he was homeless and was socially awkward. No way this could be my husband? Yet, within days of her speaking that over me, I began to have feelings for him. Be careful who you let speak into your life.

We began dating and quickly set a date to get married. He didn't propose until a few weeks before the wedding. I should've got a clue when my mom objected and told my brothers and sisters to boycott the wedding. I was upset with them. I didn't understand that they were trying to protect me. On the day of my wedding, none of my family showed up. I didn't care because I was getting my happily ever after, or so I thought.

We took my car on the honeymoon because he let his tabs expire the day before. Less than an hour into the two-hour drive, my car started smoking, and a tow truck had to pick us up. The car was unrepairable. The tow truck driver dropped us off in some small town that shut down daily at seven o'clock. I remember sitting on the side of the road with all of my personal belongings exposed as we waited for a friend to take us on our honeymoon. I was annoyed and angry.

Eventually, we got to our destination, but I was humiliated. It blows me away that I didn't see all of these things as a sign that I'd made a huge mistake. Did I mention that I also planned and paid for the entire wedding, the honeymoon, and the rings? I even picked out my engagement ring; by myself. (I'm shaking my head as I write this. Let my mistakes be your lessons).

After finding out that his ex was pregnant, I was heartbroken. The only person who knew about the situation was our female apostle. She told me that I had to accept the child if it was his because he had accepted my two children. In my heart, I knew this wasn't right because he knew about my children. I felt betrayed and stuck. I didn't know what else to do, so I grudgingly agreed. (This was manipulation. Don't ever let anyone make you feel like you have to accept anything you don't want to, because you don't. She used her position to intimidate me, and it worked).

The advice I received from her would be the first in a long line of bad advice I got from her and her toxic husband. Unfortunately, at the time, I didn't know any better. I should've left that church, run to the courthouse, and got an annulment, but I didn't. I was determined to make it work. I didn't realize that I was the only one trying.

The child was due in September, and we had to wait until it was born to get a DNA test. I was angry, hurt, and depressed. I was still in school at the time, and the days seemed to drag on. The thought of another woman having my husband's baby was traumatizing. I was jealous. I wanted to be the one pregnant, so I began trying. I realize how stupid this was now, but I was caught up in my feelings at the time. You do dumb things when you're not thinking clearly. Get out of your heart and into your head.

Don't just react to situations. Take some time to think it through, so you can respond wisely.

His pregnant ex-girlfriend called at random to tell him about ultrasounds and how the baby was doing. I would object whenever she did this, telling him it was inappropriate and she should only call when she was ready for him to take the DNA test. He never put her in her place. Eventually, she did stop calling. Those months were some of the toughest days of my life. All I could do was wait.

September finally rolled around, and the child turned out not to be his. The same month I found out I was pregnant. I was excited. When I shared the news with him, he didn't even pretend to be happy. He didn't say anything at all. I don't know why I didn't get a clue then that this marriage was headed for disaster. I thought all the drama was behind me, but sadly it was only the beginning.



Rejection is a Blessing

Thank God when people reject you because they're doing you a favor. I was blind to my husband's rejection of me. Loving myself would've saved me years of pain. Rejection is more than someone disliking you. It's people withholding love, affection and refusing to meet your needs and respect your boundaries. When people reject you, see their behavior for what it is and let them go. It's better to cry over someone's rejection than to spend the rest of your life crying because you stayed.

Rejection hurts, but disrespect hurts worse. My husband's actions were a sign of his rejection. Instead of accepting this, I made excuses for him and deceived myself. I used to think that leaving was the worst thing he could do to me. I found out that rejecting myself to gain his approval was worse; that's self-betrayal. If you have to leave you, to keep them, the price is too high!

If you have to chase someone, it's because they don't want to be caught. Let them go! Please understand that someone's inability to see your value doesn't make you any less valuable. There are people who will love you, be loyal to you and meet your needs without making you feel like a burden. You are a blessing! People who reject you are doing you a favor, by showing you who they are.

Don't ignore it! Don't try to change them. Keep your dignity and walk away. It will save you from the pain their presence will cause in your life.

Never tolerate someone's rejection because you feel sorry for them either. Brokenness may be their choice, but it doesn't have to be yours. Say this out loud: It's not my job to save them! When you make yourself someone's savior, you become their sacrifice. You're not Jesus! You will spend the entire relationship sacrificing your peace, joy, dreams, happiness, and time for someone who will never appreciate you. Refuse to be an enabler. Pick your dignity up off the floor and never look back.

Don't hurt yourself trying to love someone. Love isn't hard! It's only hard when you love someone who doesn't love you in return. Love is easily seen by those who want to receive it. Those who want you to prove your love to them are insecure and seek to control you. That's not love; that's abuse! If someone wants to be in your life, they must treat you right. They need to be patient, kind, considerate, and consistent.

If it's meant to be, it will come with peace. Let me say that again: If it's meant to be, it will come with peace! If it comes with confusion, chaos, heartache, deception, pain, or loss, run! It's not for you! God has something better.

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

-1 Corinthians 14:33 (ESV)

What Red Flags Really Mean

One reason we tolerate toxic relationships is that we never stop to evaluate what red flags mean. Red flags aren't invitations, they're revelations. We have to stop inviting ourselves into other people's pain. Red flags are a sign that a person hasn't healed and will hurt us if we continue in the relationship. There were so many red flags in my marriage, but instead of seeing them as warnings, I invited myself in to help. Bad idea! I suffered so much in that relationship. It was a hard lesson, but I know better now.

Imagine driving to a place you've never been to before. As you drive, you see signs, but instead of following the directions, you ignore them and try to get there on your own. As a result, you end up lost, confused, and wondering how you even got there. This is how it is when we ignore signs, aka red flags in relationships.

Red flags give us insight into who a person is beneath the mask. Don't make excuses for them, and never ignore them. Red flags left unchecked and unchanged are dangerous. Their last five relationships failed, and they blamed their exes. They were fired from their last three jobs because their bosses didn't "like" them. Remember, red flags aren't invitations; they're revelations.

Don't hurt yourself trying to love somebody who isn't relationship-ready. Instead, accept the revelation you've been given about them and move on with your life. It's not

your job to fix people! It's not your assignment to help someone heal and realize their potential; that's their responsibility. If someone refuses to acknowledge and address their issues, then they don't deserve a relationship. It's a sign of their immaturity and a huge red flag.

Adulthood is about accountability and responsibility. If a person is unwilling to accept this for themselves, then there's nothing you can do for them. A person who wants a good job will do whatever it takes to get the job they want, whether it's getting certified or completing a degree program. Similarly, a person who wants to be in your life will do whatever is necessary to keep you in their life.

If there are changes they need to make, they will be made. You won't have to nag or give them ultimatums. If they act like they don't care about losing you, it's because they don't. It's not an act!

Going in Cycles

I know it's hard to hear, but we repeat lessons from which we don't learn. Unfortunately, we won't know what lesson we've failed until we're taking them all over again. I know it's unfair, but that's just how life works. I didn't realize this until I found myself right back in the middle of another toxic marriage. The lesson I still hadn't learned was self-love. Had I loved myself, I would have never married either of my ex-husbands.

My second marriage lasted for nine years. Until the end of the marriage, I didn't realize that I was being emotionally abused the whole time by him and the people who counseled us. They did a good job of convincing me that I was overreacting, being unsubmitive, and needed to let him "be the man." He was destroying me mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, but all that seemed to matter was forgiving him and sticking by his side.

By the time I was able to see the situation for what it was, abuse! I had been isolated from my family, had low self-esteem, and lacked self-confidence. I was miserable, angry, and felt hopeless. I'd spent years loving someone who refused to love me in return. I was there for him through his ups and downs, but when I needed him, he was never around.

Looking back, I see how he manipulated me and others around him to get attention whenever he felt like he was losing it. The first birthday I spent with him, he acted like he was "depressed." As a result, I had to plan my birthday. I took him out to the Olive Garden. I spent the entire time comforting him and trying to cheer him up. I can see how selfish and narcissistic he was now.

At the time, I felt bad for him. That's what toxic people want us to do, so they can play on our emotions. They use your big hearts against us. Don't fall for it! I thought I could love and pray his issues away.

I thought my love could save him. I learned that you can't save anyone from themselves, and you can't help people who don't think they need help.

They have to first help themselves. No amount of praying, sexing, begging, or pleading will be enough to change someone who thinks that there's nothing wrong with them. Don't waste your energy feeling sorry for people who are making you miserable. That's not love! If you see that someone is trying to sink your ship, why would you keep letting them on deck? As hard as it may be to make them walk the plank, it's necessary.

Toxic people will use you as long as you allow it. Someone mistreating you requires your participation. You have to remain in their presence for them to do it. Does this mean it's your fault? No! But it does mean that it's your responsibility to protect yourself by removing yourself from the situation when it's safe to do so. I've been in situations where my life was in danger, so I completely understand feeling stuck. The important thing is that you seek help, make a plan and get out as soon as you can.

Patterns Are Predictors

Pay attention to patterns because patterns are predictors. Patterns reveal how a person will behave in the future based upon how they've behaved in the past.

How they treat them is how they'll treat you. If they blame them, then they'll blame you too. Pay attention to how people speak about people they used to love. What a person says reveals their attitude, character, and values. It'll tell you who they are and how they'll be in a relationship.

It's also important to assess what their current relationships are like. Do they have friends? Are they close with their family? Are they accountable to anyone? Who are the primary influences in their life? Are their influences healthy? How do they view commitment? All of these questions help you get a better picture of who you're dealing with. I don't care how attractive a person is, how much money they have, or how much you like their personality. If there are red flags, you need to run!

Don't be so in love with the idea of someone that you ignore the reality of who they are. The people you choose will affect every area of your life, for better or worse, so choose wisely.

No More Fixer-Uppers

A fixer-upper is a person who has potential. You see it, but they don't see it for themselves. These types of people constantly make bad choices. They take and take and never give. They make excuses for why their life is the way it is;

it's always someone else's fault. You feel sorry for them, so you keep trying to help them, but you're wasting your time. They're not ready for a relationship.

A person must be able to see their potential and work toward improving themselves. They have to stop making excuses and start making changes. Don't invest in people who refuse to invest in themselves. Life is hard enough without someone dragging you down with their self-made drama. Dry your tears, cut your losses, and move on!

Don't waste decades of your life waiting, hoping, and pleading for someone to change. That's who they are, and you can't change them. Keep your self-respect and dignity by walking away. People are always showing us who they are. This is why we must pay more attention to a person's actions more than their words. Words lie, but actions don't!





Chapter 1 Review

Point #1:

There is no benefit to staying in a toxic relationship. Toxic relationships damage our confidence and self-esteem. Allowing people to disrespect you reinforces their bad behavior. You have to stop being a willing participant and remove yourself from the situation. You deserve safe people who love you as much as you love them. Don't settle out of fear.

Point #2:

You're in control of who you allow in your life. To have healthy relationships, you have to choose people who choose you. People who choose you are people who willingly love, respect, and value you. You don't have to chase anyone or prove your worthiness to them. The right people will see it and love you for it.

Point #3:

Rejection is a blessing! When people reject you, they're saving you from hurt and pain, so be thankful for it no matter how much it hurts. Forcing a relationship with a toxic person because you love them is dangerous. You must learn to love yourself the way you want to be loved and let them go.

Point #4:

Red flags aren't invitations; they're revelations. They are meant to warn you when something isn't right. Please don't ignore them! You may not get a second chance. Never invite yourself to fix other people's issues. You deserve someone whole, healed & ready! Be okay being alone if being alone means that you're safe and you have peace.