

The Wonderful Power of Self-Love

By John Raye

I decided a long time ago, that I could not, and would not, ever dislike myself. How I arrived at such a momentous decision remains, to this day, a complete mystery to me.

I was born, raised and nurtured in the segregated south and had every available reason to dislike, even hate myself. I attended and graduated from an all-Black school, Pinecrest High in Winnfield, Louisiana. In every respect, it was decidedly "separate and unequal".

We had outdoor toilet facilities—outhouses that were incredibly filthy and disease-ridden. The facilities were horrendous, disgustingly filthy beyond human description. Think of a hog pen knee-deep in human waste.

Our classrooms were outfitted with "natural air conditioning"; we had to condition our own bodies as well as our minds. We had second-hand, graffiti-filled books from the local white school. Sometimes whole pages were missing. Sometimes, the "N" word was the most prominent word on every page.

Life in our little town was under the iron-fisted rule of the White Citizen Council. We were expected to obey the law, and by and large, we did just that. Black people lived in "the quarters", a section of town reserved for the "colored" or Negro citizens. You knew your place because signs, "colored", "Negro" or "White", telling you where to eat, sit, drink or sleep were posted everywhere and on everything.

My early years were spent in the cotton fields. We were paid two dollars a day for chopping and picking cotton. As far I can recall, no one in my community ever voiced any complaints about the pay. When you are broke, poor and ignorant, any money is better than no money.

Being ignorant, however, does not mean one has to be stupid. We cooperated with our oppressors largely out of fear, and largely, out of the fact that, we just didn't know any better.

Self-Love

Though we lived under oppressive conditions, some of us managed, somehow, to escape the well-known pathology of violence and self-hate that spring from a people brainwashed with a non-existent history and culture.

Because of what happened eons ago, the killing fields of America today are dominated by people of African descent. By and large, it is Black people who do most of the killing, and it usually involves Black-on-Black killing or KWB (killing while Black).

Why do Black people kill each other in such great numbers? There are many reasons and answers may vary, but one thing we do know; people with a love of self and a knowledge of self, usually take care of self!

You do not hurt or harm that which you love!

The gift of self-love, however, cannot survive in a mind occupied and overflowing with self-hate. History will show that our oppressors perfected the art of mind-control by denying us access to critical information that comes with learning how to read. It was against the law, for example, to teach slaves how to read and write, or for more than three Black persons to gather and meet, at any one time, without the presence of the slave master.

That brings up the question; how can a man feel good about himself if he has no knowledge of himself? And can he feel anything, other than an abject disgust for his own pitiful condition?

Fall In Love

Nothing is more sacred, more powerful or more divine than the acquisition of self-knowledge. Only when you have acquired a knowledge of self, can you truly love yourself, or love another individual. Love of self is the greatest gift you can ever give, the greatest gift you can ever realize, the greatest gift you can ever receive, the greatest gift that can never be taken away, unless you abuse or misuse it.

Loving yourself, however, does not mean getting stuck on self! Let your words, your deeds, and your action speak for you. When you truly love yourself, truly know yourself, you will automatically and unconditionally, do the right thing, without having to consciously think about it. This only happens when you allow yourself to fall in love, and fall happily in love, I might add, with your very own divine self!!

Honey hush!!!

Joy and happiness automatically blossoms in a soul that has fallen in love with itself. So what is the greatest joy? Self-love of course!

When you love yourself, and know you love yourself, you will do a good deed or render a worthy service without concern as to who will get the credit. Love, like truth, does not need outside validation. It is what it is!!

Righteousness is a divine trait. Right action will always produce the right results. Forget about your good deeds; forget about all the people you've helped, forget about the good things you've done in the community, in your church or mosque; forget about all the time and money you have spent in helping to make life better for others, and focus on this one thing; more! Do more!! Help more! Give more! Share more!! Love more! More!! More!! More!!!

Understand this law; you may forget about the good deed, but the good need will never forget about you!! When you help, share or give unconditionally, it comes back to you, unconditionally!!

Self-love automatically attracts more such love. You cannot attract people who dislike or hate themselves. And you cannot help or attract that which is not already present in you!!

To Thy Ownself Be True

Some of us spend far too much time and energy trying to impress other people. This is inappropriate behavior of the highest order. If you are going to work hard, then work hard on impressing yourself. Learn how to get your own attention first! Make yourself pay attention to you—first and foremost!!

Really, the only person you should ever strive to impress is your own divine self! Be true to yourself. It's real hard and frustrating, pretending to be what you are not! Anyway, it doesn't take long for most people to identify false prophets or pretend friends because, sooner or later, the real you will reveal itself!

Self-love is the governing body of all true success because, first and foremost, it is the greatest of all love. Self-love is everlasting love. It is supreme love, and need not be disguised or puffed up. For sure, it needs no introduction. If you have it, others will already know!!

And no apology is ever needed. Love of self, does not mean hating, rejecting, or disliking anyone else. If truth be told, we should only want for our brothers and sisters, what we want for ourselves!

Unfortunately, our oppressors systematically taught us to dislike, and distrust each other, and we ended up disliking and distrusting ourselves. Lincoln was very clear when he observed that "a house divided against itself cannot stand". And there is no way for a man to hold true love for himself unless he has discovered the greatest of all knowledge, and that is knowledge of self!!

The point to be made here is that no man can make true progress at the expense of another. Lying, cheating, or maneuvering will only take one so far. Progress, fame or fortune made under such condition is temporary, and, in the end, destructive and self-defeating.

There is much joy and peace of mind to be gained when self-love becomes evident. No need to shout, prance or buckdance when the real you is made known. When you reach deep within and connect with your godforce, and what a mighty force this is, such mortal enemies of the spirit as fear, worry and anxiety will quickly disappear.

There is nothing to fear or become anxious about, so this month, give yourself the gift of self-love, and watch those gifts prosper and multiply. Then shine your light so that other disturbed or lost souls can find their way.

Slow yourself down and retreat regularly into the silence. It is in the silence where you will find true peace, contentment, and strength for the journey. So, my friends, step smartly into the silence, and allow your gifts to make room for you! Be diligent in developing patterns of right thought by the constant renewing of your mind.

Allow yourself time to love, and be loved. And if you love someone, or have been meaning to do something nice for someone, do it right now!

Tomorrow, you know, never comes.

~John Raye appears on PAX-TV, Saturdays, 11:30pm. He is the author of "Make Yourself Great: Inspiration For Dark Days And Long Nights," and regional director for ComproTax, and the MATAH Network. Reach him (336) 996-4704 or johnraye@matah.com.