

The
Self Love

Oracle
Guidebook
Janet Chui

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I dedicate it to all of you, and all who are learning to love.

Introduction

In romantic stories through the ages, Love has been celebrated, desired, and pursued—usually as an external prize to be awarded to the worthy. We hear stories of parental love, love between siblings, romantic love, and the love between comrades and friends. But stories of self-love seem relatively rare. Yet it is the story *all* of us are living.

Most of us have been taught to take cues from around us about how worthy of love we are. Even with the best intentions, this is still *conditional* love—love we deserve if only we were *just so*, love we deserve only when we do what others desire.

The thought that we can give love to ourselves may be a very strange notion. Yet, we are capable of self-love. It is necessary for our well-being. We are *intrinsically worthy* of love. Some of us may grow into the idea of our worthiness only when we discover spirituality, or a figure who exudes unconditional love. When we finally experience that kind of love, a transformation around how we see ourselves begins.

It's a powerful transformation to set in motion! But we are still shortchanging ourselves when we think that unconditional, divine love can only come to us from without, or through a middle man, ie. someone “higher” than ourselves.

The most empowering transformation comes when we realize on a deep fundamental level that *we* can carry unconditional love within ourselves, for ourselves, and for everything and everyone in Creation.

Love transforms people. Discovering this love within us *transforms us*.

Love is something we practice. We can shower love on things, activities, and other people, but our loving is incomplete if we exclude ourselves. When we block ourselves from our own love, we are limiting and sabotaging ourselves, ultimately becoming our own blocks between us and the life we really desire.

Life comes with its challenges. We do not need to make it harder by telling ourselves that we are unworthy. We are *all* worthy. All the proof that we need is simply to do it.

Love yourself.

Using the Cards

The cards are meant as tools for growth and inspiration. Each card, with its artwork and its message in combination, were created to spark an understanding, an action, or an idea to pursue in your own way. There is no “right” or “wrong” interpretation to take from the cards, though the extra guidance in this book is aimed at providing clarification and further suggestions if you get stuck.

If you have a question, focus on it while shuffling the deck and choosing the card that calls to you. You can also do a meditation or say a prayer prior to selecting your card. This can be done as a daily practice.

If you do not have a question, a “random” card may also provide an idea for action or for quiet self-reflection.

Allow yourself to find and develop your own way of using the cards with your inner guidance and intuition. Loving and trusting yourself will become easier with practice!

1. Remember Your Spark

This is a card for going back to the start. Either we feel like we are starting from scratch, or we need to begin again because of recent setbacks. Beginnings are magical for all their new potential. Untarnished by illusory limits and the expectations of others, beginnings are moments for setting our clear intentions and making sure they are aligned with our hearts.

Any new journey will ultimately be for our growth, bringing us closer to the highest power that we believe in. Start your journey with the spirit of excitement, love, and trust. It is important to realize that the road ahead cannot be a “failure” unless we refuse to learn from it.

Do what you feel you came to do, even if it's not clear just yet. Your first step is simply to allow yourself to begin. All that matters is that you keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Card image: *Seed of Life*

2. Play

Playing is the most natural way that children and animals learn. We envy that children get lost in play so easily.

Living in the moment—being non-attached to memories of the past and worries of the future—is simply a state of mind. As such, children and some animals are natural Zen masters.

We could relearn this state as adults so as to function and serve others (and ourselves) with a lighter heart. It would be a blessed life if we could play every day! So why don't we?

It may be time to ask what activity would reconnect you to the here-and-now in the quickest way, something that makes you feel focused, effective, relaxed, and joyful. Give yourself a new hobby that brings you to that state, or to work out ways to bring this quality of emotional pay-off to your work.

If all else fails, simply look to your children, your pets, or the fairies for company. They understand play very well.

Card image: *Corgi and Fairy*

3. You Are Worthy

It's a natural tendency to focus on what we lack: money, time off, rest, a little luxury, good food, or perhaps even a better job, and more supportive environments. While this is true, we can also examine what we have now, how we came to have them, and why we continue to experience lack.

Our external measures of personal worth (possessions, job, titles, money) may not accurately reflect the real worth of our talents, efforts, and intentions. It does not help to compare ourselves with others. What feels inadequate for us may seem like extravagance to others, and vice versa.

If you feel that there is something that you lack, and you're currently stuck in that feeling, try shifting your energy by shifting your focus. Give thanks for all that you have, including the traits in yourself that helped you get where you are. Focus on those traits, your personal gifts. Acknowledge your patience, your perseverance, your sense of responsibility, your appreciation

for quality, etc. In doing so, you will have new appreciation and awareness of yourself and what you bring into the world.

If you still desire more, you may realize that you may need to expand or change your routines and/or your investment in the necessary resources, before you can obtain whatever still eludes you. Realize that you are inherently worthy, and that you are still learning to manifest your desires. We learn best from experience.

Card image: *The Gift*

4. You Are Safe

We can see our life in a new way. There's no need to fear the macabre, the morbid, or the unknown. Fear arises when we're afraid of losing something to which we're attached. We often forget that we came into this world with, well, nothing but our skeleton, spirit, and meat suit. All these were gifted to us.

The physical body and its capacity for pain will continue to teach us much about self-care and the sensations of our physical existence. That is why our body is a gift. It is natural to be attached to it and to be identified with our body. But it is also useful to remember that we are never given any challenges that we cannot handle. We can also choose to remember to visualize or invoke energetic protection.

If you are feeling insecure about your physical or emotional safety, visualize a protective energy bubble around you, or that you're being protected by your spirit guides, guardian angels, or other protective beings. Alternatively, you can ask or simply visualize that you are invisible to

those who would do you harm.

After your visualization or request, have faith that you are protected. Decide that you are worthy of protection and living in safety, and let your energy and actions flow naturally from there.

Card image: *A New World*

5. *Dance*

This card is an invitation to break out of physical or mental rigidity. Dancing moves our energy. With intention, movement can help us overcome our creative, mental, and emotional blocks. Dancing gets our hearts pumping, our blood racing, and forces us to breathe more deeply. This movement will positively impact our mood and mental state, thereby freeing up our thought processes to see things in a new light.

All that is needed is music, and if you're shy, perhaps a locked door. This card also invites you to play more with the people, the environment, and the energies around you. Dancing with another requires having faith in the other. It is getting to know them, anticipating their next moves and supporting them if you're inclined; letting the other "read" your intentions and support you too.

Going forth to dance with your world in this way, with awareness that everything is a collaborative effort, connects us to the wider

dance. If we step outside our comfort zones with the faith that we will attract the people and the support that we need, then that is what we will get. So go ahead and just dance.

Card image: *Stardancer*

6. Create

We were not put onto this Earth to leave without creating some impact upon it and the people around us. We become more powerful when we start to consciously choose what we create and what influence we make upon others. We are then able to claim more and more control over our lives, our destinies, and the legacies that we leave behind.

Most of us underestimate what we are capable of doing. But even small gestures such as a smile at the right moment to a stranger, a heartfelt compliment, a handmade gift, cooking for someone, or simply tidying up our spaces can have a bigger effect beyond our knowing. These seemingly small things can make a big impact and help to create a more loving and beautiful world.

If our abilities and talents extend into creative cooking, event-planning, or musical and artistic pursuits, then it is even more important to do these things as they bring joy. These are all gifts that become bigger when shared, and

that inspires the joy of creation in others too. Start work on your creative projects whether big or small. The scope you plan does not really matter, only that you do it!

Card image: *Sacral Waters*

7. Own Your Power

We play victim whenever we want to deny the steps we can take to change the situations around us. This is not to say that we are never at the mercy of circumstances outside of ourselves. But this card reminds you that there is always something you can do, even if it's to change your attitude and responses, and to start making different choices.

Everything we face in our lives is a consequence of past personal and collective choices that we've made. It is sometimes too easy to throw up our hands and claim that there's nothing else that we can do. Well, whatever we say is so, *becomes so*.

We need to become aware that we always have power over our choices. If we feel that we are forced into certain decisions because of circumstances, we may actually be shutting our doors and denying our responsibility of searching for alternate solutions or making a stand against coercion.

This card is a strong invitation to start look-

ing at what you can do, not what you cannot. Take responsibility for where you are and look at all of your options, including those that you may not have considered before. You can then reclaim your power to determine where you're going.

Card image: *The Midwives of Change*

8. Spend Time Alone

You may be surrounded by too many external influences at the moment, and thus unable to connect and listen to your own heart.

Take some time away to be by yourself. It is OK to turn down social invitations. It is OK to take a break. If you need to ask for the time away, then do so.

The quantity of the alone-time does not matter as much as the *quality*. That quality is determined by whether we are still running away from ourselves by using distractions, or if we are giving ourselves our full and undivided attention.

Giving ourselves our full attention, we may choose different ways of knowing ourselves. Perhaps all it takes is a quiet room, and pen and paper to write down our thoughts and dreams. Or maybe it will take hiking, jogging, or cycling out in nature, where our thoughts can work themselves out while we're engaged in silent physical activity. Sometimes, we *may* need a

weekend alone by the beach or a silent meditation retreat.

We need the quiet spaces where the inner promptings from the heart can be heard, and for each of us, this may mean something different. What's important is to allow yourself the time and space to listen to the quiet voice within.

Card image: *The Hermit*

9. Rest

Whether in physical work or with inner spiritual work, we cannot go full steam ahead all the time. Rest periods allow us to integrate all that we've learned.

So take a break, and be assured you do not need to do anything more for now. You've done the work and your prayers have been heard. Trust that the universe is now doing its job of delivering your desires to you. Just let go of all expectations, as well as your need to control the timing of the results. Let your body rest.

Card image: *Prayer Tree*

10. Co-Exist

The “need” to control or put others down comes from a place of inner insecurity. This is different from being objective and simply observing how we differ from others. Each of us is unique, and we can certainly co-exist in a peaceful and harmonious manner.

The need to dominate arises in people who feel powerless, and who are still learning how to master themselves and what they manifest in their lives. This card reminds you that if there are difficult people in your life, you do not need to always need to “win” all the time, even if the difficult person views you as a threat or as competition.

If you refuse to do battle, fights will no longer come looking for you.

Keep your sense of calm and inner peace, and others will slowly start responding to that positive energy.

Card image: *Abimsa (Do No Harm)*

11. Clarify Your Desire

Clarity can come in the form of a feeling, a thought, a desire, or a dream. Clarity results from knowing ourselves and accepting ourselves in every moment. No confusion can exist without us allowing or tolerating it.

Some of us do not know what we want, especially when we've neglected or shied away from asking ourselves the right questions. What do we want? Why do we want what we want? Why this and not that? What are the reasons for your answers?

Are we then accepting our truest answers, or are we denying them because they show us our "shallowness", our "selfishness", our vulnerabilities and insecurities? If we are honest to ourselves and accept our innermost truths, do our desires not become clearer? We can then work out the necessary actions that we need to take, to bring about the results that we want.

We all want love, security, abundance, and purpose. It is good enough to be clear on these

feelings alone. When focusing on what it's like to have these desires already fulfilled, we'll carry that energy of love, security, abundance and purpose, instead of the energy of lack.

Try to radiate clear and positive emotions while holding further visions of the life that you want. Together with concrete steps towards your goal, not only are you on the way, but every step along your journey will be also fruitful and supported.

Card image: *The Angel with Bells on*

12. *Acceptance*

This card is a chance to pause and ask if you are over-extending yourself. Your commitment to serving others is not being questioned. However, there are times when what we are giving away needs to be dialed back, either because our efforts are not being reciprocated, or they are blocking someone else from their own personal growth and development.

Those of us who are empathetic, generous and compassionate easily fall into relationships that can be one-sided. If we are paying too high a price to care for another, and neglecting our own physical and emotional needs, at some point, this debt needs to be repaid.

Instead of waiting for someone with their own agenda and soul journey to fulfill your expectations, you are invited to stop chasing an external result, to shift your focus back to yourself and what you need at this moment in time.

Find ways to give what you need to yourself, whether it's finding new supportive friends, letting go of unhealthy one-sided relationships,

or giving yourself a regular time and space to recharge.

It is important to accept our physical limitations and our own wishes. This helps us to become wiser in managing our time and energy.

Card image: *Crimson*

13. Set Boundaries

Every one of us operates from our own context and unique set of life experiences. As social creatures, we may give advice and comments to our friends, just as we often encounter comments, judgments, and advice from other people. Sometimes, this feedback may benefit us. Sometimes, it does not.

Many of us may have come from backgrounds where it was common for others to judge and direct our personal affairs. Giving in to external authority, we may “keep the peace” but become unhappy with the choices that others have made for us! Becoming aware of how this practice can be detrimental, we need to learn to set boundaries around us of what is ours to decide in our own lives. We need to respect the space and boundaries of other people as well.

We should know ourselves and our own needs best. We need to be clear that others have no authority over how we feel, what we think, or what we need to do for ourselves, especially

if *they* do not have to live with the consequences of their advice to us.

We should always be wary of others trying to extend control beyond their own lives and into ours, some going so far as to restrict our behavior and opinions so as to reward us with their conditional approval. We should pay attention that we do not do the same thing to other people too.

Know where your boundaries are and communicate them clearly and assertively to others.

Card image: *Birdwoman's Nest*

14. *Look Deeper*

This card indicates a need to go beneath the surface. An easy answer is not going to be adequate here.

Take the time to wait for further information to reveal itself. You may need to ask deeper questions. Or, you may need to approach the situation from another angle in order to expose some blind spots. Detach yourself from your first impressions and be open to new information.

Card image: *Water Lily*

15. Love Your Shadow

The shadow is an idea from Jungian psychology that describes the part of us (usually “negative”) that we are unconscious of, that we neglect or even outright deny.

When we refuse to acknowledge our shadow, we are prone to projecting our shadow onto others, perceiving traits in other people that may or may not be truly there.

Doing so can be a symptom of a shortcoming in ourselves that we have not yet come to terms with. For example, you may perceive confident people as being arrogant when it is *you* still struggling to find a happy level of self-confidence.

Coming to terms with our shadow is a life-long process, and necessary when we set out to heal, love, and master ourselves. Simply put, we can endeavor to learn about and acknowledge our flaws and strengths. We can understand them and accept that they’ve been with us for a while.

We can recognize and integrate our shadow

by becoming conscious of this part of us, taking responsibility for our shortcomings, and being more proactive in managing our insecurities.

This card may appear when there is an opportunity for us to examine and acknowledge a trait previously unknown to us. The trait may be a constructive or restrictive one.

Card image: *Solar Center*

16. *Evolve*

Life will toss us new experiences. These experiences are meant to help us to grow, expand and evolve. Some experiences may dissolve our previous illusions and false beliefs.

Wisdom lies with realizing when we need to let go of beliefs that no longer serve us, especially if they divide us from others, or prevent us from acting from our hearts and living to our fullest potential.

You may see this card come up when you are unsure about an evolving truth. You may feel as if you require permission to let go of a belief that no longer serves you. You really do not need anyone's permission but your own.

Fear comes when we speculate about the friends or support that we may lose because of our changing beliefs. Friendships based on superficial values may indeed be lost. Those around you who truly love you are more likely to see and celebrate all the positive changes that make you happier, lighter, and freer. True friends will celebrate your joys and triumphs

with you.

We were never meant to live our lives without ever experiencing changes and personal growth. The new you will attract a new circle of supportive and loving friends.

Card image: *Emergence*

17. Find Balance

If you find that there's "too much" of something in your life, you are probably right. It's even possible to have too much of a good thing!

The solution to such a situation isn't to go to the other extreme, because that only perpetuates an unending cycle. As one example, we sometimes face recurring disappointments in our lives, and choose to "give up" and become passive about our dreams. Submissiveness and passivity can breed frustration that turns into extreme and misdirected aggression. Aggression that accomplishes little can lead to a feeling of defeat, that may turn into fatigue and passivity again.

If we are noticing extremes and repetitive cycles in our own lives or in our environment, it may be time to sit down quietly and think of a new way to do things.

The new way must come from an understanding of ourselves, our needs, and what our environment can realistically provide. We can

not be too rigid in our requirements, lest we turn into despots. Neither do we want to become doormats with no will of our own.

This card may indicate that the answer to a current situation lies in finding the balance between two extremes, or in finding a middle ground among two or more parties.

Card image: *Earth in the Balance*

18. Stop. Breathe

It's easy to be influenced by what's going on around us. If you are in a situation where you find that others are operating out of fear, defensiveness, ego, and short-term gain, then use this card to remind yourself that you do not have to follow them.

Bringing attention to our breathing is a way of carving out a quiet moment for ourselves amid any external pressure. The movement in our lungs puts focus back around our heart center. Awareness of the quality of our breath—how deep, how slow, how steady—gives us a chance to choose calmness for our inner state.

Such moments are good for reminding ourselves that like lotus blossoms that bloom above muddy water, we can thrive amid negativity and “lower” energies if we know how to shake these off ourselves.

Let go of your need to control what is happening outside of you. You have control over your own state of mind.

Card image: *Lotus*

19. *Pass It On*

Extend kindness to others by way of your time, attention, or resources.

Shifting our attention to someone else who needs our help is a good way to engage in the flow of generosity. Pay it forward. What we are able to share with others reminds us of what we have in abundance. Reaching out to give also helps us to connect to others in ways that are exactly what *we* need.

Give to receive. Or just give.

Card image: *Light and Rainbows*

20. Share Light

We all love listening to and reading stories; especially those of people overcoming challenges and insurmountable odds.

All of us will face various challenges in life, and how we respond becomes *our* story. This card may appear when it is time for you to share your story and/or expertise with others. Realize how much you've learned and grown through your life experiences, and how these experiences may benefit others going through similar situations.

Sharing your story can be done through speaking or writing, or in other ways that feel right to you.

Card image: *The Apotheosis of Psyche*

21. Sensitivity

Sensitivity is often looked down upon in cultures that see only masculine values as important. Such cultural and personal belief systems tend to place competition, materialism and utilitarianism much higher above social and emotional needs, which may include simple desires such as being in sensually-pleasing surroundings, the feeling of being cared for, and being treated with gentleness.

All of us have a “soft” side. It is the stronger person who accepts this part of themselves without having to hide it. Denying our sensitivity may temporarily protect us against cruelty and ugliness. It may help let us soldier on in difficult environments despite our emotional needs. However, in disconnecting ourselves for too long, we may start to inadvertently perpetuate the same cruelty and ugliness that once hurt us, because we are no longer in touch with ourselves. We may have learned to downplay or deny our emotional and sensitive selves.

If we desire more beauty, kindness, and

gentleness in our lives, then accepting and integrating our sensitive and feminine side is a must. We have to accept that these unquantifiable “soft” characteristics are not frivolous, but among the things that make life worth living.

Self-love encompasses allowing ourselves a chance to be sensitive, while learning how to stand tall among people who have forgotten their sensitive and emotional sides.

This card may be reminding you that it is OK to indulge in something “frivolous”, but which you need in order in order to *feel* again. This may take the form of enjoying or pursuing the arts (music, the visual arts, or dancing), or simply being out in nature.

Card image: *Spring Blossoms*

22. Write

Writing and drawing have therapeutic and meditative effects especially when done for pure exploration and self-expression. Some of us may have developed a kind of performance anxiety with these activities from our school days. If so, it's time to give ourselves these useful tools again.

Writing and drawing both allow us to express what is going on in our thoughts and in our hearts. If we are putting an idea onto paper, writing or sketching allows us to develop the idea further with details and alternatives. If we are recording our feelings and experiences, writing can allow insight that is “unlocked” by certain phrases, an intuitive idea, or a stroke of inspiration. These insights can transform our views on the experience.

Putting our ideas and feelings onto paper can also free us of unwanted thoughts and worries. The exercise can be a meditation, a way to “process” and understand our inner states of being.

Getting our thoughts and feelings out, we become clearer on what we need. We will then know how to move forward.

Card image: *The Patron Goddess of Journaling*

23. Use Discernment

Discernment lets us approach information in a wiser manner: we can decide that the information that is presented to us by the media, friends, family, and external authorities need not be 100% accepted.

Wisdom is knowing that knowledge can be limited by the experiences and perspectives of others, the same way it is limited by the technologies available for recording and measuring our physical reality. Wisdom is realizing that things that are universally and socially accepted as true can often change, and that these changes have actually occurred quite often in human history.

Discernment lies in choosing wisely any information that we put our faith in. Beliefs are *chosen*. This is a fact that can make some of us uncomfortable, yet it's empowering once we realize that we can choose beliefs that support our well-being. We can choose not to believe anything at all until it also fits our own personal experience and inner knowing.

We should be wary, however, of forcing our beliefs onto others, and of people who are trying to force their beliefs on us.

We should also be careful not to develop any unhealthy clinging to a belief because it pleases the people around us, or because we do not want to admit our previously limited perspective. What we know at any point can change. As we have more experiences, our perspectives can broaden, grow, and shift.

Discernment is knowing that whatever we choose to believe as truth can be tested, adapted and changed.

Card image: *The Angel of Truth and Illusion*

24. Learn

*Learning without thought is labor lost;
Thought without learning is perilous.*

—Confucius

We live in an age where sharing and accessing information has become easier than it's ever been before. If we are ever stuck for lack of inspiration or information, we've probably momentarily forgotten the wealth of resources available to us!

Besides reminding you of the books, articles, videos, and audio resources available online and at your library, this card may also be an invitation to look at some local or online courses, workshops, and sharing sessions. A trip to the museum or an art gallery may also be fun!

Card image: *The Reading Tree*

25. Dream Bigger

Keeping our goals and dreams humble may be pragmatic, but if we're doing this only out of fear of disappointment, it's like quitting on your real dreams before you've even started.

We can hold on to our dreams while keeping our plans down-to-earth. The journey may be long and winding, but there are good reasons for us to go for our biggest dreams. Aiming for the stars, we'll still get farther than if we set our sights too low. We owe it to ourselves to try to achieve what is really important to us.

Card image: *Creation*

26. Listen to Feedback

Feedback from the people or situations around us is nothing to fear. Everything we experience is the result of the choices that we've made before.

The feedback that we receive from others can be a mixture of “good” stuff that makes us proud, and “bad” stuff that troubles us. We may receive comments on an aspect of us or about our work. We may get it from strangers who don't know us at all, acquaintances who may *think* they know us, and close loved ones who may know us better than we know ourselves. We should use our discernment to note which opinions we should pay attention to.

When we get “bad” feedback from a trusted source, or are surprised by a difficult experience, it's useful to disengage our ego and learn what we can from it in an objective manner. This is especially important to consider if you feel you keep getting certain feedback or meeting a certain type of person, over and over. Im-

portant messages will be repeated to us until we learn how to listen to them. We can then learn how to adjust our responses, so that we start getting different feedback!

If we run from feedback, we thwart the learning process and are likely to be confronted later by challenges caused by our avoidance or denial.

Sometimes well-intentioned and objective feedback can be difficult to hear, but we can teach ourselves to weather it, and then decide how we ought to respond. We are always in control of that choice.

Card image: *The Peacock*

27. *Patience*

We have chosen fear whenever we feel the need to control the timing of an outcome. When we put our energy and attention on what is *not* happening for us, we experience more frustration and negativity.

The message of this card is that we can do better for our emotional state and for ourselves by choosing faith over the energy of impatience.

Good gardeners know the best times to sow seeds or to harvest the fruits of their labor, and they work with nature for these activities. This sense of timing comes with experience.

There is no need to force things when the conditions are not ripe for them. Let go for now. You can try again later.

Card image: *Winter Light*

28. Change Your Environment

We are affected by our environment—the air we breathe, the sounds we hear, and the inspiring (or distracting) views of our surroundings. Try to ensure that your living and working spaces are supporting you.

Take some time to make some changes in your environment to make you feel happy, inspired, and loved. This undertaking can take any scope you feel comfortable with. You could start bringing fresh flowers or plants into your working and living spaces, adding some art or photographs to your walls, playing music, using aromatherapy, decluttering, or doing a complete home makeover.

Create your happy place where you are.

Card image: *Sea Kelp & Starfish*

29. *Forgive and Release*

Some traumas will be hard to forgive. No one should be coerced into forgiveness before they are ready. Reaching a point of accepting what happened and healing from it can take time. Eventually, we reach a point where anger and hatred become heavy burdens. That is when we can start releasing these emotions from ourselves.

This card may be used as a reminder that even forgiveness does not mean forgetting our boundaries nor allowing ourselves to be hurt by people who do it knowingly and deliberately. We are allowed to keep our wits and instincts about us, and the lessons we have learned from our experiences.

Forgiving and releasing means we need no longer replay the negative emotions from our old stories. This forgiveness and release is something that we do for ourselves.

Card image: *Anael, The Rose Angel*

30. *Be Nimble*

Flexibility is a virtue! Sometimes we are called to adapt ourselves and our plans to the resources we are given. You may need to be creative and less rigid, and to explore previously unconsidered alternatives. These may work out even better than what you had asked for.

The universe can give us surprises. To work with unexpected gifts requires some quick wits and flexibility. You can do it!

Card image: *Green Tara*

31. Break Free

Some challenges to our growth take the form of restrictions, which have either been placed on us by our old selves, or by others based on what they think we cannot or should not do. Too many restrictions will make us feel trapped. This feeling is also part of growth.

It's time to remember that your happiness and self-love are far more important than the old and expired expectations that you once carried. Maybe you saw yourself as "too old" to pursue a dream, and yet it still keeps on haunting you! These restrictive labels and limiting thoughts are best discarded. The same goes for the expectations that other people place upon us. They are not living our lives. *We are!* Our own expansion may just inspire them to adapt and grow as well.

Card image: *Tangled (The Dreaming Dryad)*

32. Conquer Fear

Fear is useful when alerting us to physical threats. But if we feel fear in the presence of people or situations that are not necessarily life-threatening, we may need to examine our fear and understand where it comes from.

FEAR can be described as False Evidence Appearing Real. Fear can come from a false belief that failure is certain, or that we are unable to face the consequences of an action that we actually need to take. Fear may also come from a bad past experience.

Fear closes doors and can force us to make unconscious and destructive decisions, rather than letting us choose from a position of strength. Fear can also be wielded quite cleverly by people who are trying to manipulate us for their own self-gain.

We owe it to ourselves to take back our power and examine our fears. If we do so while in an emotionally safe space, we may find that many fears are actually false ideas of possible bruises to our ego, or just exaggerated ideas of

what could go wrong, but usually does not. We may believe logical reasoning that is actually faulty or based on false premises, or, we are just afraid of admitting our past naivety.

We sometimes become our own worst enemies by heaping unrealistic expectations upon ourselves, and then being afraid that we can't achieve them.

We can choose to confront and eliminate our irrational fears. We can choose to take the stance that our egos can heal from whatever is thrown at us. We can choose to believe within reason that things may actually go *right*, and if they don't, that we can have other plans in place. The world will not end. There is truly nothing to worry about.

Conquer your fears by examining them up close, and make peace with them. It may be a lifelong process, but worth it when we are no longer controlled by fear.

Card image: *White Dragon Rider*

33. *Gratitude*

If we can see the gift hidden in every challenge, the challenges become easier to overcome. There is always a silver lining to every dark cloud.

Difficult people may teach us the virtue of patience or help us realize the ability to stand up for ourselves. Difficult situations may help us discover or develop new skills, or to recognize how much support we have from our friends and family.

Gratitude is an attitude that we choose. When we cultivate it, it becomes a habit that helps us keep our chins up, and to respect others even during disagreements.

We should also learn to express gratitude to ourselves for the choices that we make, especially as we grow and learn to love ourselves more.

Card image: *Water Lily: Gratitude*

34. *Move Quickly*

When we're not used to having our wishes granted, we may sometimes doubt how quickly things can move and happen. This card may have popped up to suggest that you should make haste!

Heed your gut instincts and act on them. Trust your inner guidance to lead you through life's events, and enjoy the ride!

Card image: *The Winter Changeling*

35. Co-Create

You may be standing at the threshold of a new relationship or partnership and wondering whether or not to dive in. Let go of your expectations of others, while becoming clearer about what you can learn and bring to the collaboration. This clarity and honesty from you needs to be matched by all involved to be fair.

All relationships have the potential to bring out the best from all the individuals involved.

When doing things alone, we learn about our own abilities. When working with others, our abilities are expanded to include the experience and creative ideas of those that we choose to collaborate with. It can certainly become a rewarding experience if we make it so! Mutual expansion and growth are the results.

Card image: *Vesica Pisces*

36. Remove Toxicity

Often, we take other people's thoughtless behavior more personally than we need to. We may have to speak up, and then re-evaluate if our wishes are being disrespected once they have been clearly expressed and communicated.

Self-love means we should not tolerate toxicity or abuse directed to us, or indeed, from anyone that we come across in our lives. Firm steps are usually needed to manage our exposure to such abuse.

We do not need to expose ourselves to toxic behaviors, chemicals, media, and food. Let's act like we truly love ourselves!

Card image: *The Messenger*

37. *Mourn*

Grieving is never easy, but loss is something that all of us will experience at one point or another.

One of the worst things we can do for ourselves is to stuff our feelings down and deny them. This habit, sometimes learned in our early childhood (especially if we were often told not to cry), can leave cumulative negative effects on our health. Having self-love is to understand how we manage our anger and grief, and whether our practices so far have actually been healthy for us.

We may feel grief when it's brought on by our own losses, and we may also feel it when learning of tragic events, recalling sad memories, or empathizing with the predicaments of others.

We need to allow ourselves the release and expression of our grief in whatever form necessary. We may feel the need to reach out to others who understand our grief. It's certainly a lot healthier to be around supportive people, in-

stead of those who are uncomfortable around emotions, and who may ask you to stop crying, or however you've chosen to express your grief.

If you are the one who is uncomfortable around others who are mourning or grieving, then it may be that you are carrying unexpressed grief yourself. Try not to let your discomfort manifest as discouragement at other people's actions. Find a safe space for yourself where you can try to understand your own feelings around mourning, and to know that there is really no right or wrong way to do it.

Card image: *Mourn*

38. *Grace*

There are many interactions that we go through in our lives where we are able to choose between kindness or “justice”. We do not need to harm those who have hurt us, even as we protect ourselves from further injury. Cruelty is never necessary. Those who hurt others are often in need of kindness themselves.

Showing grace and mercy to others means that we are saving ourselves from the endless cycle of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”. This card bears the message of choosing kindness and grace for our interactions with others.

This is also a lesson on how we speak and think of ourselves. Do we judge ourselves harshly, and put ourselves down in our speech? Do we expect much higher from ourselves than we do from the people around us, and could we be gentler with ourselves?

The ones who judge others are frequently also judging themselves, and it's often a heavy emotional burden. You can use more of your time and energy for the things and people

whom you love, instead of dwelling on the imperfections and shortcomings of others. Even if you can clearly see the problems that others are carrying or causing, seek to cultivate mercy and compassion instead.

Card image: *Justice*

39. *Return to Center*

In our daily home or work situations, we sometimes lose the “big picture”. We may have become so rigid in our routines that any disruptions can be viewed as a major setback. This outlook is unnecessarily stressful.

Try to find calmness inside whenever everything around us appears to be going wrong. You are urged to find this peace *before* embarking on a plan of action.

Are you panicking and taking responsibility for a matter that isn't yours? Is it possible that the current issue confronting you is actually a trivial one, and will blow over and be forgotten in the long run? Is it possible that someone else is in a better position to act, and should be given the chance to rise to the occasion?

Give the matter more time to develop, and watch from your own calm inner space before jumping in.

Card image: *Dragon Lore*

40. Heal

Self-love involves knowing ourselves deeply and taking responsibility for what we can teach and do for ourselves right here and right *now*.

Healing requires acknowledgment of the wounds and unhealthy patterns we may grapple with, such as downplaying our own needs, running away from conflict, accepting lies and abuse, feeling unworthy, and relying on other people's approval and authority. We can choose to heal and empower ourselves by releasing these patterns and embracing newer, healthier habits.

Every single one of us has received some emotional trauma in this life. When we were growing up, we were subject to the care and authority of our elders, some of whom in spite of their best intentions, were also suffering in some way. Their words and actions may not have given us the proper support and guidance that we needed, and it may have left us with models of behavior that have not worked well for us. This is something that all of us would

have experienced to varying degrees, and which some of us may still be experiencing as adults.

Our sense of self-worth was largely set during our upbringing. As adults, we can recognize that we are now responsible for healing ourselves from unhealthy views and patterns that we inherited.

Each of our journeys towards healing and wholeness is going to be unique. What is important is that we recognize we need healing for ourselves as much as possible, so that we can be the best possible us that we were always meant to be.

Card image: *The Healing Place*

41. *Get Up*

It's easy to be strong when things are going well. It's during disappointments and setbacks that we face the real test of our resolve and endurance. Each time we stumble, we have an opportunity to pick ourselves back up, reaffirm our goals, and learn how to adjust our action plan.

Did we have a blind spot? Were we over-optimistic or under-prepared? Did we listen to advice, and if not, can we still apply it?

Difficult situations can act as feedback to teach us to pay attention to certain details, or to take more control, or to try new avenues. Self-love means not giving up on the dreams that really matter to us. It also means recognizing that we may have room to grow and lessons to learn along the way. We may have to learn more practical skills, practice more objectivity, or even to set higher goals and to think bigger.

Card image: *Get Up*

42. Self Care

Eat good food. Drink plenty of water. Take time to breathe. Get enough sleep. Exercise. Give yourself emotional outlets and time with friends. Have a support group. Engage in regular activities that you enjoy. Create spaces that make you happy. Make sure that you have time and energy for the things you like to do.

If any of the items on this list seems impossible, then more attention needs to be paid to it. Prioritizing our physical and emotional health is part of healthy self-loving. If we are always placing other people's agendas above our own, then we need to examine if we are harming ourselves by doing so.

This card invites you to take stock of your health right now. Make the necessary changes to your lifestyle to ensure that your needs are taken care of.

Card image: *Silence and Blessed Sleep*

43. Love All

Whenever we look at a part of ourselves or someone else and say, “This does not deserve love”, we unwittingly place a barrier on our own hearts. We may have been taught by others that sensitivity is for the weak, that compassion is for the naive, and that love is only for the beautiful and deserving.

Most of us will have inherited our parents’ and authority figures’ judgments of us. These judgments may have persisted as barriers to loving ourselves as we became adults. The walls we put up inside ourselves usually don’t just stay there, but become the walls we put up between ourselves and the others around us. Believing that we are flawed and unlovable, we actually affect our relationships because we’re busy hiding our objects of shame from others, distancing ourselves from them and putting up false fronts.

The time has come for us to learn to love it *all*. Authenticity becomes important to us once self-love teaches us to accept ourselves, together with all our imperfections. Doing so, loving oth-

ers and their imperfections becomes easier too.

Compassion becomes natural when we understand that everyone has been damaged in some way by false beliefs and fear. Our compassion is complete when it includes everyone and ourselves. Carrying this compassion, we will fight ourselves less, love ourselves more, and become capable of more.

Card image: *Guan Yin*

44. Remember Your Purpose

We are our own best teacher, healer, and friend. Our principle relationship is with ourselves. If there is a part of ourselves that we hate or judge, then we are going to see that being reflected back to us by others. The world has plenty of examples of the consequences of hate.

We can learn that it is possible to love all our weaknesses. We can objectively see the worst parts of ourselves, and manage them. Acting like this takes a lot of self-knowledge and courage in applying self-love, so that we can learn how to accept, develop, and master ourselves all at the same time.

We do this so that we become better forces of positive change, rather than waiting for other people to solve our problems, to heal us, or to fix the issues we see plaguing our world. It is possible to understand that we perpetuate many problems due to our own lack of consciousness.

If the external problems around us look insurmountable, then it is all the more important to work on ourselves and love ourselves so that we can apply this love and these skills of transformation to our lives, as well as to others whose lives we are destined to touch. Loving ourselves is no different from learning to love the diversity of life present around us.

If we can learn to love without a sense of separation, then we have learned unconditional love; the divine kind of love that creates heaven in its presence. This is what we need on earth. There is no higher aspiration.

Card image: *Heart of Creation*

