

## Week 2 Lesson 3: Love

***I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self indulgent.***

***Caring for myself is an act of survival.***

**~ Audre Lorde**

Dear heart,

What a beautiful first week together!

Often in life, what we need arrives just at the moment we are ready for it. And I can tell that you are so ready for *Ferocious Compassion*.

Great shifts come from small steps.

And in Loving Kindness, we always hold compassion close. So we build a safe space, a container of grace that surrounds our fire towards new action and change.

As we move into our second week together, let's dream about what could be? What could happen when you step into your own authority, when you own your goodness and your inner unity?

We are bringing forth new practice from our True Self, which is what integrity is all about!

This week, we are holding space for love. For ourselves, for each other, and for the world. I have an affirmation, a prayer of sorts, that I have used over and over to help women connect to loving themselves. It is in my book, on my website, and I have listed it again here at the very bottom of this lesson so that you can return to it again and again as you make space for love.

### **A few words about love from my book, *A Heart of Gold*:**

*Through my darkest and lightest moments, I've been able to soften and tenderly deal with life's complexities within the heart of Loving Kindness. At the root of it is compassion. In the beginning of my practice I was inspired to keep going whenever I sensed a glimmer in the darkness. When I paid attention and let myself go there, I found that accepting my own limitations, pettiness or shame was a really good starting point.*

*Loving Kindness is medicine to keep us going. To realize life is worth it. To keep finding beauty, to know how to appreciate beauty and see it in all sentient beings. This is the dream of life. When anger, sadness, confusion, frustration or doubt consumes us, we learn to return to the practice of Loving Kindness.*

*Real change usually comes tenderly in the night like a kiss from the Moon. It might take much longer than we imagine, but that is okay. We have time to really know ourselves, to be with ourselves from the inside out.*

*Life presents as it does each day for us. I love the teachings on interdependence. It speaks to our need to not polarize just to find order in a chaotic world. We live in such fortunate times. We have this tremendous opportunity to evolve. Right here and right now is the best place to start.*

*Love takes off masks  
that we fear we cannot live without  
and know we cannot live within.*

-James Baldwin

*When you adopt the viewpoint that there is nothing that exists that is not part of you,  
that there is no one who exists who is not part of you,  
that any judgment you make is self-judgment,  
that any criticism you level is self-criticism,  
you will wisely extend to yourself an unconditional love  
that will be the light of the world.*

-Harry Palmer

## **Journaling and Meditation Questions**

Read the affirmation of Loving Kindness in your life (printed below). Pause after you read it and meditate. Breathe softly through your nose, observing your breath. There is only this breath coming in, there is only this breath going out. Give yourself 10-15 minutes of sitting with this affirmation.

Write down any thoughts or ideas that come up for you around reading and meditating through the affirmation. What is present right now?

Where do you need permission to practice self-love?

Dream for a moment about what loving yourself could look like. What would a whole day of self-love look like? How about a whole week? Dream big and write in as much detail as possible. The longer you write, the more you will discover. What is self-love beyond the spa or the bubble bath? Come back to this question often this week and record your thoughts and ideas in the sections below.

WHAT SELF-LOVE IS TO ME:

A DAY OF SELF-LOVE:

A WEEK OF SELF-LOVE

## Excerpt and meditation from *A Heart of Gold*

Self-love is the basis for all loving relationships, and loving ourselves starts with learning how to be ok with who we are. So when the soul steps forward and you allow yourself to be seen by your own mind without judgment, but only with compassion, you are beginning to experience the practice of Loving Kindness.

Loving Kindness helps us get off the train of continuously suffering and longing to be a different version of ourselves. When we get off that train, we can sit still and know that we are okay just as we are.

Of course this practice is not easy, because the world is constantly trying to bring us back to a different wavelength, one of struggle and striving.

Women in particular have a really hard time leaning into self-love. We are so conditioned to care for children, partners, family members and others then we often come last. Culturally there is a huge push on women to excel at everything for everyone else, and then maybe if there are a few minutes left at the end of the day, they can squeeze in five minutes of yoga.

Self-love is one of our greatest struggles. Most women I know are exceedingly hard on themselves. We're pretty sure that we have to accomplish a huge list of things before we can be worthy of our own love, let alone anyone else's. We don't really like who we are so we keep trying to solve something, which keeps us stuck in an exhausting daily grind.

Often in order to let ourselves off the hook, we need one-on-one intimate helpers, guides, wise woman mentors.

Helping women tend to their own self-love has become my life's work. I began teaching yoga out of compassion for myself, and the women around me who need permission to love themselves, and I started leading sacred retreats and holistic coaching out of a desire to help women clear space, make time and embrace the importance of loving themselves.

I have had retreat students tell me that being on retreat is the first time in their lives that they actually felt self-love and had the space to fully embody it in real time.

I long for women to love themselves in daily practice, not just once or twice in a lifetime.

Read these words from me out loud to yourself. You can come back to this affirmation of Loving Kindness in your life again and again.

# Loving Kindness Blessing

*from A Heart of Gold*

*Dear heart,*

*After all the time you have spent tending to others, now is your time.*

*You are a magnanimous human being and you deserve all of the love and tenderness life has to offer.*

*I give you permission to take your foot off the pedal. Your body won't tolerate the pedal-to-the-floor stress forever.*

*Your life is too precious not to generate more qualities of equanimity.*

*You need cozy little nooks of inner okay-ness.*

*You need a place for a respite. Where can you rest, dear one?*

*Your life is not a race to the finish line.*

*You are beautiful just as you are. Your heart, your soul, whatever is emerging as you begin to know yourself, it belongs. Nothing needs changing.*

*Practicing Loving Kindness is not a life change plan. It is already within you. Sit and know that you have everything within you that you need.*

*You are worthy of all the love you can give yourself in this lifetime.*

*You can love yourself without conditions and without limits.*

*You can start right now. When you forget, you can start again.*

*Every moment that you take your gaze inward and love yourself is a moment that you are coming home to your true self, who you really are.*

*May you know peace in those moments, dear heart.*

*Namaste.*

