

Episode 57:

Unconditional Self-Love

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You will be introduced to the foundational principles of personal integrity, which are: how to live impeccable honesty, rigorous personal responsibility, humility, vulnerability, openness, willingness, transparency, and boundaries.

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Some of the concepts covered inside of the classroom include: what validation and vulnerability are and how to animate those principles your life; how to live in Truth rather than distortion; how to recognize your distraction and your controlling behavior in your relationships; and how to live a life of peace rather than pain. Powerful concepts that change lives, beginning with yours.

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[00:02:48]

Good morning and welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast for the week of May 16th, 2015. Thank you for joining me this morning. I want to invite you, if you have any questions that you want answered, to get on our website at www.connexionsclassroom.com and go to the podcast button. When you click that, it will drop down a space where you can write in your questions. I invite you if you have any questions,—you want something answered, maybe you listened to a podcast and you want a particular question answered for your individual life or your situation, go ahead and ask me a question and I will answer it on upcoming podcasts. The other way to contact us is at support@connexionsclassroom.com.

This morning, we're going to be talking about how to self-care, or another way to say that, how to self-love. What I hope by the end of this podcast you realize is that the only real avenue to loving others is by loving oneself first.

So, true self-care—the loving of oneself—involves beliefs and a lifestyle where I see myself and all others as truly equal in value. I clearly see to whom my responsibility lies and I am impeccable in my honesty towards myself and my choices. I honor myself, which involves being vulnerable, validating, and practicing surrender.

As I self-care, I learn about myself and I better understand my love for myself in more of a true form—in an unconditional form.

I start seeing my desires as positive and I don't see myself as a bad or unworthy person. I see myself as one that is worthy of love, and respect, and honor.

In order to do this, I must learn to care for the whole of myself, including my physical self, spiritual, emotional, social, nutritional, financial, sexual, etc. And when I do that, when I care for the whole of me, I will then quite naturally care for the whole of someone else.

So, self-care is a solo act and as we talk about self-care today, I want to hone in on a couple of strategies. One being daily affirmations and the other being self-care ideas or strategies that you can begin to use to promote this love of self, this care of self.

So, caring for oneself is a solo act, believe it or not. Many of us don't want to subscribe to that Truth that loving self is each person's own responsibility, because it means facing a Reality that might be uncomfortable and at times we might be straight-up unwilling to face. It means that I and I alone am accountable for me and how I feel, and what I do, and what I choose, and what I think, and when and how I respond.

Unfortunately, there are some illusions and overt and covert teachings in my environment that “make me” think, believe, want, desire for someone else to do my responsibility *for* me. Those illusions tell me that they—whoever that person is—can, or should, or must do, and be, and act in certain ways *for* me. This quite frankly is not the Truth.

Though it is true that people do have the capacity or capability of doing physical things for me, it is the illusion that doing physical things for or on behalf of someone does not translate into doing emotional and spiritual things for me. Doing physical things for someone cannot translate into doing physiological things for them.

For example, I cannot eat for another or exercise for another. Emotional and spiritual “doing” has no translation in the physical world. My emotional and spiritual health—which is my honesty, my accountability, my vulnerability, my humility—cannot be transferred to another person or be removed from my own responsibility for myself.

For example, I can make a meal and feed my friend physically, which is an act of service, yet I cannot control his or her response to the experience. For example, what they think, what they feel, what they perceive, or interpret about the meal. I have no control over his or her emotions, their anger, their sadness, their gratitude, their grief, feelings of belonging, or being loved, or feeling fulfilled, or believing he or she is enough or worthy. I cannot *make* my friend feel or choose to become or believe anything.

I think everybody here that’s listening would subscribe to that – that we do not have control over other people. We only have the ability to manage and be responsible for ourselves. So, love of self is where we each are responsible in the creation of our feelings and the outcomes of compassion, love, care, and respect for self. We are each responsible to learn how to create this type of connection or love within ourselves, for as we do, it will allow us to naturally give love to others.

So, when we engage in this form of self-care or love, we will have a desire to share and teach this type of connection or this type of love we have and feel towards ourselves to other people.

So, for many, the fear the fear is that if I learn to and practice caring and loving self, then I would only want to focus on myself, or only think of myself, or only care about myself and thus become so full of self, full of greed, and entitlements, desires, aggression, covetousness, and wants. Yet the opposite is the Truth.

The command for us to love others as we love ourselves is the directive, and if we will learn how to love self, we *will* love others as we love ourselves. To love means without conditions, without motives, without guile, or expectations, and without desire for reconciliation or repayment of anything.

True love is free. To love is an act of setting free the human spirit. Love is full of honesty and personal responsibility. And love equates to emotional and spiritual freedom.

So, in order for someone to truly love, you or they must actively be noticing, caring for, giving, disciplining, holding responsible, being emotionally honest, showing compassion ***to yourself***. Filling self with Truth by word and deed, caring and caressing the body as to keep it well and full of health and vigor, being sensitive to what your senses are experiencing and only allowing into your body things of a healing and spiritually uplifting source.

Doing these types of feeding “one’s soul” will fill you with light, it will fill you with spiritual power, and an intense desire to do good, to be good, share good, and uplift anyone who is lacking spiritual or emotional strength.

The fruit of loving oneself is loving others. Loving oneself is the only way to truly, authentically love another person. *Love thyself and all else will naturally fall into place.*

So, how do we love ourselves? How do we do that? Here are some ways to do this. There are many, many ways to love self, but I want to focus in on this particular podcast on the power of affirmations.

[00:11:32] Affirmations

So, what is an affirmation? Affirmations are short, direct statements of Truth about yourself, which you consciously choose to tell yourself throughout each day. The purpose of affirmations is to challenge and change your specific faulty core beliefs—or those shame messages that we’ve been talking about; for every single podcast, the concept of shame comes up.

So, just as you have come to believe your shame messages through their constant repetition in your mind, so too can you come to believe the Truth about yourself by repeating specific Truths in response to your shame messages, or as a symbol of love towards yourself.

So, affirmations are statements of Truth about you and/or about your world. Affirmations are powerful for your soul and your healing—if you will choose to believe them and practice through efforts of:

1. Changing your shame messages back in Truth or Reality.
2. Reframing your thoughts into thinking that is self-affirmative, bold, and courageous.
3. Being willing to challenge your feelings and recognize that emotions follow thoughts and can be changed if you're willing to change your thinking. So, emotion follows the way that you think.

And so, when you change the way you think, your emotions will change. And affirmations will remind you of who you really are, and what you really stand for, and what you really believe in.

Affirmations typically have particular characteristics associated with them. There's four of them.

1. Affirmations are statements that are brief, specific, and positive. For example, *I am a powerful being for compassion and honesty.* That statement is brief, specific, and very positive. “I am”—that’s very specific—“I am powerful. I’m a being for compassion and honesty.” It’s brief and it’s very, very clear and positive.
2. Affirmations are statements that reflect the accurate Truth about you and don't reinforce shame messages.
3. Keep your statements—keep your affirmations—in the first person, like *I am* lovable, *I am* powerful.

4. This one is optional. You can make your statements of affirmation sensitive to time and/or location. For example, *Today, I will...* Or *I will go to work and be happy.* So, there's the time which is about *today*, and a location—I will go to work—which is the location.

Here are some examples of some affirmations. I'm going to read a couple of affirmations, and notice whether you feel different about yourself when I read these. And notice which affirmations you believe, which ones you think might be true, and which ones you blow off or think, "That doesn't really fit for me, that's not really the Truth." So, affirmations are meant to confront your shame messages. The affirmations which you question or avoid represent areas that might have some shame in them, so just notice that. Consider saying these affirmations out loud in a firm voice and recognize whether you feel differently towards yourself or another person.

I'm going to read these. See how you feel as I'm reading them, because some of them may not for every person that's listening. Here's a couple.

- I am powerful.
- Today, I will find gratitude or look for gratitude.
- I will be open and transparent with all of my interactions today.
- I am incredibly smart.
- I have permission to ask for help.
- I will forgive myself today.
- I will be responsible for all of my choices and their outcomes.
- I am strong.
- I accept all of me.
- Today, I will notice beauty that is around me.
- My capacity for Truth and love is limitless.

Those are just a handful. See which ones resonated with you. Maybe all of them fit for you, maybe some of them didn't. But that's just an example of some affirmations that might be helpful for you to repeat. But I would encourage you to make your own. If you have a specific experience that you're having for the day, I would make one or two affirmations, like, *I will be focused and alert during my meeting.* Something along those lines.

[16:35] Challenging Faulty Core Beliefs: Truth Declarations

Now, if you have a faulty core belief, how do you write an affirmation in order to challenge that faulty core belief? So, affirmations can be incredibly powerful when they touch a vulnerable spot, or a wound, or a shame message in you. Saying the “correct” affirmation is like cleaning and dressing an emotional wound with a bandage and dressings that are just right for that type and size of wound.

However, affirmations are only part of the wound dressing to be fully effective. They must be used together with reframing language. So, there's a specific process or procedure to follow to reframe shame messages back into Truth.

To reframe a shame message into the Truth, there are three steps.

1. Recognize the shame message. So, recognize that faulty core belief, like, *I'm not enough*.
 2. Say to yourself, “That’s not the Truth, that I'm not enough.” So, *it's not the Truth that I'm not enough*.
 3. State the Truth. *“The Truth is, is that I am enough.”* Or, *“The Truth is, is that it's not about me being enough or not enough because I never can NOT be enough—I'm always of worth.”*
1. Or my shame message might say “I can't...,” “I can't do this,” “I can't show up at the party,” “I can't be a friend.”
 2. Number two is to say, “That’s not the Truth, that I can't show up. That’s not the Truth, that I can't be a friend.”
 3. Number three says state the Truth. “The Truth is, is that I can be a friend, **and** I'm a little bit intimidated about the person that I want to go and interact with. Or the Truth is, is that I *can* show up **and** I don't feel fully prepared.”

So, language is incredibly powerful. The most important thing here is to use the same language that shame uses, but in The Truth. So, when you hear a message of shame—which is a faulty core belief—you will not successfully surmount it by replacing it with affirmations. You *must* use shame’s exact words and flip it around to have it leave.

So, what that means is, if I say, “I can't do this”—which is a shame message—“The Truth is, it is not the Truth that I can't do this. The Truth is I **can** do this; I just don't know how to do it *yet*, and that’s why I'm being taught by this person how to create this.”

Or shame message, “I'm stupid.” “It is not the Truth that I'm stupid.” “The Truth is I'm not stupid, I'm an intelligent being and I feel inadequate because I'm learning something that is challenging and new for me. I will persist until I learn it.” Can you hear those three steps?

Shame message, “I'm bad and an unworthy person.” Step number two, “It is not the Truth that I'm a bad and unworthy person.” Step number three, “The Truth is, is I'm NOT a bad and unworthy person; I have made egregious and hurtful choices *and* I am choosing to clean them up and make new and loving choices.”

Here's another one. Shame message, “If they knew what I've done, they would hate me.” Step number two, “That is not the Truth that they would hate me if they knew what I'd done.” Step number three, “The Truth is I don't know what they would do, or what they would think, or say if they knew. The Truth is, I get to be open and transparent, and people who are full of love will come into my life.”

Let me give you one more example on those three steps. Shame message, “I don't deserve this.” Step number two, “That's not the Truth that I don't deserve.” Step number three, “The Truth is, it's not about whether or not I deserve; this experience is what is happening, and I'm grateful that I get to experience it.”

So, there's not a set way that you have to address your shame messages as far as it has to be a particular language, but it's got to have those three steps in it. So, step number one, recognize the shame message, step number two, say that's not the Truth that... (such and such shame message is true), and then number three, state the Truth.

That's how you make affirmations or do affirmations. And affirmations are very, very powerful because remember, the brain does not know the difference between real and imagined. And so, when you are speaking or allowing your shame messages to speak, the brain thinks that what you're saying is the Truth. And so, it will react with similar emotions according to what your shame messages are saying.

So, you really want to challenge your thoughts and not just let them run amuck because emotion will follow. So, when you hear those faulty core beliefs, please, please use those three steps and challenge those shame messages. It's very easy with those three steps.

Any child can do that. Any three or four-year-old child, if you teach them those steps, can redirect their shame.

Now, what if you're not trying to reframe your shame and you just want to make some affirmations? Then go ahead and do that, use those other steps—those four steps—that I talked about a minute ago, of how to create an affirmation. So, affirmations of I'm divine, I'm powerful, today I will look for gratitude, I'm incredibly smart, etc.

So, one more thing that I want to suggest for how to self-love or care for self is learning how to do self-care strategies.

[00:22:43] Self-Care Strategies

So, what is a self-care strategy? Self-care is the act of caring for yourself, including your soul and your body. A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular result. A self-care strategy, then, is a specific, intentional, conscious plan to engage in a thought or activity that nurtures your soul as well as your body. A self-care strategy is something that invites and encourages you to edify your spirit or your soul.

So, why would you use self-care strategies? Well, one of the reasons why you want to use them is because all of us have some level of shame in us. And shame is a slippery and devious entity which affects my ability to think rationally and clearly. And so, as a result, each of us needs predefined strategies which we will decide upon while we're thinking and perceiving ourselves in the Truth.

We then use these strategies when we're in shame and distortion, in order to return to the Truth about ourselves. So, being able to manage shame is truly like fighting a war. Your weapons are your self-care strategies which are anything that invites and encourages you to identify—and thus eradicate—shame from your life. When dealing with something as illusive and treacherous as shame, we must be strategic and consistent.

So, here are some examples of some self-care strategies:

- Practice being impeccably honest with yourself and others, including being emotionally honest. For example, when I recognize something that I need to clean up—make right or forgive—I need to make a plan and I need to get feedback from an accountable person. And I need to commit to a time and a place that I will accomplish this plan, and then keep and follow through with my commitment.
- Another self-care strategy is, I need to become familiar with my feelings, my wants, my thoughts, my beliefs, my values, my morals, and desires, and learn how to share those with other people.
So, for example, every morning I spend 10 minutes reviewing my moral code, my goals, and my commitments. And I consider the morality of my choices. I keep lists of what I desire to have and experience.
- Another self-care strategy is, I learn to forgive myself and others.
- Another one is, I'm willing to let go of expectations and resentments. That's a biggie.
- Another self-care strategy is knowing what I can change and knowing what I can't change. So, basically that includes understanding surrender—like, what I'm responsible for and what I'm not. And what I'm not responsible for, I have to let go of.
- Another self-care strategy is that I learn not to take things personal. For example, when I feel attacked by a shame message or an insult from another person, I stop and I remind

myself what I know about who I am. Then, I remind myself that, “It’s not personal” and I need to speak the Truth about me to the lie—to the shame—and tell myself that this isn’t about me. When I hear myself say “I’m not enough,” that’s not the Truth about me.

- So, other self-care strategies are exercise, sleeping appropriate amounts of time, being in the moment—staying present in the moment, asking for help when I need it, planning out my day and being structured around my day.
- Another self-care strategy is to go through a thorough process when you want to say sorry to someone, so it’s not just this flippant sorry. It’s more of, I go through a process of empathizing and articulating what I’ve done to the person. And I sit with them and I have them tell me how they’ve been affected by my behavior, and then, I make restitution to them, so that they understand that I truly am sincere about wanting to make things right with them. Then I make a plan so I don’t repeat that same mistake that I did before. And then, after I go through all of those types of things, I then say I’m sorry to them.
- Another self-care strategy would be following through with my commitments.
- How about a self-care strategy of not saying sorry if you haven’t done anything wrong?
- Another strategy is to create and hold boundaries for yourself and honor other people’s boundaries.

So, although all of us have the same basic and innate needs, my self-care strategies are in some ways unique to myself. You get to decide upon your priorities, and needs, and wants as you get to know yourself intimately, including your responsibilities, your strengths, your vulnerabilities, your aspirations, your fears, your expectations, etc. And make a detailed plan to care for yourself—and then follow it. And then, also, find others who will support you or validate you as you learn to love and nurture yourself—because learning to love oneself is a very full-time, rigorous job and it requires significant and consistent effort.

The outcomes, the fruits, will be love towards self, love towards others, connection, peace, internal strength, firmness with self, and honesty—and ultimately, joy.

As you think about being able to love and care for self, I hope that you will think about if you use affirmations in your life. Affirmations are very powerful ways to change your thinking, and it can be very private. It doesn’t have to be this external, with volume kind of an experience. It can be something that’s just in your mind. You either recognize a faulty core belief or you need to reinforce something about you.

Let’s say you’re out lifting weights and you’re really tired. And so, you say to yourself, “I am strong and full of power.” You might think well, that’s not going to make me Super Woman or She Woman. However, when you say those kinds of things to yourself, your body responds because your brain believes what it is that you tell it. So, when you say to yourself “I am powerful and strong,” your body will respond. Those affirmations are *incredibly* powerful.

So, I encourage you to practice affirmations and these self-care strategies as manifestations of you loving oneself because remember, it is each of our responsibilities to care for, and love, and connect with self, so that we can then love other people.

Thank you for joining me this morning and between now and the next time that we meet, stay connected. We'll talk soon. Bye bye.

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