

Have you considered 'befriending' yourself? We see that the idea of loving yourself has become so idealized and distant that it seems impossible to actualize. It stagnates as a concept that has been given to you, rather than one you can understand, respond to and move toward simply being a friend to yourself. We invite you to consider exploring a gentle hello, a soft, getting-to-know-you, friendly encounter. Just like, in fact, when you meet someone else, as in, when you say 'Hello' and think, 'Hmm, there's something interesting here. Oh, I feel an affinity.' Can you feel the difference *within* if you start to think about yourself in this kind of gentle meeting-place way? It might even help to hold the image of getting to know 'a new me, today's me - I'm meeting 2008 me' - to help yourself look **anew** and seek the **seeds** of relationship with yourself.

What does it mean to love one's self? What does 'loving' mean in this context? Is it an idealized, romantic image of 100% acceptance? Is it a kind of abiding tolerance? Is it a deep acknowledgment of the **whole** of a person, which includes ups and downs and what can be seen as the polarity of positive and negative? So the simple statement 'love yourself' is filled with so many questions of what does that mean.

We agree that coming from a centered place of knowing how to love yourself, experiencing this love in the broadest and most complete way and then interacting with the world through those eyes would give us all an easier, stronger more supportive way to be present in life. But let us take a few steps back from that all-powerful word 'love' and its compatriot, 'know one's self' and **find a good beginning place.** A place that says, 'Can I come to know **about** myself? Can I see what makes me tick? Can I feel comfortable when I tock instead of tick? When I off-balance or off-beam? Can I **acquaint** myself with my self? Can I become **friendly** with my self? Can I discover **relationship** with my self? And can that be different than I already think of it. Can it be supportive to me when I don't feel supported? **How can I come befriend myself and from there, come into relationship with my self?'**

It's time to consider having a 'meet-up', signing your own FaceBook, instant messaging, emailing, meeting in the chat room and all of the like **with yourself.** Many people are having a very active expression of 'I want to communicate. I want to share.' And yet, as many are also learning, that even in this world of 'I want to share,' it's not always the **truth** that is being shared. There are, in fact, whole worlds of people creating what is called 'avatars,' faux identities, extended identities, other kinds of identities, which may in fact reflect **aspects** of the self or dreams of the self, but they are not the whole truth.

We see within the world wide web phenomena a cultural, global crying out for and interest in knowing another by sharing the self. **Know yourself by sharing your self.** Here is the same theme of **inquiry** that we hold through everything. It's the same theme of **wondering** about the self, of asking questions such as 'Where did I learn this? Why do I hold onto this?, but today we ask you to inquire a bit differently, asking, 'I want to know myself and come into relationship with my self **as if I hadn't yet met myself.'** Ask, 'What can I learn and who can I meet when I'm not sure I have all the answers or the whole truth? Who do I meet when I ask from today's moment and am willing to follow an **entirely different chain of thought** than all the ways I have asked these questions before?

This is an invitation to become friendly with and learn again about yourself. In this, see '**yourself**' as the core **personality-self.** Through such exploration you are always **resonating with** and giving yourself clearer recognition of your alignment with what we refer

to as the **core-essence** and the mystics refer to as deeper self, fuller self, true self, self in the fullest way and so on.

In meeting yourself anew, you will get to know your history and tell yourself what you already know and understand. You can do this literally, as in writing it down, or perhaps more an **evolving** rhythm, by **listening anew** as you share with others. Recognize what you say and note it, as in, 'Oh, I talk about that situation, like that. Oh, that's what I feel sometimes.' At the same time, hold present the attitude of **'I'm going to meet me**, greet me, come to know me a little differently. I am going to be *friendly* with, then friends with myself. **Friendly, acquaintance, friend**. And perhaps from the root of true **friendship** you can then allow yourself to evolve into **lover, loved and fullest love**.

The focus, though, is not a step-by-step progression, In fact, there are an **array of progressions** which move forward, backward and stand still. You may have epiphanies, paradigm shifts, regressions or plateaus or combinations thereof. So do not hold too tightly to the model of progression as step-by-step for it can be all of these elements.

Again, the goal here is softer, lighter and easier. 'Ah, I will **acquaint** myself with myself and be friendly with myself.' The emphasis is on friendship, relationship and love all as a piece. What can evolve is caring, compassion, tenderness to yourself – all the feelings you readily bring to your friends.

The inner judge, the task-master, the corrector, the teacher, the goal-setter are NOT invited to this meet-up. Or any other elements of teaching the self to be *improved, good, better, perfect*. We ask you to focus on discovering and recognizing the **worth** that is **already present**, is **inherent** and that people are very willing to see, to recognize and to mirror to **others**. Don Miguel Ruiz used to claim – and perhaps it did not originate with him as it is an axiom – that we are much more tolerate and accepting of our animal pets than we are of ourselves and each other. We accept the **nature** of a dog or cat. We might get annoyed that we have to clean up after them or chase after them, but we're quite willing to say, 'Well, that's just how dogs are. That's just what cats do.' And yet, it is challenging to extend this to other people and even more challenging to extend it to **yourself**.

As your own friend, explore more readily showing compassion, support and understanding to yourself. And it is true that there are times with our friends when we have to set a limit or say no or say this is very upsetting to me, but we can do that with compassion and caring and wanting to keep the balance of the *wholeness* of the relationship. Being you own friend doesn't mean you are all one way. You don't have to be a judge of yourself, but at the same time, that doesn't mean you cannot bring **discernment** into play, bringing **attention** to wondering how you could do something differently or free yourself from a pattern or is it possible to lose your fear. You can ask **all** the questions. You can see what the questions open up and lead to. You can **accept** the places you are **not** going to change. You can consider that there **is** change and possibility you haven't yet imagined.

As a friend, you can give yourself a greater latitude of being than when you burden your relationship with self with **idealizations** of love as all positive or needing to meet certain standards, such as, 'Do I deserve to be loved or love is earned or it's opposite, love must be **unconditional**.' 'Unconditional' so often becomes a **limitation**, expressed as 'I can only have **one** condition and it must be **all** acceptance, all confirmation, all acknowledgment'. Such idealizations are rarely, if ever, **actualized** because the 'all-ness'

can never be met. To us, 'unconditional' is a **state of willingness** to meet yourself and another with an openness to **all** the elements of option and choice and preference. Here we wait to listen, to try to understand, to hold space for the person in the present moment – we respond to them **holding open** our reactions to the conditions.

The truth is there are 'conditions' in life and they change all the time. What worked for you at one time of your life, doesn't work at another. What was a favorite thing doesn't work any longer. What used to bother you, doesn't bother you now. If you can find a way to **acknowledge** and accept that sometimes you **do** have preference about the elements within friendship, you can go deeper than acceptance and **allow** preference. You can then find ways to **express** preference which holds and supports relationship as well.

Befriend yourself by going to the core of friendship - which is the recognition that we are **expressions of the essence of being** in the multiverse. We are all inherently connected, no matter how much it may seem or be experienced that we are not connected. This reality asks us again and again, in a multitude of ways, to be **present** and **balance** all of the seemingly paradoxical, opposite and conflicted elements of life. And yet, you can still find your way to a **personal** sensing of the core of connection and one way is through friendship with yourself and with others. As your friend, you can allow yourself to be late and have those extra ten pounds and forget things and be emotional and whatever it is that really feels in the way of accepting to yourself who you are.

Again, friendship is not about striving for perfection. When friendship really shows up it is about recognizing connection **irregardless** of perfection. It is about finding the ways of putting together a dance with our conflicts, our differences, and those very imperfections we worry about. This is the essential element in friendships with ourselves and others. Remember, the nature of a person is **not a single**, aligned thing. It is, in fact, a moving dance of **many** elements, some in accord, some discordant. Some happening at the same time. The push and pulls of life. The clashes and crashes within ourselves. 'I want two things at once.' Yes you do. And sometimes you have to simply say, 'I can't take an **action** of two things at once, but yes, I **want** two different and sometimes contradictory, things at once.' It is there you have to simply stop, pause, **allow** – 'Yes I have these two different desires' and **wait** to see which one can actually move toward at **this** moment in time. Often people are not at ease with the idea of these conflicting multiplicities within.

When we become friends with ourselves, we're not becoming friends with an ideal of ourselves, we're becoming friends with all these multiplicities **as they are**, as they arise and as they change. Friendship doesn't mean that you have to give equal value of 'liking' to all of them. You **do** give equal value to the **whole** of the being, including yourself.

The gift of life is inherent connection and this supports you in recognizing, embracing and **treasuring** your own value. You are connected to this world of your life simply because you **are** here. Life will distract you from recognizing this. There will be times when all you recognize is **disconnection**. There are times you will feel singular and in that singularity, alone. And although the words 'You are part of all there is' may resonate and you recognize that truth on some level, that does **not** guarantee there will not be days that even that truth does not supplant feeling separate and alone. And so you find you must **bear the truth of that day** – 'Yes, today I feel separate and alone.'

But, a friend is someone who says, "Yes, you feel that today.' A friend doesn't need to hurry you along to the next place, to help you go through it or get over it. A friend

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doesn't need to **talk you out** of your feelings. And a friend may not say anything, but simply let you be where you are that day, but always holding the energy that you are more than what is prominent, what is present in a moment. **Be this friend to yourself.**

The present is demanding. The present gets our attention. The present fills the screen. It is hard to remember that there might be something **behind** the present moment or below it or coming toward you. But the present is never **static**. It is always a wave of motion moving toward the next moment - no matter if you recognize it or see or know where it is going. And as you **own** friend, give yourself more ease, more permission to be **as you are.**

Befriending yourself is really a movement toward ease with yourself. Sometimes it will not be easy and you will not feel at ease. You may even feel ill at ease. In that very moment, ask, 'Can I simply be **friendly** towards me?' and right there you may discover you have the sense of 'someone' walking with you. People often use the image of 'high self' or 'guardian' to express the **sense** of someone on your side. In fact, high self, guardians, guides are very much **archetypes** that holds a **mirroring to ourselves** that we are not alone, which is the gift of our inherent connection to All There Is. Hold all the images of guides, guardians, cosmic energies and let them merge. Allow that soft, caring, strong energy to come towards you. Feel it in your body, perhaps right in your heart at the center of your physical being. Now think of that very energy as **friendliness of the self** - your friend who is you. And you are now present and available and oh so willing to walk with your, side by side, inside, outside. And although you may not be in **constant** contact with this energy, it is **always** present.

Come to know yourself in a new way. An ancient axiom and a present one. Befriend yourself - be your own supportive one, the clear-seeing one, the acknowledger for yourself. This is truly a life-long relationship that will grow and change, and always reconnect from the moments of loss and separation.

Edited from a personal session with permission